



Northern Ireland
Assembly

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard) and JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

Volume 116
(22 June 2016 to 8 July 2016)

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Assembly Members

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Anderson, Sydney (Upper Bann)	Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)
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Minister of Education.....	Mr Peter Weir
Minister of Finance	Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
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Minister of Justice.....	Ms Claire Sugden

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The Executive Office	Ms Megan Fearon Mr Alastair Ross
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Official Report (Hansard)

Assembly Sittings

Northern Ireland Assembly

Monday 27 June 2016

The Assembly met at 12.00 noon (Mr Speaker in the Chair).

Members observed two minutes' silence.

Assembly Business

Mr Speaker: Before we start today's business, I welcome the new Clerk/Chief Executive, Mrs Lesley Hogg, on her first day at the Assembly. I also put on record the sympathies of the House to the family of Lord Mayhew, who served here as Secretary of State during a difficult time.

Private Members' Business

United Kingdom Withdrawal from the European Union

Mr Speaker: The Business Committee has agreed to allow up to three hours for this debate. The proposer of the motion will have 10 minutes to propose and 10 minutes to wind. All others will have five minutes.

Mr Nesbitt: I beg to move

That this Assembly notes the result of the referendum on European Union membership; and calls on the Executive to set out, in the immediate future, their response to the consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for allowing the motion. It is right that the first item of business in this Chamber since the referendum should be a discussion of the implications and consequences of what happened at the tail end of last week.

I note that Sam McBride, in the 'News Letter', leant on the words of W B Yeats to sum it up. Everything is "changed, changed utterly". I am not sure that that is right because I believe that what has actually happened is that we have entered an era of uncertainty, an uncertainty that will last years, not months.

There is only one certainty, and that is the result. The result is the result. Be in no doubt. We asked the people of the United Kingdom for their view, and the people of the United Kingdom gave us their view. It was to leave the European Union. The Ulster Unionist Party accepts that result.

The result is the result. There is no point in trying to say that it was a non-binding referendum and that Parliament is sovereign. Given the low esteem that many of us as elected politicians here and in other Chambers are held in by the people of the United Kingdom, the last thing we should do is say, "Tell us what you want us to do" and then ignore it and do what we want to do. No: the result is the result. We are on our way out of the European Union.

We have to accept that, but I believe that we should also acknowledge that, within Northern Ireland, 56% of the people who voted voted to remain in the United Kingdom. We must acknowledge that. The first question to the First Ministers is: how do they factor that in to how they will deal with the consequences of the referendum?

Mr McElduff: Will the Member give way just briefly?

Mr Nesbitt: I may give way later, but I have a lot of progress to make.

David Cameron, as Prime Minister of all the people of the United Kingdom, asked for a "Remain" vote, did not get it and has indicated his intention to resign. Nicola Sturgeon, as First Minister of all the people of Scotland, asked for a "Remain" vote in Scotland, got it and, therefore, has a clear mandate to take to the negotiations that will involve the UK Government and the devolved institutions. Arlene Foster, as First Minister of Northern Ireland, asked for a Brexit vote and did not get it within Northern Ireland, so there is, I believe, a legitimate question to ask of the First Minister.

Mr Frew: Will the Member give way?

Mr Nesbitt: I said that I may give way later.

There is a legitimate question to ask of the First Minister when she goes into those negotiations. How does she balance her party political view for Brexit against the fact that 56% of the people who voted in Northern Ireland said, "Let us remain within the European Union"? I look forward to the First Minister's response to that.

This, however, is not about going over the result: the result is the result. It is about the implications and consequences of the result for the people of Northern Ireland. There are huge consequences, and perhaps some unintended ones. The first consequence for us is that we look to London and recognise the fact that, of the two parties that are capable of governing in Downing Street, neither has a leader with credibility any more. The Prime Minister, Mr Cameron, has indicated, as I said, his intention to stand down. I believe that, this morning, the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Tom Watson, went to his leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and told him to stand down as leader of the Labour Party. We find ourselves with a certain political crisis.

Mr Clarke: I thank the Member for giving way. Maybe you can tell us when you are going to remove the whip from Tom Elliott.

Mr Nesbitt: The Member misunderstands the position of the Ulster Unionist Party, which I will come to during the course — *[Interruption.]* Mr Speaker, I was hoping that, after such a divisive campaign and with the eyes of Northern Ireland, perhaps of the world, on the Chamber this morning, we would have a thoughtful and respectful debate. I hope that we can still do that because —

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Mr Nesbitt: I will not give way.

What are the implications and consequences? Let us start with the finances. Nobody is in any doubt that Northern Ireland, currently and for some time, has been a net beneficiary of European funding, not just for agriculture but for our voluntary and community sector, our universities —

Mr Allister: Will the Member give way?

Mr Nesbitt: No, I will not give way.

Mr Allister: Peddling falsehoods. *[Interruption.]*

Mr Nesbitt: Mr Speaker, I ask you to reflect —

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to take his seat.

This debate, obviously, will have a fair amount of emotion from all sides of the House. I ask Members to be respectful to each other. That includes how they address each other and the titles they apply to Members. When it is quite clear that a Member is not going to take an intervention,

I ask that that be respected by the Member seeking the intervention.

Mr Nesbitt: Mr Speaker, I ask you to reflect on the comments from Mr Allister who, I believe, accused me of "peddling falsehoods". I ask you to reflect on that and come back to us when you are ready.

It is not just about the Peace funds; we all agree that we have done well from them. It is about the competitive drawdown, the common agricultural policy, the single farm payment, universities and the community and voluntary sector. It is about our infrastructure, and we all agree that, to have a vibrant economy, we need to invest in that. I believe that I saw our Minister, Chris Hazzard, out in Brussels a few days ago, discussing the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), which we did very well with when my colleague Danny Kennedy was Minister for Regional Development. In the last Programme for Government, for the first time, we had a target for the competitive drawdown of European funds, and we matched it easily. I would have hoped that we were going to be much more competitive and ambitious in the next Programme for Government, but can we even compete for infrastructure funds? Over the remaining years, when the withdrawal is being negotiated, why would the European Union give us money for infrastructure projects that would benefit the United Kingdom for the next five, 10, 15 or 20 years? What about corporation tax — the big idea? What happens to corporation tax now? Is there an opportunity here to get it without a hit to the block grant, or has it gone for good? This is the sort of clarity that we seek from our First Ministers.

The Ulster Unionist position has been very clear —

Mr Stalford: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. A previous statement from the Chair advised all Members that they should, at all times, refer to other Members by their correct and proper title. Do you judge it outwith that recommendation for the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party to use the term "First Ministers"? There is a First Minister and a deputy First Minister.

Mr Speaker: I have already addressed the point of referring to people by their correct title.

Mr Nesbitt: The Ulster Unionist position was that, on balance, Northern Ireland is better off in the European Union — not the United Kingdom, but Northern Ireland — with a UK Government arguing for further reform and a move back to free trade and away from political union. That is still our position.

On the money issue, when we discussed it as an executive, I took my pen and said, "If anybody in the room is prepared to take this pen and write a blank cheque that guarantees that Northern Ireland will not be one penny worse off in the event of Brexit, I will vote for Brexit." Nobody took that pen. I now ask whether the First Minister and the deputy First Minister will take that pen and guarantee our agriculture sector, universities, voluntary and community sector and everybody else who benefits from European Union money that they will not be a penny worse off. I will leave the pen there for a blank cheque to be signed.

What about the Barnett formula? What is the next —

Lord Morrow: Will the Member give way?

Mr Nesbitt: I am not giving way. I have made the point now.

What about the Barnett formula? We know that some Brexiteers, such as Lord Owen, have made the point that the Barnett formula should go. What are the implications for Northern Ireland?

Then there is the border. Were we misinformed about the border and the common travel area? I notice that the Taoiseach has said that he will do his "best" to maintain the common travel arrangements; not that he guarantees that they will stay but that he will do his "best". What is the plan in the Executive Office for the border and immigration? What about the future of the United Kingdom? I heard Members say that there is no way that Scotland will press for another vote on independence. I heard Members say that it will not happen because the price of oil has plummeted and Scotland cannot afford it. I said that I did not want my fingerprints on the button that Nicola Sturgeon will press to secure a second referendum. My fingerprints are not on that button, but the fingerprints of the leader of the DUP are, and she will press it.

What is the future for Northern Ireland as nationalism reacts with anger to the fact that those outwith this part of the United Kingdom have voted for Brexit? I love the United Kingdom. I remain convinced that we, in Northern Ireland, are all better off as part of the United Kingdom. I want an assurance from the First Minister and the deputy First Minister that they will work tirelessly to persuade the people that we are still better off in the United Kingdom, even in the event of this Brexit.

Mr Speaker: Will the Member conclude his remarks?

Mr Nesbitt: There is a lot to answer. The final question to the First Minister and the deputy First Minister is this: why is there no contingency plan to deal with this calamity?

Mr Stalford: What happened over the weekend was an exercise in democracy. The people of the United Kingdom, from every corner of the United Kingdom, were, for the first time in 40 years, given their chance to have their say on the continuation of our country's membership of the European Union.

12.15 pm

I think it is fair to look at the opposing sides in this campaign. On one side was Goldman Sachs, big business, the EU, the IMF and the political establishment of this country. They were convinced that it was in the bag, convinced that the case for staying in the European Union was so self-evident that no person could ever dare to vote against it. Well, they got their answer on Friday morning. The ordinary people of this country, who for years have been sneered at and ignored by the political and media establishment of this country, their values held in contempt and simple things like love of country held up as foolishness, had their say.

I knew that it would be an uphill climb in my own constituency, and I said that I would be pleased if we got above 28% for "Leave". In the end, we got 30.5%, and I knew when I saw the record turnouts in places like Donegall Pass; Sandy Row; the Donegall Road; the Woodstock Road — even in the Braniel, where I live — that ordinary people, who do not come out and vote at election time, were fired-up to come out and vote in this referendum, because they were fed up with being ignored by the media and political elite; fed up with being treated with contempt.

Since the result was announced, I have heard some of the worst denigration of our older population. It is disgraceful to hear people say that older people should not have the vote, or that they have betrayed the future of the young. It is because of the effort of the older people of this country that the young have a future to look forward to and to treat them with such contempt is disgraceful.

I enjoyed the campaign. The "Leave" campaign in Northern Ireland attracted —

Mr Dickson: Will the Member give way?

Mr Stalford: No. I will give way later.

It was a cross-section of people drawn from my own party, the TUV and UKIP, and, I am delighted to say, a good many Ulster Unionist Members were out with us, making the case for leaving the European Union.

We have heard that this is a time for seriousness. Well, seriousness requires that we have discussion and reasoned argument in the Chamber; we do not run off to 'The Irish News' saying that the Union is under threat, because we were on the losing side of the referendum, as some have chosen to do. The reality is that the people of this country were offered a choice, and they made their choice. I say this to those who were on the opposing side: had the vote gone the other way, I would have had to take it on the chin and move on. I know what it is like to lose an election, and I know what it is like to be on the losing side of a referendum. Those who just assumed that the people would do as they were told should accept the verdict of the people.

Over the last 48 hours, we have heard all sorts of crazy and interesting ideas on how the people's verdict can be overturned. We had a Labour MP saying that Parliament should simply ignore it because it was only an advisory and non-binding referendum, and I have no doubt that we will hear some of that today.

Mr Speaker: Will the Member conclude his remarks?

Mr Stalford: To go down that road and ignore the democratic verdict of the people of this United Kingdom would be a grave mistake.

Mr Murphy: I am very pleased to get the chance to speak in this debate. There is quite a lot of political difference already on the issues that were debated and the outcome of the referendum. One thing that does unify us is that we are left with an impending mess as a consequence of the vote that was taken last Thursday.

It is the responsibility of all of us to try to navigate our way out of the mess we find ourselves in. Whether one accepts the result of the referendum or not, had the vote been to remain in Europe we would not face the huge degree of uncertainty and potential difficulty that we now face. Regardless of whether people wanted to leave or stay, we are now presented with a serious political, economic and social difficulty that we have to chart our way through. There is no clarity from those who led the "Leave" campaign or, indeed, the British Government on how we will navigate our way through this political upheaval.

At a local level — I was involved in the campaign in my constituency — constituents are angry and bewildered. They are angry that their future and their children's future will be decided not by themselves but by people living on a neighbouring island. That democratic deficit and lack of self-determination is clearly another story that we will return to.

In my area, Newry and Dundalk were two busy ports and market towns located centrally on the east coast of Ireland with a shared hinterland pre partition. Their economic potential was sundered by partition and surrendered for the best part of 70 years. It was only with the advent of the single market and with specific European funds designed to remove the hard border and deal with the negative impact of partition — funds like INTERREG, Peace, the European social fund and some of the rural development programmes — that communities in that border area began to recover and look forward with some optimism to a better economic future, having been on the periphery of two states for so long. They are fearful now and somewhat bewildered about their future.

We have a responsibility collectively, regardless of our position in the referendum campaign or of how we see its outcome and in the absence of any sense of direction from London, to chart the best course for the people we represent to give clarity and some direction. That involves not just the Executive — obviously, the Executive have a key role in that, and I look forward to hearing from the First Minister later and, no doubt, other Ministers as the days and weeks progress — but the Opposition and all of us, because we have a collective responsibility in this institution. In the absence of any sense of clarity and direction elsewhere, the people of the Six Counties certainly and those across Ireland are looking for some direction here and, indeed, in Dublin.

We also have a responsibility to engage with the Irish Government on this. They will obviously be key players in negotiating matters relating Europe on this island, and the decision undoubtedly has a negative economic impact on them. Given the nature of our institutional arrangements, we have to ensure that we have a close working relationship with the Irish Government and, indeed, with Scotland, who find themselves in the same position as us, having decided in their jurisdiction to remain but now finding that they will, against their wishes, be out of the European Union in the near future. We specifically have a responsibility to engage with the sectors that will be most concerned: the business sector, the community and voluntary sector, farming, trade unions and other people across society who were heavily reliant on the European Union and some of the funds that it provided in their own businesses.

The clear majority in our vote in the Six Counties to remain gives us a strong hand in the negotiations that lie ahead. The British Government will be involved in those negotiations, we need to be involved in them and the Irish Government need to be involved. We have specifically expressed our wishes on this, and that gives us a strong hand with the British Government attempting to ride roughshod over the impacts of this on the people we represent.

We need a common purpose. Let us have the debate. People can argue the toss about which side they were on and the outcome, but, when the dust settles, we need a common purpose. We need to row in behind our Executive and act collectively with all the political parties here, with our friends south of the border, with friends in Scotland and, particularly, with friends in Europe to get the best possible outcome from this for the people we represent.

Mr Eastwood: I hope that some of the comments we have heard from sedentary positions are not a sign of how this debate will develop, and I do not just mean the debate in

here. Everybody in here who calls themselves a democrat should recognise that people here in the North of Ireland voted for our position within the European Union to remain the same. People in Scotland did that as well. Young people everywhere formed a coalition to have a positive relationship with the European Union. People here in particular, in Northern Ireland, understand the benefits that that has given us.

I spoke to a great number of people on Friday in my constituency, which is surrounded on three sides by a border, who were devastated, scared and extremely worried about what comes next. You see posters all round Northern Ireland — I have to drive past a load of them coming here in the morning — telling you that there will be £350 million more for the health service and all that stuff, but, of course, the “Leave” side is now rowing back on those great commitments about the health service, immigration and all the other plans that it made to —

Mr Bell: I thank the Member for giving way. Is the “Remain” side rowing back on the third world war?

Mr Eastwood: First, I do not know what you are talking about. I made a commitment to speak positively about the European Union throughout the campaign, and I think that we did. We know the benefits of it. The “Leave” campaign, however, is now rowing back on all its big claims. We told them the whole way through the campaign that that would happen. The notion that you will have access to the single market while controlling immigration is utter nonsense. It is nonsense, and it is proven to be nonsense in places such as Norway and Switzerland. There were a lot of lies told, but people in Northern Ireland saw through them. As democrats, we are standing by the people here who decided that we are not being dragged out of the European Union by the right wing of the Tory party or anybody else who does not want to listen when told about the benefits of the European Union.

Mr Allister: Will the Member give way?

Mr Eastwood: Yes.

Mr Allister: The Member says that he is not going to be dragged out of the European Union. I do not know what the question was on the ballot paper that he used, but on the ballot paper that I used the question was clear: do I want the United Kingdom to leave or to stay? The question was never “Do you want Northern Ireland to stay?”. The only autonomous answer is the answer that came from the entirety of the people of the United Kingdom. Is he going to accept that, or is he not?

Mr Eastwood: “No” is the answer, because I stand by people — *[Laughter.]* I stand by people on this island — *[Interruption.]* You see? Gracious in victory as usual. I stand by people on this island and in this country who do not want to leave the European Union. One minute we are told that Northern Ireland is a nation, and then the UK is a nation: I am not sure what people are trying to tell us, but people in Northern Ireland —

Mr Frew: Will the Member give way?

Mr Eastwood: No, I have given way enough.

People in Northern Ireland told us that they wanted to remain in the European Union, and we will look for every device possible to make sure that that happens, and I hope that others join us in doing so.

Mr Allister: Deny democracy.

Mr Eastwood: I know all about democracy, and some people in here need to learn about democracy. I remember a referendum that was held on this island not all that long ago, where people voted for the Good Friday Agreement. The Member who is shouting from his seat and some of the Members across the Chamber who were shouting from their seats earlier did not recognise that the people of this island voted for the Good Friday Agreement. What did the Good Friday Agreement mean? It meant that people from my persuasion who wanted to see a united Ireland were able to democratically argue for and democratically work towards that goal. We all accepted that the principle of consent was key to that. Let me tell you this, Mr Speaker: the people of the North of Ireland are not giving their consent to being dragged out of the European Union, and we stand by them on that.

Let me just deal with the point that the Secretary of State made about the principle of consent and the Good Friday Agreement. I do not think that this is the right time for a border poll, because I believe that we should have a border poll that we can actually win. Our duty today — *[Interruption.]* Do you not want to hear? No? Our duty today is to deal with the issues that face us right now. The Secretary of State has got it wrong: just because people on the nationalist side say that they agree with the principle of consent and the Good Friday Agreement, that does not mean that they give consent to our position within the United Kingdom. We will continue to democratically work towards changing that.

Right now, we are not about to be dragged out of the European Union against our will. I would love to hear the DUP explain to me today how it will enforce a border on this island and how it will control the freedom of movement of people into the British Isles. How will you do that? I do not think that you can, and I think that you have voted for something that you have not really thought through.

Look at what is happening in Scotland and here; people are beginning to see that the next step is further integration across this island, working —

12.30 pm

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to conclude his remarks.

Mr Eastwood: — together with our unionist neighbours to begin the process of working in the European context and delivering for our people here, not being dragged out against our will by Sunderland, Surrey or anywhere else.

Mr Speaker: I ask that Members be listened to with respect and that they be allowed to make their arguments across the Chamber. I also ask that Members, when speaking, address all their remarks through the Chair.

Mrs Long: We need to acknowledge that the vote across the UK was to leave the European Union. For me, that is a regrettable decision, but I acknowledge and accept it. It means that the UK will now begin a process of negotiation that will fundamentally change not just our relationship with the EU but the EU itself and, potentially, our relationships in the United Kingdom. To do otherwise would leave an electorate that was already clearly angry and disaffected even more angry and disaffected.

It is true that Parliament has primacy on these matters; it is also true that referendums are merely advisory.

However, no Government should ever go to the people, ask their view on a matter and then simply ignore the view that they are given by the people. That does not mean that, in future, when the new arrangements are made and are in place, it would not be equally appropriate for any Government to ask the people whether they are happy with the new arrangements, but, as we stand today, that is where we are.

We have to acknowledge — the “Leave” campaign needs to acknowledge this — the sharp divide that has opened up between England and Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland on the issue. There has to be some reflection of the clearly expressed wish of the people of Scotland and Northern Ireland to remain at the heart of the European Union. That must be reflected in any arrangements negotiated by the Government for the future. To ignore that, and to fail to seek an accommodation of those views, is to place the future of the United Kingdom in peril. I am surprised at the rather blasé approach that some unionists are taking to that risk, given that they are those most invested in retaining the United Kingdom.

I have no intentions —

Mr Humphrey: Will the Member give way?

Mrs Long: I will not give way.

I have no intentions of taking lectures from the party opposite on how to accept losing or, indeed, winning elections and votes with any measure of good grace. Whether it be the Good Friday Agreement, a democratic decision on flags on City Hall, or many others that would take too long to list, that party does not have a good record when it comes to good grace in democratic decision-making.

I do not want to reopen a referendum debate today. We have, in the context of a very close and divisive result, to look at how we now provide the sort of leadership that will get us to a place of stability. The continuing instability is a threat to our economy, to social cohesion in this society, and to our future as a regional economy in Europe whilst clearly potentially being no longer in the EU. Each of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom now has special arrangements and relationships with the Westminster Parliament, and the EU will be irrevocably changed by the departure of the UK. In that context, everything is open for discussion. Therefore, acknowledging in any agreements the clear votes to remain in the EU from Scotland and Northern Ireland is not beyond the capacity of a strong and coherent negotiating team. My question to the First Minister and the deputy First Minister is clear: can they provide that coherent negotiating team on behalf of Northern Ireland, given that the majority of people here wished to remain whilst the position of the First Minister's party was that it wished to leave? That is a genuine question that I place before them and ask them to consider today.

We need to reassure business and people in Northern Ireland about the future and maximise certainty. That reassurance is not coming from Westminster, which has now dissolved into the chaos that we were told was scaremongering but is now the news. I ask that we see strong leadership in Northern Ireland, not just for business or for the people in Northern Ireland but for those EU members —

Mr Stalford: I am grateful to the Member for giving way. I do not recall, at any point during the referendum

campaign, those who argued for “Remain” telling us that we should stay in for fear that David Cameron might resign or that Jeremy Corbyn would be subject to a coup. You referenced the trouble at Westminster; those are entirely internal party political matters for the Tories and Labour.

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mrs Long: Let us be honest; the referendum was entirely an internal party political matter for the Conservative Party. We all knew that when we voted; we knew that that was what it was about. Frankly, those who argued that it was about any higher principle need their heads examined. If we are being honest, the reassurance that I want today is for EU nationals and, indeed, other migrants who live and work in our communities and who make a contribution to society, because they feel vulnerable and afraid after this vote. I want reassurance for them that they are still welcome and that we are still an open and tolerant democracy —

Mr Speaker: Will the Member conclude her remarks?

Mrs Long: — and that they have a place in our future.

Mr Poots: I find it ironic that the proposer of the motion is none other than Mr Nesbitt, particularly after reading today's newspaper and his comments about people considering their positions. Mr Cameron called a referendum and Mr Cameron lost that referendum in spite of throwing everything, including the kitchen sink of Downing Street, at it. There were many inaccurate and untrue statements which the public, wisely, chose to ignore. By Mr Nesbitt's logic, Carwyn Jones should also resign, but he did not mention that this morning. Indeed, in his own Strangford constituency, 5,000 more people voted to leave than to remain. So, by his own logic, he has lost his own constituency and he should resign.

We go back to the principle of the standing of our First Minister. Our First Minister went to the country just over a month ago and received a vote of 207,000, which was an increased mandate. Mr Nesbitt went to the country and received 87,000 votes, which was a decreased mandate. Mr Nesbitt managed to take the leadership of the Ulster Unionist Party when it was at rock bottom and take it down further. He has been grovelling about —

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to come back to the motion.

Mr Poots: It is to do with the challenge by Mr Nesbitt to the First Minister. Nonetheless, he has been grovelling about on his stomach in the dust and now wants to spit it out at us this morning, having failed, and failed miserably. People had a reason for voting not to stay in Europe. Indeed, most of the former leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party voted not to stay in the European Union, including past leaders Tom Elliot and David Trimble. Mr Nesbitt does not command the support of his own party.

Mr Kennedy: Will the Member give way?

Mr Poots: Yes, certainly.

Mr Kennedy: Will the Member confirm that he is now completely reconciled with Lord Trimble?

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr Poots: Thank you for giving me the extra minute — I will give way again if you let us know how you voted, Mr Kennedy. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Lyons: Will the Member give way?

Mr Poots: Yes.

Mr Lyons: Does it worry the Member or his party that Mike Nesbitt seems to be suggesting, because there is the threat of a Scottish independence referendum for the second time, that unionism should act in a different way? Surely, that is nationalism dictating to unionism. Does that not show that the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party is better suited to the role of a commentator than to the role of leader?

Mr Poots: It is for the people to decide on what role he has. I think that the people decided very convincingly at the Assembly election, but he decided to cling on to his position and become leader of the Opposition as a result. Ironically, there were all these people who were saying that we would break up the Union if we voted “Leave”, but the nationalists in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all wanted to vote “Remain”. The unionists who joined them — the Ulster Unionists — joined the nationalists and, indeed, the republicans to say vote “Remain”, when clearly the people voted for something different.

In Northern Ireland, the DUP lifted 207,000 votes at the Assembly election and 350,000 people voted to leave the European Union. Quite clearly, many Ulster Unionists walked away from the guidance and leadership of Mr Nesbitt to back the leadership of the DUP. If any leader is considering their position today in this Chamber, it is the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, who has been exposed and found wanting. He failed miserably in the Assembly election, and he has failed to provide good, solid leadership to the people of the Ulster Unionist Party over the course of this referendum.

Mr Eastwood: Will the Member give way?

Mr Poots: Yes, I will give way.

Mr Eastwood: In the little time he has left, will the Member take some time to address the concerns of people in my constituency, in border constituencies and in every other constituency across Northern Ireland today? All I am hearing is an internal unionist argument.

Mr Poots: Fair enough; you are hearing an internal unionist argument. I will complete that before I touch on what you had to say. We are a one-nation United Kingdom and that one nation has made a decision. It is for Parliament — our sovereign Parliament at Westminster — to enact the democratically expressed will of the people of this United Kingdom. If we split Scotland, as some people want to suggest, are we going to split Northern Ireland as well? It was very evident that many constituencies in Northern Ireland voted to leave. This nation will be staying together and Nicola Sturgeon will fail in what she is doing.

Things such as the border issues need to be discussed, and we will work very closely with the Republic of Ireland Government to ensure that there is as little change as possible as a result of this decision and that people will be able to enjoy all the benefits.

Mr Speaker: The Member should conclude his remarks.

Mr Poots: We need to divest ourselves of the regulations that Europe has imposed on us. That will give business and farmers and many other people great opportunities to move forward, deal with the rest of the world and take this challenge on in a very positive way.

Mr O'Dowd: Whatever else the United Kingdom is, it is not united, either in its desires for the future of the nations that make up that current United Kingdom or around socio-economic policies, race policies or anything else. The recent referendum debate in Britain has shown the rifts in society there and here, so the term "united" does not fit this debate.

I know that Members on the opposite Benches and those beside them traditionally refer to the term "United Kingdom", but let not anyone in the Chamber believe that there is any unity of purpose as a result of the referendum decision made last week. No matter how you look at this group of islands, they are divided like they have never been divided before. We have to recognise that the EU referendum result is the biggest single social and economic shock to hit the island of Ireland since partition. Regardless of where your allegiances lie, whether they lie with the Union or, as mine and those of my party colleagues do, with the reunification of Ireland, we have to deal with it.

The motion:

"calls on the Executive to set out, in the immediate future, their response to the consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union."

The Executive's hands are somewhat tied on this, because they will not be able to work out a response until the Conservative Party sorts out its internal squabbles, appoints a leader and a Prime Minister and, as is quite likely, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the very near future. The Executive and the First and deputy First Minister are somewhat constrained in what they can do, but I have no doubt that, despite their differences on this and numerous other issues, they will work to do their very best for this society.

They will do their very best for this economy. They will do their very best for the people whom they represent here in the North.

Mr Dickson: Will the Member give way?

Mr O'Dowd: As my colleague Mr Murphy said, there is also a responsibility on the opposition to work positively in tandem to ensure that outcome. I will give way.

12.45 pm

Mr Dickson: I am interested in the Member telling us that the First and deputy First Minister will work together on this. Is the reality not that they are as disunited on this subject as the disunited kingdom is today on the whole issue?

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr O'Dowd: I do not think that it will cause newsflashes around the world that Martin McGuinness is an Irish republican and Arlene Foster is a unionist. They are disunited on that, but they have shown that they can put their differences aside and work for the betterment of society. That is what is required now.

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Mr O'Dowd: I will, if I can, in one moment. What is required now is leadership.

I return to the referendum and the uncertainties that it has thrown up to us. There is always certainty in uncertainty. We can now be certain that the £350 million a week that was promised to the health service is not going to the health service. Some of those who opposed EU membership were opposed to immigration. We can be certain that emigration and immigration will continue. We will not be able to stop immigration. Negotiations will have to take place with the European Union. If they want to trade into the European Union, they will have to do what other nations on the European continent are doing, and the free movement of people is part of that. Why is the free movement of people part of that? It is because, despite the fears that were promoted by some in the "Leave" campaign, immigration is actually good for the economy.

I want to turn to our brothers and sisters from European states and those from other ethnic minorities who already live here. I would hope to send out a very unified message from the Assembly that their contribution to our economy is welcomed. Their continued contribution to our economy is absolutely necessary, and we, as an Assembly, an Executive and political leaders, defend their right to be here and welcome them here with open arms.

In conclusion, the time ahead will be very difficult because the principle of trickle-down economics, which many in the House — I am one of them — argue does not work in the method that it should work and does not deliver for those at the bottom of the stream, works in quite a different way. The losses that were seen on the stock markets across the globe on Friday will have a trickle-down impact. Who will pay for those losses? It will not be big business; we learned that from the last recession. It will not be any of the big businesses, whichever side of the argument they were on last week. It will be the ordinary person on the street who will pay for those big losses on the stock market last week. Our Budget and economy will be impacted, which is why it is vital that the First and deputy First Minister work together. I am confident that they will. I hope that I can be confident that the Opposition will work with them.

Mrs Little Pengelly: I welcome the vote of the people of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union project. Over the last number of days, including today in the Chamber, I have listened to and read of the hysteria of those in the "Remain" camp. First, let me be clear: we all knew the terms of this referendum. We voted individually as citizens of the United Kingdom on the position of the United Kingdom. Those were the terms accepted by all sides, including the "Remain" side. It is fundamentally dishonest for some in the "Remain" camp to attempt to change the parameters retrospectively when the result did not go their way.

Secondly, it is offensive and unacceptable that there are those in the "Remain" camp, particularly elected representatives, in Northern Ireland who try to portray those "Leave" voters as racist, stupid, uninformed, misinformed or uneducated. This is an issue of respect about the outcome. Today, we have already heard a patronising view towards those who voted "Leave". They may not be the commentators, the journalists, the Establishment or the left-wing liberals who dominate the public narrative, but there is a clear message: the so-called little people have spoken. The oft-silent majority across the United Kingdom have made their feelings clear.

The mouse has roared and become the lion, and millions of decent, upstanding people have all the lefty liberals in a spin. The reality is that Europe had become too detached and too unaccountable, yet, in that context, there was an ever-growing agenda of increased scope and remit.

There is an irony about the position of Mike Nesbitt. He criticises others when he represents neither the view of unionism in Northern Ireland nor, we suspect, even the views of the Ulster Unionist Party.

I know that my party leader, the First Minister of this country, will fight her hardest for the best deal for Northern Ireland, the best deal for farmers, the best deal for the economy and the best deal for our public services and all in Northern Ireland.

Mr Aiken: Will the Member give way?

Mrs Little Pengelly: Yes.

Mr Aiken: Thank you very much for those comments. I apologise for coming late to the debate. Many representatives of unionism and many of my constituents who voted "Remain" have communicated with me how concerned they are with what has been going on. It is not just a question of unionism in one place —

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to come to a question.

Mr Aiken: — it is all of unionism.

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mrs Little Pengelly: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand here today to give assurances to the people of Northern Ireland — I know that other Members will do so as well — that the First Minister will fight for the best deal for Northern Ireland in the renegotiations. She will roll up her sleeves and fight fearlessly for all in Northern Ireland, including those who decided to vote "Remain" and those who decided to vote "Leave", and I want people to be reassured of that today.

This is a new dawn for the United Kingdom. There is of course much work to be done and much negotiation, but there is also much opportunity. Today, as I stand here, I am still a European. People need not to listen to the hysteria but to buckle down and look at the opportunities that this provides for us.

We stand here today free to negotiate and build a new and recalibrated relationship on the world stage, including with the European Union, and a better deal for an independent and sovereign United Kingdom on the world stage.

Our message today is one of hope, not despair. People need to keep calm and listen to what is being said. Do not listen to the hysteria. We should not fear change but embrace the opportunities that will come from removing from our wrists the shackles of this failed European Union project.

Mr Smith: Our economic and political environment fundamentally changed with last week's referendum result. On Friday, Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England, said:

"The Bank of England has put in place extensive contingency plans."

Trying to calm the market free fall in the pound, he also said:

"we are well prepared for this."

Mr Carney showed a steady hand and provided reassurance to the markets. The question is this: are we similarly well prepared? I hope that we are but fear that comments from the deputy First Minister suggest otherwise. When asked what our contingency plans were, he clearly said that there were none. His only contribution was to add more uncertainty with a proposal for an unnecessary and unwinnable border poll.

As we move into a period of economic turbulence and political uncertainty, it is foolhardy in the extreme to seek to add further instability, especially when, as officials recently told the Finance Committee, Northern Ireland's deficit with the Treasury is currently £9.2 billion, making any prospect of Irish unity an economic non-starter. The bottom line is that a UK-wide referendum vote was taken, a decision was made and we now need to move forward as a United Kingdom, not component parts, to obtain the best deal for our country.

On Friday, the First Minister said that we needed a period of calm, stability and leadership, but she also stated that there was no contingency plan. Surely it is a bizarre situation when the First Minister has not planned for the outcome that she campaigned for, especially when the result was going to be close and uncertain. Where is the Northern Ireland Executive's contingency plan? We are all aware that we have received billions from the EU in recent years, and there are billions still to come during the next Budget phase until 2020. There is £1.2 billion in CAP payments and rural development, a further billion from the current round of regional development funds and millions more from the social fund and Peace moneys. Some of the funding might be covered by additional budget from Westminster, but some might not. At this stage, no one knows. The expectation is that it will be two years, at least, before the full ramifications become clear, but, again, no one knows.

What we do know is that we will be impacted by two issues, both of which are outside our control. First, a significantly weaker pound will reduce the value of EU payments in the short term to the Executive and to funding recipients like our farmers. There is an element of swings and roundabouts of course, but the net impact is likely to dampen growth and investment in the short term, thereby reducing the revenue generated by Northern Ireland. Estimates of the impact of the EU exit on Northern Ireland suggest a 3% reduction in GDP. Secondly, we must also look at our debt and the potential for increased costs to fund that debt. Let us also bear in mind that the Executive is indebted to the tune of over £1,200 per capita compared to, for example, £530 per capita in Scotland.

On Saturday, Moody's downgraded the UK's long-term issuer and debt ratings to "negative" from "stable". Its analysis is that:

"the negative effect from lower economic growth will outweigh the fiscal savings from the UK no longer having to contribute to the EU budget."

This reduced credit rating will result in higher borrowing costs for government, businesses and households in the longer term.

We have a challenging financial environment that is exacerbated by the failure of the previous Executive to mend the roof while the sun shone. That failure to reform

and drive change in our public sector means that, unlike the Chancellor this morning, it is difficult for us to state that we come to this from a position of strength economically and with a fundamentally strong economy. We need a coordinated response from the Executive that will produce a plan to protect our local economy and public services. We need reassurance and leadership to calm markets and encourage investment. We need an emergency plan that can ensure that Northern Ireland's voice is heard at Westminster and throughout Europe and that is clear in its demands to protect our funding streams and to put in place policies to facilitate our businesses to take advantage of any opportunities that arise.

As I said, we need reassurance and leadership, both of which have been in short supply since last Thursday's momentous decision. I urge the Executive to show some urgency and some leadership and start to plan for this new economic and political environment.

Ms Seeley: As party spokesperson for childcare, children and young people, I can only describe the referendum result as heart-wrenching. The vast majority — three quarters — of 18- to 25-year-olds voted to remain. It appears that Thursday was the day young people proved that they are much wiser than many others. I therefore want to express solidarity with young people right across Britain, who have been let down by inter-party rivalry in a campaign which did not have their interests at its heart. Again, this raises the urgent need to extend the vote to 16-year-olds. Their level of engagement in the Scottish referendum was unprecedented. If their vote was good enough then, why not now? Thursday's result will impact most not on those who are 50-plus and who voted in their thousands to leave but on our children and our children's children, as their opportunities to study, live, love and work in another 27 countries while gaining invaluable life experiences —

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Ms Seeley: I will not give way. That has been snatched away from them. Young people have been denied opportunities, experiences and friendships. That is certainly not a legacy to be proud of.

Linkages between universities will now be severed. The ERASMUS school exchange programme will be called into question, and those young people from our neighbouring countries who have taken a brave step to live and work here now face huge levels of uncertainty. Let there be no doubt: young people will disproportionately bear the brunt, and the effects will be long-lasting. I personally have been contacted by friends who are living, working and studying in Europe and widening their skills, who now say that there really is no point in coming home. If unemployment is concerning now, the outlook is increasingly bleak. Our talented and skilled young people will stay away when we need them to return home most.

In my constituency of Upper Bann, community projects funded by EU money will now collapse, with those in the pipeline suffering a devastating blow. On Friday, I met representatives from NICEM, which represents the ethnic minority community of Upper Bann. Their lives have been thrown into disarray. Families are unsure where their children will go to school in September and if they will have a job in a month's time. Families, who will endure

countless sleepless nights, now need leaders to step up and reassure them.

1.00 pm

In the coming days and weeks, Upper Bann will welcome Syrian refugee families into its communities. I implore my constituents to extend a warm welcome because, sadly, the whole debate has given rise to the type of poisonous politics that we should never have witnessed. The first sign of contagion was evident with the questions of citizenship that were posed by a Fianna Fáil TD in the South.

As Mr Stalford pointed out, the civil and human rights we enjoy were fought hard for, but they now lie in the hands of far right Tories who are hell-bent on scrapping the Human Rights Act.

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Ms Seeley: That is not good enough for anyone, particularly our most disadvantaged. I will give way.

Mr Stalford: She mentioned youth unemployment. Can she tell me what the youth unemployment rate is in Greece?

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Ms Seeley: I am most concerned about the unemployment rate here in the North and the fact that this means that many of our youth now face a dire future.

To conclude, this is not the future our young people voted for. If we do nothing, we will deepen the injustice. I call on all those across Britain and Ireland who favoured "Remain" to come together and explore options pertaining to a continuing relationship with our friends in the European Union.

Mr Lyons: My first reaction to the result of the EU referendum was to welcome it, and I think an awful lot of people across Northern Ireland will have done the same. My second reaction was that people need to take a breath. People need to relax, and people need to calm down. Yes, we have made a significant decision; yes, we have made a momentous decision; and, yes, there will be huge change in front of us, but I believe that can be positive change. By the way, I say to Members that they are very foolish if they think there would be no change if we had stayed in the European Union. There is certainly no certainty about remaining within that block.

Some mentioned the uncertainty. Some mentioned the stock markets, and it is important to note, of course, that they are no worse off than they have been at certain points over the last number of months, but I am not surprised there has been some volatility —

Mrs Long: Will the Member give way?

Mr Lyons: — when you consider that the prophets of doom have been preaching over the last number of months about how terrible it may be. I will give way to the Member briefly.

Mrs Long: I thank the Member for giving way. Does he dismiss as "prophets of doom" those businesses that are trading with the US and that have found that their costs have risen by 10% over the weekend?

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr Lyons: I would say that there are many people, especially those in the agriculture community, who will be

very pleased about exports and the benefits the change in the pound will have.

People mention —

Mr Stalford: I am grateful to the Member for giving way. Would he agree with me that a party that advocated joining the euro is in no position to lecture the rest of us on economics?

Mr Lyons: I obviously completely agree with what the Member said.

People also mentioned the uncertainty that could come as a result of the change we have made by voting to leave the European Union. There will be uncertainty. Do you know why? We are getting control back. There will be decisions we will have to make about agriculture, trade, borders, immigration and our money. We now have decisions to make because we have that control back. Those decisions were previously taken by other people and were dictated to us by other people. We now have the choice to make about what we do in those areas. We get freedom with the result. With that freedom comes responsibility, and with that freedom comes the power to decide for ourselves. I welcome that we will have an opportunity now to make decisions for ourselves.

*(Madam Principal Deputy Speaker [Ms Ruane]
in the Chair)*

We also need to accept the result. I have to say I was very disappointed with what Mr Eastwood said about young people. The argument that has been trotted out over the last number of days is that, because greater numbers of young people voted to remain in the EU, in some way their votes are worth more or should be given greater weight. We have democracy in this country. We have one man and one vote, and I thought that is something that the Member would welcome.

Mr Eastwood: Will the Member give way?

Mr Lyons: I will not give way. My time is going, and I have already given way a couple of times.

We are a part of the UK, and we have voted to leave. Those who are calling for a second referendum are only injecting uncertainty into the future. It is also, by the way, a smack in the face for those who have decided to leave, and those are the people who so often feel ignored by the elites in this country.

So we have time to prepare; we have two years. We know that our First Minister and deputy First Minister will work with Brussels and Westminster to ensure that we are in a good position as we negotiate our way outside of the European Union. Although there has been so much negativity around this decision, I believe now is the time to embrace the possibilities that come with us leaving the European Union. We have decided to leave a bloc of countries that stifles jobs, hampers trade and hurts agriculture — and, by the way, we have paid for the pleasure of doing all of that. We are now in a position where we can march forward and be stronger than ever before. I believe in the creativity of our people, I believe in their hard work, I believe in their industry and I believe in our ability to push the boundaries and make further progress for future generations.

Mr Eastwood: Thank you for giving way. I know that he addressed some of the things I said. I will maybe not go into that now, but, for the record, I do not believe that the vote of anybody, no matter what age they are or what background they are from, should be worth more than anybody else's. That has been our position since our foundation. Maybe a wee look into history would be useful for the Member. I ask him to tell me: how much of the money that you are telling us is going to be saved by not being members of the European Union is going to have to be ploughed into the banks, which are publicly owned and which have lost fortunes upon fortunes in the last couple of days?

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I ask that all Members make their remarks through the Chair.

Mr Lyons: I know that we are going to have an awful lot more money back now for us to spend in the way that we want. We are going to have that freedom, and we are now going to have that control. I welcome the result of the referendum, and I know that the First Minister and deputy First Minister will work to ensure that we get a good deal. I believe that we have very good days ahead because of the possibilities and opportunities that leaving the EU will afford us.

Ms Hanna: For those I have been speaking to over the weekend, the overwhelming emotions are still shock and anxiety. As much as the party across wants to gloss over the arguments and myth-making of the last few months, for something this major —

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Ms Hanna: I am going to get under way.

For something this major, we are entitled to ask who did this, and why. As an Assembly, it is our job to chart some sort of a course and to play the hand that we have been dealt, not just for the people who voted "Remain", but for all those people who are going to be affected by this. That includes people who were too young to vote — I am not saying that a younger person's vote is worth more than anybody else's — and the tens of thousands of people from the European Union who have come here, work hard, pay into our system, did not get a vote and have been scapegoated for every problem of the world.

We warned about the carnival of reaction that would follow Brexit, and we are seeing it now. We are seeing market instability, we are seeing the beginnings of job loss announcements and we are seeing the two UK Government parties essentially setting themselves on fire. The polls show —

Mr Aiken: Will the Member give way?

Ms Hanna: I will give way.

Mr Aiken: As a question and a degree of clarification, the figure that we were talking about around the instability, which was brought by the other Member, is now £260 billion and rising. That is a lot more than £8.5 billion.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Ms Hanna: I am going to get to your points, but those who set themselves up as defenders of the Union and the empire should look at the polls in Scotland and be very careful about what they have wished for.

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Ms Hanna: Will the Member sit down, please? *[Laughter.]* I am going to make a few points. *[Interruption.]* The Member has had his time; the Member can sit down. *[Laughter.]* I do not know what you are laughing at. You have lost this. Those who led —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Order. Will the Member please take her seat?

Ms Hanna: Why do I have to take my seat?

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I hope the Member is not challenging the Chair. Will the Member take her seat? We will have order and respect in the House, and all remarks through the Chair.

Ms Hanna: Those who led the “Leave” campaign have gone AWOL. Your friends are popping up in the media to roll back on a lot of the spoofs that they put out over the last few months on extra money to the NHS, the ending of free movement of people and when article 50 would be triggered. As the Member has said, the quarter of a trillion that has had to be pumped into standing up the pound today represents 20 years of EU contributions. The Members across talk about the disenfranchised and the forgotten. How are those people going to feel when they find out that they were lied to and that their opportunity and financial stability were thrown away for a handful of magic sovereignty beans? There is now no plan.

Mr Dickson: Will the Member give way?

Ms Hanna: No, I will not because I have given way for quite some time.

There is now no plan, and it is a dereliction of duty for the First Minister of Northern Ireland to say that, despite there being no plan, we will wash up the same creek that the UK Government find themselves in without a paddle. This result was a leap into the unknown, and people here knew that. A majority of people wanted to stay in Europe and have the stability, the opportunity and the cooperation that it offers. We have to try to get that.

The DUP refuses to accept the democratic will of the people, 70% of whom voted for the Good Friday Agreement, and the DUP refuses to accept that a majority in the Assembly and a majority in the UK support equal marriage. You choose which issues to veto. The DUP said that the majority in Scotland did not vote for independence last time — that vote is smaller than the majority that you got — but that that majority is somehow decisive and settled while this majority is not. You cannot pick and choose on these things.

Members wanting to make this a green-and-orange issue is another dereliction of duty. We also need a Government that represents everybody here and not party interests, and I think that knee-jerk calls for a border poll are the last thing that we need. We have seen over the last few months the atavistic passions that that raises in people, including people without a history of recent violent extremism, and a woman, an MP and a young mum is dead because of that. We are too fragile to have that sort of instability. We spent the last four months telling you that “Leave” was a leap into the unknown and so was a border poll, but I will tell you this: the relationship between moderate nationalists and moderate unionists in the United Kingdom is fundamentally and recklessly altered. The social democratic benefits, like the National Health Service and stability and tolerance, are now on their way out or are being taken out. The principle

of consent that we all adhere to in the Good Friday Agreement has been breached. The constitutional status of Northern Ireland cannot change without the —

Mr Beggs: Will the Member give way?

Ms Hanna: No, the Member is going to get through some of her own points.

Whatever your views on the logic of Scottish unity, they did their homework, and we have not done our homework on maxing out devolution or on Irish unity yet. We need to do that, but forcing that instability on people would be reckless in the extreme. On how we move forward, let us not forget that we have the most imaginative constitutional settlement possibly anywhere in the world: it allows people here to be British or Irish or both as they so choose, and you cannot just write that away. Good political and legal minds wrote that while the party across was marching up and down the driveway, taking no part in the solutions, but solutions can be found. Later today, we are to discuss the Budget and how we get corporation tax, which is the basket that we are putting all our eggs in, when every single foreign direct investor has said that they wanted us stable, they wanted us skilled, and they wanted us as a gateway to Europe. Those on the left who put their ideological purity over public services and people have forfeited the right to complain about the hardship that the block grant being dumped will bring.

I am not given to quoting poetry, but I will in the last. Yeats said:

“All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born.”

He also said,

“the centre cannot hold”.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member bring her remarks to a close?

Ms Hanna: The centre, the majority, voted for Europe, and it is the duty of the Assembly to represent that centre.

Lord Morrow: We have heard a lot today, and we have heard a lot over the weekend since this poll took place. People do not like it when the little people speak, and, when people are given their democratic right, there is something infinitely wrong with that, particularly from those opposite. It will soon get to the stage, I suppose, where there will be sections of our community and our great nation who will not be allowed to vote because they might not do it in the way that people want them to. The little people have spoken, and I must say that I welcome the decision that they have taken. Those who are confused today are confusing themselves, because let it be loudly stated that Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom. This was not a referendum in Northern Ireland; it was a referendum of all the people of the United Kingdom.

I listened to Ms Hanna, and she came very close to saying what had been said by the “Remain” camp. What did it promise us if we voted to leave? A third world war, an emergency Budget, and poverty would be our lot for the rest of our lives. They have absolutely no confidence in themselves, no confidence in the country in which they live, and they just want to play it down all the time. Mr Nesbitt has still failed to tell us which part of the Ulster Unionist Party he speaks for. Does he speak for Tom Elliott MP, does he speak for Lord Rogan, does he speak for

Councillor McGimpsey? Tell us, which section of the party do you speak for?

Some Members: *[Interruption.]*

Lord Morrow: I will let you in later. I have heard you long enough.

1.15 pm

The EU referendum was a momentous democratic moment for the United Kingdom. The decision to leave is, without question, one of the biggest political moments that any of us have experienced. For me, the decision to leave is the right one for the United Kingdom. For me, the decision to leave could not have been better.

I believe that the United Kingdom will not only survive outside the European Union but, in fact, will flourish. We have left a shrinking EU for a better place in the world. We no longer have to put up with the undemocratic nature of the European Union. Thankfully, we will not be subject to that any longer. No longer will those making consequential decisions for the people of the UK be beyond the reach of accountability. The UK has voted to take back control of our own affairs, and that is a positive thing.

I respect the fact that for many in the UK, and in Northern Ireland, the decision to leave the European Union is one that they do not welcome. I understand why some desired to remain within the EU and voted that way. I was not one of them. It is my hope in the years to come that those of us who desired to leave the EU will be able to win round some of those who wanted us to remain, as the benefits of being outside the EU become apparent.

There has been a hysterical response — and we have heard some of it here today — in some quarters to the decision to leave. From what we have heard in the media, you would imagine that the sky is about to fall in. Well, I can tell all Members: relax, the sky is still in place, it has not come down just yet. You would also imagine that the four horsemen of the Apocalypse are about to make their appearance in the aftermath of this vote. It is not going to happen.

Many commentators seem to be on a mission to talk the United Kingdom down. We are, apparently, too poor and too weak to make our own way in the world. In my view, and in the view of my party, the UK is a strong country, with the fifth biggest economy in the world.

Mrs Long: The sixth.

Lord Morrow: We can, and will, thrive outside the European Union. What we do not need right now is the sort of hysterical response that we are getting from that quarter over there. *[Interruption.]* Yes, it is the case that the UK will face significant challenges in the months and years ahead. Political leaders in Northern Ireland will need to think carefully about issues such as the status of the border with the Republic of Ireland and our trading relationships with countries around the world.

Now is the time for cool heads. We need a cross-party approach to consider carefully how we in Northern Ireland can best thrive outside the European Union. We need to be willing to listen to the wisdom of those who desired a "Remain" outcome —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member bring his remarks to a close?

Lord Morrow: — and those who voted "Leave" in considering how we go forward. This country has the intelligence and capability —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member's time is up. I call Jennifer McCann.

Lord Morrow: — to thrive regardless of whether we are in —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I call Jennifer McCann.

Ms J McCann: I have been listening to the debate since I came into the Chamber. Really, we are listening to a lot of grandstanding. We are listening to a lot of people who are saying that this is a victory for the ordinary person on the street and the ordinary person in society, and everything else. I am confused, and I do not know what people out there are thinking when they are listening in, if they are listening in, or will be listening to this later. The people who we should be talking about in the Chamber today are those who live in the North of Ireland. We should be talking about the people who voted to remain, not those who voted to leave, because the people who elected us and who we represent are the people who live in the North of Ireland, and they voted to remain. That said, I want to break this down to the actual realities, because sometimes a dose of reality is needed in a debate like this.

This morning, I visited a community organisation in west Belfast. It has services for children with severe disabilities and complex needs. It helps to support the families of those children as well. It is organisations and groups like that and the services that they deliver that will be impacted, not the people that you are grandstanding about or the great empire that you are talking about. It is about ordinary people on the street: children with disabilities and their families, women's organisations and community organisations right across the piece in constituencies represented by everyone in the Chamber.

We know that the cuts that have already come to those community and voluntary organisations will be worse after this result. Do you really believe — does anybody in the Chamber believe — that the money that will not go to Europe will come here? Does anybody seriously believe that? Look at the Tory austerity programmes and policies that have already been put in place: how can anyone seriously get up today and say that the community services that will go because structural funds, Peace funds and the ESF have gone will be replaced? I certainly do not believe that, and I am not convinced by anything that I have heard today.

I just want to touch on the voluntary and community sector. Peace moneys have been here since 2007, and we thought that they would be here until 2020 at least, although they might not now. Those moneys were to build positive relationships between our communities. We saw young people, women's organisations and local communities availing themselves of them. They helped to build spaces for people to come together, even in constituencies like West Belfast, and I see Members on other Benches who represent West Belfast.

There was a small youth organisation, R City, from the Hammer on the Shankill and Ardoyne. Those two sets of young people came together in a neutral place, and they went out to South Africa to help other underprivileged children and those less fortunate than themselves. My DUP colleague, who was junior Minister at the time, and

I went out to visit the organisation. Some of those young people, who were 15 and 16 years of age, had never come together to meet somebody from a different community background. That money brought those young people together in that space so that they could go out and help people in a different country.

Ms Seeley: Will the Member give way?

Ms J McCann: Yes.

Ms Seeley: Would the Member agree therefore that the result of the referendum will disproportionately affect our young people and future generations?

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Ms J McCann: I think that it will. A lot of the victims and survivors money comes from Europe as well. This will impact really seriously on ordinary people. I plead with people in the Chamber to speak with a united voice and to show leadership. Communities and families are very concerned about their services, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are very concerned. I make a plea that we speak with a unified voice.

Mr Humphrey: I thank the Member for giving way. I pay tribute to Alan Waite and the people who work on that project. Does the Member really think that the speech that she has just delivered provides him, his colleagues and the young people on the project with any comfort? Is she not raising fears as her colleague to her right did when she was speaking? We should be playing them down and giving people certainty and surety, not raising people's concerns.

Ms J McCann: There is not any certainty; that is why I am speaking the way I am. The community and voluntary sector —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I ask the Member to bring her remarks to a close.

Ms J McCann: That is what will impact on ordinary people and families.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member's time is up.

Dr Farry: It is appropriate that we have this debate today. It is a shame that it is the Opposition who have brought it to the Floor: this matter affects all of us. It is perhaps the most serious issue to face the Assembly during its entire existence; indeed, it is perhaps the most serious issue to face the UK since the Second World War. Let me also be clear that I accept that this is a UK-wide vote, and we have to respect the outcome, no matter what position we took on the referendum. We have to deal with the consequences and implications that flow from it.

Equally, it would be wrong to work on the basis that the UK is a unitary state and we are all now lumped in together on where we go and what the future is. Look at the very name of the UK — the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We are familiar with the fact that, for example, we have separate football teams — as an aside, let me say, "Well done" to Northern Ireland; I am sure that the House will join me in congratulating the team on its outstanding success in the Euros — and we have the reality of devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland is a kingdom with its own separate history, and they have now established a principle that

they can do things differently. In Northern Ireland, we are very much a place apart, particularly in the context of our land border on the island of Ireland. We also have our very particular constitutional settlement based on the Good Friday Agreement, with a three-stranded set of relationships and, importantly, the ability of the people of Northern Ireland to determine their future through the principle of consent. To be accurate, that is framed only in terms of the issue of whether we are part of the UK or a united Ireland, but I make the point to stress that we have the ability to take our own decisions and are a separate place in how we are seen by the UK as a whole, the European Union and the wider world.

The consequences and implications of Brexit will be massive and far-reaching for Northern Ireland, the UK as a whole, the island of Ireland and, indeed, the rest of the European Union. A lot of dominoes could fall over the coming months and years. We have set ourselves on a path, but we do not know our destination. Certainly, staying in the European Union had a certain risk and uncertainty, but that is nothing like where we find ourselves today.

I hear comments from people, most recently Lord Morrow, about the importance of taking control. That was the mantra of those who advocated taking us out of the European Union. Let us be clear: no one is in control. We have an absolute mess. We have Boris Johnson scrambling around, as one commentator put it, trying to find the pin to put back into the hand grenade that he has set off. There is no leadership whatever, and no one is taking control of the situation. There was no plan before for what would happen in the case of a vote to leave, and there is no plan today for where we are going.

Mr Agnew: I thank the Member for giving way. Does he agree that, like many of the arguments of the "Leave" campaign, "Take control" was an English argument? As we have seen, with the majority of people in Northern Ireland having voted to remain, we are not actually in control.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Dr Farry: I concur with the Member's point.

Mr Allister: Will the Member give way?

Dr Farry: No, I need to press on. Let me also be clear about the argument that this is about the ordinary people versus the elites or the Establishment. We have had a lot of comments that have been very disparaging of people who voted to stay in: they are ordinary people as well. This is, fundamentally, a battle within the Tory Establishment. It is not the Establishment versus the people; this is a fight within the Tory Establishment, with the people of the UK as their plaything.

Mr Stalford: I thank the Member for giving way. When I was on the referendum programme on the night that the votes were being counted, the very first thing that I said was this: "I love my country, and I believe that the people who voted to remain love their country as well". I do not think that anyone will be able to point to anything that either I or any of my colleagues have said that disparages people who voted to remain.

Dr Farry: At the start of the Member's comments, he referred to the victory of the ordinary people: the people on the other side of the argument are also ordinary people. Hopefully, that addresses that.

Let me come to the crux of the issue of where we find ourselves as an Executive and an Assembly. This is for the DUP in particular: Northern Ireland has voted to remain. That is a matter of fact. We are also a separate entity in the context of the overall UK. There is an issue for the First Minister as to whether she and her party will recognise those special circumstances in how we move ahead. Arising from that, will there be the capacity in the Executive —

Lord Morrow: Will the Member give way?

Dr Farry: I need to move on, sorry. Will there be the capacity in the Executive and the Assembly to argue for Northern Ireland in taking our special circumstances into account?

Will there be any capacity to seek special modifications or recognition of any special status for Northern Ireland? Those are issues that are very much on the minds of the people and business community of Northern Ireland today.

1.30 pm

Let us be clear that there are many, many issues for us to address: access to the single market, which, let us not kid ourselves, is the single biggest reason why companies want to invest in Northern Ireland; the future of our public finances, which are already precarious; and the fact that we face a shrinkage of the Northern Ireland economy. For the benefit of Lord Morrow, the reason why we are saying that we are the sixth largest economy rather than the fifth is that, with the “Leave” vote, France overtook the UK overnight. It has implications for the Good Friday Agreement and for where our border will be in terms of the free movement of people and goods. These are all issues that the Executive have to take —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I ask the Member to bring his remarks to a close.

Dr Farry: — control of and provide us with answers.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Many Members are making comments from a sedentary position. I ask them to refrain from doing so.

Mr Aiken: The Ulster Unionist Party respects the wishes of the British people, whilst clearly recognising that Northern Ireland and Scotland have, by a considerable majority, voted to remain in the EU. It is clear that a significant constitutional crisis, the like of which the United Kingdom has rarely seen, is occurring. Indeed, the turmoil in the country, the markets, and the palpable lack of confidence being shown in our political system are undermining Northern Ireland and, in particular, our economy. We have already heard from many business leaders that there will be a slowdown in investment and a shutting down of the flow of FDI until confidence in the UK is restored.

What we do know is that, when the United Kingdom's economy slows down, the Northern Ireland economy stalls or goes into deep recession. We hope that we are wrong, but hope is no basis for planning, helping to secure and retain jobs, and restoring confidence. We also know that, over the coming months and years, the economy of Northern Ireland will be very low on the priority list of the United Kingdom Government, especially as the issues of Scotland, a possible general election, gaining trading arrangements with the EU and restoring faith in the United Kingdom political system will take up the majority of our

mainland politicians' time. We must act now to take control of our economy in the best interests of Northern Ireland.

As a party, we call on the Northern Ireland Executive urgently to enact discussions and think about legislating to help to recover confidence in our business sector, especially for our manufacturing, agribusiness, tourism and retail sectors and, above all, our many small to medium-sized enterprises. Rather than just stating the obvious and rapidly growing problems, we ask that some of these proposals are given full consideration. We ask the Executive, particularly the Economy, Infrastructure and Finance Ministers, to consider talking to the Bank of England and the Treasury to look to gain some access to infrastructure support funds. We can look at the amount of quantitative easing that has already been passed to the banks, which is in the region of £250 billion. We, as Northern Ireland, should be making a special case to look for additional funding to be able to get us through this situation. We need to stimulate our economy. We should be looking immediately at tax reductions, particularly corporation tax, stimulating our tourist sector and scrapping things like air passenger duty. We know that those may not be devolved matters, but the situation has changed, and we need to look forward.

We could be improving support for our retail sector and looking at taking on the initiatives that the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) has raised about retail business rate relief. We should also start the process of easing our renewable energy requirements for our energy industry to reduce the cost of energy in Northern Ireland. That might be a benefit of us coming out of the EU.

We need to take immediate provision to invest in our universities. We have already heard their vice chancellors talking about the £55 million black hole. We need to be preparing Northern Ireland to be as competitive as possible, particularly since we are heading into such difficult times. We should be looking to see how we can fast-track infrastructure developments across the board. We need to make Northern Ireland competitive. If we do not do it, nobody else will. I would like the Executive, particularly the First Minister and deputy First Minister — thank you very much for coming in, deputy First Minister — to put Northern Ireland first. If we do not fight for the Northern Ireland economy, nobody else will.

Mr Bell: What has become very clear is that the United Kingdom has spoken conclusively. I accept that there were different views and different arguments and that some of the arguments on either side may not have been presented as well as they could. However, the United Kingdom has spoken. This was not an individual country referendum; it was a United Kingdom referendum, and it has spoken, so it is now incumbent upon every politician to follow the people's instructions. The result is clear, so now is the time for all of us to unite and seize what I believe will be a golden opportunity for all of the people of the United Kingdom.

We do not need to worry about some of the fears that were out there. The Chancellor was out this morning: there is not going to be an emergency punishment Budget. I do not think that I have heard any air-raid sirens: there is not going to be world war III.

Ms Armstrong: Will the Member give way?

Mr Bell: I will in a moment. We are not going to see our economy significantly damaged, given the opportunities that are opening up. As I understand it, when we joined the European Union, it had 36% of the world's economy; today, it has 17%. The United Kingdom — our United Kingdom — which has voted to take back control, set its own taxes and free itself to make laws that serve the people of the UK, is one of only two of the current 28 members of the European Union that do more trade with the rest of the world than with the EU. So, now is the time.

To pensioners, I say that, in an ageist way, older people have been discriminated against and derogatory things have been said about you. I am sure that I am not alone in having heard derogatory remarks such as, "These people who are voting do not have long to live" — disgraceful comments.

We should remember that, while youth unemployment is falling in Northern Ireland, we seem to want, according to the Member opposite, to be shackled with the youth unemployment of Greece, at 48·9%; Spain at 45·3%; Croatia at 40·3%; Italy at 39·1%.

Dr Farry: Will the Member give way?

Mr Bell: Seriously? At 13·4%, by the official figures of the UK of under-25s, we want to fail our people in the way that others have been failed by the European Union? I do not think our young people will buy that argument.

Mr Lyons: Will the Member give way?

Mr Bell: The Member opposite first, and then I will give way.

Dr Farry: I thank the Member for giving way. The danger of quoting statistics. Will he also, if he has the list of youth unemployment figures, quote the figures from the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Austria and also, just outside the EU but part of the single market, Switzerland?

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr Bell: Thank you. I will continue for the Member if he wants: Cyprus 30·5%, Portugal 30%, Belgium 25%, France 24·6%.

Mr Lyons: I thank the Member for giving way. Would he agree with me that there has been an awful lot of negativity from those who lost the referendum, and although we can understand that some people are very disappointed with the result and can empathise with them, should our focus now be that, as the result has been declared, everybody should accept it and look in a positive way at how we can build an even better country?

Mr Bell: Absolutely. We need to move forward positively. What has the BDI, the German equivalent of the CBI, told us today? Let us just take a moment, "Free trade will continue; access to the single market will continue". The only thing that we seem to be freed from is the sclerotic and opaque legislation of the corpus of European Union law from which there can be no appeal.

It is a golden opportunity for the United Kingdom, but let me thank the older people of this country. Because while others may choose to be derogatory about them, it was the older people of this country who founded and built our National Health Service; it was the pensioners of this country who won two world wars; they built our industry

and made the UK the fifth largest economy in the world. Is anybody telling me that, with an economy to the value of, I believe, £2·31 million sterling, we cannot build a future for our young people?

Is anybody telling me that, with the third largest defence capability on this planet, we are not capable of defending our own people?

Mr Aiken: I thank the Member for giving way.

Mr Stalford: He gave way to me. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Aiken: Ach, come on — Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr Stalford: I am grateful to the Member for giving way. A Member from Belfast South said that the people she has been speaking to have all been in agreement with her that this is a dreadful thing. Is that not exactly what was wrong with the "Remain" campaign: you talked only to people who agreed with you?

Mr Bell: I have 10 seconds.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Yes, 10 seconds. It might be useful when you are taking an intervention to identify who you are taking it from.

Mr Bell: To conclude in 10 seconds, what the global economy needs into the future is flexibility, adaptability and for us to have control over our own destiny. That is why I believe the majority of the UK —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member's time is up.

Mr Bell: That is why —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member's time is up.

Mr Bell: To be honest with you, Mike —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member please —

Mr Bell: Your defence is terrified because Arlene Foster's on fire.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member please take his seat? His time was up, and his time was called.

Ms Archibald: We heard a great deal this afternoon about uncertainty due to the result of last Thursday's referendum. Arguably, there is no sector more impacted than agriculture. The real problem is the uncertainty. Our farmers, and consequently our rural communities, have no idea of the outworkings or implications of this result. We raised this time and again throughout the referendum campaign, saying that those campaigning to leave had not outlined their plan for the agriculture sector upon an exit from the European Union.

We got platitudes that our farmers would, of course, still receive subsidies, but there was no information on what those subsidies might comprise. Taking into account that 9% of the total CAP funding from the EU to Britain and the North comes here to the Six Counties, it is clear that those subsidies are a very significant concern to farmers here. It seems that we are now in a situation where there is no plan and we have no idea what the future will hold for the sector.

There will obviously be a period when negotiations will take place, and we are being assured that, during that time, the funding that was committed will remain in place.

That funding is very significant, including some £1.9 billion of CAP funding and rural development programme funding. The problem is that we do not know when that period of negotiation will begin or how long it will last. Therefore, we do not know how long those funds be available.

It is important to reiterate how much our farmers rely on funding that the EU affords them. There were some £236 million in direct payments annually. Without those direct support payments, farm incomes would have been negative last year and in three of the previous five years. Any reduction in direct support would leave many of our farmers in severe financial difficulty, with very negative implications for agricultural —

Mr Clarke: Will the Member give way?

Ms Archibald: Go ahead.

Mr Clarke: I presume the Member voted to remain. Could she have given farmers the assurance that the subsidies would have continued into the near future?

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member will have an extra minute.

Ms Archibald: We were certain that the direct payments would remain until 2020 in any situation.

I have not even touched on the impact on the rural sector. The last rural development programme had a very positive impact on our rural communities, with those communities able to access funding for community projects and rural infrastructure. The new rural development programme offered even greater potential, and we are now uncertain about how long that will last. Planned community programmes will likely suffer or could become untenable.

Now that we are looking at an exit from the EU there are other significant issues that need to be addressed, including legislative arrangements and trade arrangements etc, which affect all sectors, including agriculture. It should be pointed out that, although not part of the EU, Iceland, Norway, Lichtenstein etc, as part of the European Economic Area, have to comply for trade purposes with a range of food safety, environmental and veterinary legislation.

A major change has taken place —

Mr Bell: I thank the Member for giving way. Does she accept that Norway and Switzerland are first and second in the Legatum Prosperity index? They rejected the EU by 79% and 82% respectively.

Ms Archibald: My concern is with the North of Ireland and the issues for our farmers.

A major change has taken place over the last few days, and the uncertainty that has resulted has already affected our economy severely. It was mentioned earlier that it may have a short-term positive impact on export prices, but, in the longer term, the uncertainty will result in many farmers reconsidering their future in the industry, and that may impact on production. We need direction, and we need some certainty for all sectors of our society.

1.45 pm

Mr McGlone: I feel that I have to reiterate for the benefit of some people why I bought into the European project. We have to clarify to ourselves why, in the first instance, it was set up. It is the world's largest international peace

process. Fundamentally, that is what was at stake. As Europe was ravaged after two world wars, people and leaders saw the need to come together in the spirit of peace and reconciliation, and, ultimately, in the spirit of accommodation of difference. In the week that is in it, with the anniversary of the Somme, I do not see any jocularly in anybody thinking that a world war is something to make jokes about. I feel that the spirit — the true spirit — of the EU is as important today as it was on previous occasions since its foundation.

Mrs Long: I thank the Member for giving way. Will he agree with me that it was never the case that "Remain" argued that an exit from the EU would lead to world war III? It was simply that we stated — quite correctly, as the Member said — that it had made a tangible contribution to stability and peace in Europe over the past number of years.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr McGlone: I thank the Member for making that comment. It is a crucial one. Members may not appreciate that, but that is the way that it is and the way that I see it. That is why, along with —

Mr Lyons: Will the Member give way?

Mr McGlone: Sorry, but I have other comments to make.

That is why I see it as being important for stability, important as a social driver and important for cultural accommodation and diversity within our communities. That stability is crucial. The fact is that 440,707 people in Northern Ireland bought that. They saw the importance of stability. They saw the importance of the future and of buying into it.

There are a number of other facts that we need to solidify around the Chamber. As a direct consequence of Thursday's vote, the UK slipped into sixth place as an economy, we saw the run on the currencies, and we have heard about firms moving their location. On that point, I sat as Chair of the Enterprise Committee and took evidence on the important issue, as it was then, of corporation tax. Many of the people who gave evidence to that Committee, including key stakeholders and potential business investors and the like, saw access to the European markets on mainland Europe as a key factor in their making a decision to invest here. Those are the important things.

We have also seen the consequences of people taking a two-way bet by getting a further passport. Indeed, I have noticed people from all backgrounds doing that. The biggest lie of the lot, however, was the one about the £350 million, some or all of which was to go to the health service. Already, two of the authors of that misleading part of the campaign, Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage, have backed off from it. People bought that lie. They had concerns and they bought that lie, and now it has turned out to be exactly that.

On the economy and stability, a key element of exports from the North and of cooperation here is the rest of the island. I will just quote a person who came up to me. Now, I would hardly go as far as to call him a left-wing radical. He is a lorry driver. He said to me, "Patsy, am I back to this stupidity of having to line up at the border for a couple of hours to get clearance on my delivery documents if I am travelling down to County Clare?". He often travels there.

That is a question from someone who is hardly a member of the ruling political elite.

I will move on to other elements. One young mum came to me on Friday morning in tears, thinking about the future of her kids and the stability of the society that she was looking at now. Was she one of the elite, a lefty liberal, or a member of the political establishment that has been referred to? No, I do not think so. I am talking about small farmers concerned about single farm payments; I am talking about people who saw opportunities under the local action group (LAG) programme to develop projects in our rural communities to offset the problems and difficulties that they are having with world trade prices for their beef and milk. The little man is deeply concerned about the instability that has been brought about by this. Students are concerned about the Horizon 2020 programme. What about Peace money for community groups? I attended the opening of a mental health charity on Friday morning. One third of its project money comes from the —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member bring his remarks to a close?

Mr McGlone: European social fund. There is also concern about Erasmus from schools.

Mr Beggs: Everyone in Northern Ireland — certainly everyone in here — purports to be a democrat. We should reflect on what that means. There is a responsibility on everyone to accept democratic decisions. Some, from their comments, appear to dispute the referendum decision. I remind everyone that, in the Belfast Agreement, it was agreed that Northern Ireland would remain in the United Kingdom until the people of Northern Ireland decide otherwise. I accept that there is a great deal of uncertainty about the future of the economy of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom because of the decision; nevertheless, it is democratically accepted that Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom and will remain so. We have to accept the decision that was taken in the national United Kingdom referendum, irrespective of what side of the argument anyone was on. We need to get away from the futile argument of whether it will apply here or in Scotland. It will apply here. Let us move on and try to get the debate onto the more constructive ground of how we must react.

Northern Ireland businesses and their employees need clarity and certainty, and they want to know what can be done to give that to them. We need to accept that the decision has been taken and get on to the debate about what future measures come in. What else can we do to provide protection? Some 40% of our exports in the United Kingdom — there is no reason to think that it is any different here — go to the EU. We must ensure that those companies continue to export and to sell their goods and that employees will still be employed. Let us get away from the futile argument that there has been here.

Mr Lyons: I thank the Member for giving way. Is it not important for the House, and, indeed, the country, to remember that, just because we have left the European Union, we are not severing all ties with it? It is still going to be an important trading partner. Further to Mr McGlone's comments, we can still have cooperation and can foster good relationships with the European Union, even though we are outside it.

Mr Beggs: I will come to that later. It is not just about the firms exporting in Northern Ireland. For anybody who deals

with a firm that exports to Europe, their business could be affected if we do not get stable grounds for business in Northern Ireland. For those who trade with others, there could be implications for their business.

Equally, there are ramifications for the many organisations in Northern Ireland that have, to date, received European grants, such as the social fund, the Peace fund, the regional development fund and funding for the rural community. There needs to be greater clarity and certainty going forward. What are the implications for those? We also have the particular issue in Northern Ireland of the land border. There is considerable trade across that land border. Whether it is Caterpillar in Larne selling a major generator to a company in the Republic of Ireland or a small farmer selling some of his milk to a creamery in Monaghan, there are possible implications. We need to ensure that trade will continue and that people will continue to be employed in Northern Ireland. Enough about decisions in the past; the decision has been taken. We now need solutions so that trade can occur and companies can continue in business.

We must not dwell on the past. We must look at what the future arrangements will be and at what will be best from a United Kingdom and Northern Ireland perspective, and we must try to give reassurance. I draw Members' attention to a paper from Dr Richard North and Robert Oulds of the Bruges group, entitled 'The Market Solution'. It discusses the need for compromise and for staging posts in their ideal future solution. There are choices available, but anyone here has to recognise that it takes decades to get a bespoke agreement with the European community.

Look at the recent trade agreement with Canada; and the Swiss model has transformed over years. Are we looking for a Swiss model or for a Norwegian model? We will probably have to accept something off the shelf that will come reasonably quickly or else it will take years and years, which we cannot afford. We have to accept what there is in some of these models; there are things that some people will not like. We will have freedom of trade, which is essential for our companies and for business, but there will also be freedom of movement of people, some of which has been opposed. There is also the issue of having to pay a significant tax for access to Europe.

We need solutions and we need to move this forward. While we have been speaking, the pound is now at a low. It has gone down further and it is now at €1.20. This is affecting businesses and real jobs in our economy, and we need solutions. We need to get away from futile arguments and get solutions that will help our companies and businesses and protect jobs for the future.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: As Question Time begins at 2.00 pm, I suggest that the House takes its ease until then. The debate will continue after Question Time, when the next Member to speak will be Alex Attwood.

The debate stood suspended.

2.00 pm

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Oral Answers to Questions

The Executive Office

Mr Speaker: I remind the House that questions 6 and 12 have been withdrawn.

Victims: Service Delivery

1. **Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with the Victims and Survivors Service on the long-term sustainability of service delivery for victims. (AQO 119/16-21)

Mrs Foster (The First Minister): With your permission, Mr Speaker, I will ask junior Minister Ross to answer the question.

Mr Ross (Junior Minister, The Executive Office): Our Department has been working in close collaboration with the Victims and Survivors Service and the Commission for Victims and Survivors to develop a comprehensive, sustainable and responsive service that meets the needs of all victims. This has achieved significant improvements in the delivery of services, maintaining required levels of funding whilst improving and extending partnership working on the ground. This financial year, over £14 million has been allocated to victims' services, demonstrating our continued commitment to ensuring that victims receive the best possible services.

Mr Eastwood: I thank the Minister for his answer. Given the fact that the Victims and Survivors Service has been named as a lead partner along with his Department in a Peace IV project for victims and survivors, the application is currently finishing and, I think, the business plan is in for £17.6 million over three years, what is the Minister's view on what Thursday's decision will mean for that £17.6 million and the impact on victims?

Mr Ross: The Member is right that a total of £17.6 million is being allocated to the victims element of the Peace IV programme. The Victims and Survivors Service stage 1 application was successfully approved by Peace IV on 11 May. A detailed stage 2 application must be submitted by today. I recognise why he raises the issue, but of course he will understand that we have at least two more years for that programme to run, given that article 50 will not be invoked immediately. We plan to continue to make sure that we get the funding from that Peace IV initiative. In the meantime, we will also make sure that we have a more sustainable programme moving forward, so that victims and survivors, individually and in groups, maintain the levels of funding.

Mr Nesbitt: I think that I am right in saying that it is the junior Minister's first Question Time: if so, I welcome him to the House and wish him well. He will be aware that a review is being commissioned of the 10-year strategy for victims and survivors. What has been his Department's input to drawing up and initiating that review? Specifically, can he tell the House the review's terms of reference?

Mr Ross: That collaborative design programme has been made up from personnel from the Department, the Victims and Survivors Service and the Commission for Victims and Survivors to ensure that development of an improved service delivery model is capable of meeting the needs of victims and survivors. Work will continue throughout 2016-17 to progress the strands of work. We will seek input from the sector on the redesign of the service delivery model. There has been and continues to be extensive engagement with the victims sector on how those services can be improved, including a series of workshops that have identified key priorities, such as the greater need for partnership working. The recommendations of that report will improve the service delivery model over the period from 2017 to 2020. We will work to continue, throughout this year, to progress the strands of work of that collaborative design project. Input will be sought from the sector on the development of the most appropriate service delivery model.

Mrs Cameron: I welcome the junior Minister to his first Question Time and congratulate him on his role. Can he outline what the mental trauma service will deliver as part of the service delivery to victims?

Mr Ross: The Member will be aware that the Stormont House Agreement included commitments on victims and survivors. The setting up of a leading mental health service was announced by the former Health Minister on 10 September 2015. That position was reaffirmed by the Minister at a conference on 23 and 24 November. Additionally, initial funding of £175,000 for early set-up costs for the new mental trauma service was announced by the former Health Minister on 24 February this year. The new service model will support the delivery of an effective range of services through an integrated service step care model and governed by a partnership agreement between the Victims and Survivors Service, the statutory service and voluntary and community sector providers. That partnership agreement is under development and will cover areas including the interface between the voluntary and community sector and the health and social care trusts, referral protocols, linkages, monitoring and evaluation and funding.

Mr Lynch: What engagements have taken place with victims' representative groups in services that have been provided?

Mr Ross: There is regular contact with victims' and survivors' groups and, indeed, individuals. I have met them, as has the First Minister. That engagement is absolutely crucial in making sure that we deliver appropriate services, and it will continue over the months ahead.

Mr Speaker: Just before we move on to Mr Douglas, will the junior Minister adjust his mic? It is a bit difficult for the sound to be picked up.

Social Investment Fund: East Belfast

2. **Mr Douglas** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on social investment fund projects in East Belfast. (AQO 120/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Substantial progress has been made in East Belfast, with funding of £6.5 million committed. Completed projects include the Bryson Street surgery, which opened

in April and has transformed a derelict site into a purpose-built community doctors' surgery delivering vital healthcare to the local community. The Best of the East visitor centre also recently completed a refurbishment and opens in the coming weeks, providing a valuable tourism hub and social enterprise opportunities. Additionally, two revenue projects are in the process of procuring organisations to deliver services on the ground: the community education project and the employability project. Work continues on the remaining projects.

Mr Douglas: I thank the First Minister for her answer and for going out to the Bridges centre recently. She will agree, I am sure, that it is a smashing project. Apart from East Belfast, will she update the House on the progress of the social investment fund across Northern Ireland?

Mrs Foster: I enjoyed my visit to the Bryson Street surgery; it is a wonderful example of what the social investment fund has been able to achieve across Northern Ireland. I had the opportunity to visit the projects that have finished, and I look forward to visiting many more.

As I indicated to the Committee when the deputy First Minister and I were before it just a couple of weeks ago, the current project commitments have associated costs of over £70 million. Spend from 1 April 2012 to the end of May 2016 is over £10 million and is expected to increase to over £30 million in this financial year. As of June 2016, 10 revenue projects have service delivery organisations appointed and have formally commenced delivery in local communities. They will have significant spend this year as they maximise the number of participants over the next few months and deliver the services throughout the remainder of the year. A total of 21 capital projects have commenced detailed design or construction and are incurring associated costs. Therefore, this is a big spend year for the social investment fund. It also reflects the progress made over the last year.

Mr Attwood: First, I welcome the junior Minister. There is a widespread view that, as Justice Chair, he went some way towards earning that nomination.

Are there any plans in the First Minister's head or in her Department for a SIF II? Is it not better that that approach to neighbourhood renewal is delivered through neighbourhood renewal? Does she agree that even neighbourhood renewal is now in jeopardy, given its reliance on European funding, which will clearly be uncertain two years from now?

Mrs Foster: Thank you very much for confirming my wise decision on my junior Minister; I will take that from you, Minister Attwood. There are no plans for a SIF II at present. We are still very much engaged in making sure that we deliver SIF I, and I am pleased to say that that is now happening. We recognise that, because it was new, innovative and imaginative, it had some teething problems, but those issues are being dealt with very effectively.

Therefore, we encourage participants in SIF to continue to work with our officials and to make things happen on the ground. You can touch and feel the capital projects, but, for me, some of the most exciting projects under SIF have been revenue projects, which are about making sure that people are employable in areas where they may have difficulties finding employment. Those will be great legacy projects, and I look forward to them being rolled out.

Dr Farry: Does the First Minister recognise that a number of Departments that dealt with deprivation and skills had their budget cut more severely in order to create the social investment fund and that they are better placed to spend money efficiently, effectively and with stronger governance than the situation that prevails with the social investment fund at present?

Mrs Foster: Of course, Mr Farry fails to recognise that we are in a different era now. We are in an era of working right across government and one in which the published Programme for Government includes firm outcomes. The deputy First Minister and I feel very strongly that we want outcomes as opposed to processes, and SIF will, I think, give us outcomes right across Departments. The Member said that other Departments might have been better placed, but that is not the era that we are in now. We are in an era of joined-up government, making sure that everyone knows where we want to be in five and 10 years' time, and we will use programmes such as this to deliver on that.

Mr Maskey: I thank the Minister for her responses so far. She has begun to address some of these matters, but will she outline the very positive impact that SIF programmes have had on local communities?

Mrs Foster: As I said, some revenue projects are very exciting. We are investing £18.5 million in employment-focused projects, and, through that, supporting over 500 people through training and paid work placements. A sum of £5.7 million has been invested in early intervention projects across the SIF zones, and almost 1,200 participants are availing themselves of those services. Feedback from parents has been encouraging insofar as we are changing the behaviours of young people who otherwise may even have found themselves in care — it is as radical as that — and I think that we should be very proud that we are helping those young people to realise their potential.

Another area that we are focusing on is education. With maths and English support at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and literacy support for primary-school children, we are making a very practical difference to the lives of those young people.

FOI Requests: Deadline

3. **Mr Smith** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what proportion of Freedom of Information requests submitted to their Department between 2011-16 were answered within the 20-day deadline. (AQO 121/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Between 1 January 2011 and 17 June 2016, our Department received 763 valid freedom of information (FOI) requests, of which 373 — 49% — were answered within 20 working days.

Mr Smith: I thank the First Minister for her answer. Given that, during the last mandate, the Executive Office, under its former title of OFMDFM, found itself at the top of the list of complaints made to the Information Commissioner about Executive Departments, what plans have been put in place to ensure public confidence in transparency within the Department?

Mrs Foster: I hope — indeed, I believe — that we have started on a good footing in this mandate. Of four requests

under consideration, none are beyond the deadline of 20 working days. We have made a good start. It is recognised that OFMDFM is not like any other Department. We receive a lot of requests that are sensitive, and many are very political in nature. In responding to requests, we have to give them all due consideration and make sure that we answer them in the appropriate way for the person making them. It also has to be recognised — it is political reality — that the ministerial input in releasing freedom of information requests has to be agreed between two political parties. We recognise that there were difficulties in the past and are determined to try to deal with those issues in the future.

2.15 pm

Mr Milne: Thank you, Minister, for your answers thus far. What measures are being taken to improve performance even further?

Mrs Foster: As everyone is probably aware, senior civil servants must approve draft responses to FOI requests. Departmental directors have been directed that they must allocate sufficient resources to ensure that FOI requests are responded to within the statutory timescales.

We are very much aware of the difficulties of the past and are trying to deal with those. We have also put in place enhanced systems for the tracking and monitoring of requests to make sure that we encourage adherence to deadlines. FOI performance is also reviewed at a weekly senior management meeting. We have put in place measures to try to deal with issues that have arisen in the past.

'A Fresh Start': Update

4. **Mr Girvan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of 'A Fresh Start'. (AQO 122/16-21)

Mrs Foster: We continue to make good progress on implementing the commitments that we made in 'A Fresh Start'. We are due to meet the Secretary of State and the Irish Government on Wednesday afternoon to discuss implementation, after which, it is our intention to publish a progress report. We believe that we have a good story to tell. In the last few weeks, for example, we have published the three-person panel report on disbanding paramilitary groups and appointed the co-chairs of the new Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition. We will also finalise the membership of the civic advisory panel shortly.

Mr Girvan: I thank the First Minister for her answer. In the Fresh Start Agreement, reference was made to corporation tax and how it would be delivered. As a consequence of the referendum vote and the outcome on Friday, does the First Minister agree that the Azores judgement, which would have had a major financial impact on Northern Ireland, is no longer a priority?

Mrs Foster: Of course, one of the difficulties with a reduction in corporation tax was that we would have to pay for it out of our block grant allocation because of a European Union ruling — the Azores judgement. We will want to explore with Her Majesty's Treasury, as a matter of some urgency, what impact the decision on Thursday has to that removal from our block, because, of course, we have committed to the devolution of corporation tax

powers by April 2018. We will want to try to look at the affordability of all that. I assure the Member that that is one of the issues that we wish to speak to the Prime Minister and the Treasury about. It is one of many issues, but it is one that we have on our radar.

Mr McKay: Will the First Minister give us a more detailed update on the civic advisory panel? Would she also agree that, as we face what is, undoubtedly, a political and economic abyss, it is more important than ever that we hear from civic voices in society as well as political leadership?

Mrs Foster: On the first question about the civic advisory panel, I can advise the Member that the deputy First Minister and I have spoken about that for a number of weeks and that we hope to be able to make an announcement about it in the coming weeks. That is in active discussions at present. As I said, we have made good progress on the paramilitary panel and the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition and, indeed, look forward to working with that commission.

It will not surprise the Member to know that I believe that we have a huge moment of opportunity, ambition and potential. It is up to us in the Executive Office to make sure that we are well equipped to deal with that potential and ambition. My ministerial colleagues are already tasking their officials to look at where Europe has been a drag on our competitiveness, our flexibility and our ability to do business in an innovative and imaginative way. I look forward to hearing from ministerial colleagues on all those issues because, of course, that will form part of how we move forward in Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

Ms Mallon: Can the First Minister confirm whether it is the case, as London clearly sees it, that any negotiation on second-round effects of the devolution of corporation tax will be off the table in the event of the devolution of corporation tax?

Mrs Foster: Of course, they were being quite aggressive on those issues, but, because of the vote on Thursday, the issue of second-round impacts, never mind the cost, is something that we will want to revisit. I am sure the Finance Minister will want to look at all those issues. This gives us an opportunity to revisit the issues where we were having difficulties with the second-hand effects.

Ms Armstrong: Will the First Minister guarantee that the action plan to tackle paramilitarism will be published by the end of June, which is Thursday of this week, as committed to on page 17 of the Fresh Start Agreement?

Mrs Foster: Certainly, it is our hope that we will have it by then. We are working with our colleague the Justice Minister to have the action plan in place. I think we have received a draft of it, and we are discussing it at the moment. We hope to discuss it further at the Executive Committee on Wednesday of this week.

Maze/Long Kesh: Update

5. **Mr Butler** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Maze/Long Kesh site. (AQO 123/16-21)

7. **Mr Lunn** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what work is being done by their Department to develop a proposal for the regeneration of the Maze/Long Kesh site. (AQO 125/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Mr Speaker, with your permission, I will answer questions 5 and 7 together.

There is no current agreement on the Maze/Long Kesh site issues. It is a prime site in a key location, and we hope we can find a resolution that will see the site developed.

Mr Butler: I thank the First Minister for her answer. Perhaps the First Minister can outline the level of engagement she has had with potential investors for that site, where, we were once told, there was the potential to create 5,000 jobs.

Mrs Foster: Of course, there is great potential on the Maze/Long Kesh site, but, unfortunately, there is not political agreement on how we can move forward at present. That does not mean that nothing is happening on the site. The Member, in particular, will be aware of the yet again fabulous Royal Ulster Agricultural Society show that happened on the Maze/Long Kesh site in May of this year. As with the three previous shows, this year's show was regarded as extremely successful. Attendance figures are not yet available, but the corporation has indicated that in excess of 100,000 people attended this year's show. Whilst we continue to hope that we can find a resolution on the future development of the MLK site, there is still activity on the site.

Mr Lunn: I thank the First Minister for her answer. Given that the Maze project was originally to benefit from considerable EU funding — indeed, we lost a tranche of funding due to our inability to agree about this in the past — how do the Executive expect to fund future investment if there is no EU funding available in the future?

Mrs Foster: To be blunt, other funds are available, whether it is private funding or other investors coming in from other parts of the world having shown interest in the MLK site. We need to find a way forward on the MLK site. I recognise that, and the deputy First Minister recognises that, therefore, for us, it is something we need to grapple with and get down to dealing with in the near future.

Ms Lockhart: I thank the First Minister for her answer. Will the First Minister agree to engage in further discussions about the MLK site to see whether a solution can be achieved that can command community support and allow the site to be developed in the future?

Mrs Foster: Absolutely. The deputy First Minister and I intend to have further discussions on the MLK site probably over the summer and into the autumn. It is very much in our in tray. We recognise the potential of the site. It is because we recognise the potential of the site that we want to make good things happen on it. So, yes, we will engage again to make sure that that happens.

Mr Allister: Does the First Minister continue to share the view to which her predecessor was brought in August 2013 that there is no prevailing basis on which the peace centre can proceed at the Maze? Is that still her position?

Mrs Foster: Yes, that is still my position.

Delivering Social Change: Older People

8. **Mr O'Dowd** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how their Department is addressing issues affecting older people in relation to the Delivering Social Change framework. (AQO 126/16-21)

Mrs Foster: A Delivering Social Change framework programme led by the Department of Health and jointly funded with Atlantic Philanthropies focuses on dementia services and includes a package of dementia projects that aim to transform the commissioning, design and delivery of dementia services. The programme makes a significant improvement in the quality of care and support for people — this particularly affects older people — to maintain their independence and to live independently with the condition for as long as possible and delivers an improved understanding of dementia in wider society. Policy responsibility for older people transferred to the Department for Communities on 9 May.

Mr O'Dowd: I thank the First Minister for her response. Clearly, dementia is an issue of topical debate and concern to many in our society. Can the Minister detail some of the elements of the programme?

Mrs Foster: Absolutely. Dementia has, I think, affected every family in Northern Ireland, not unlike cancer. I very much welcome the work that is ongoing through the project. It consists of three discrete work streams. The first is raising awareness and information and support. The second is training and development and delirium. The third is on short breaks and support to carers. I think that we all recognise that support to carers in particular is a fundamental piece of work. We are all too aware of the mental stress that is put on people who are caring for a loved one with dementia. They need help and support, and they need to get away and have respite. We therefore very much welcome the support for carers that is being delivered by all five trusts but led by the Member's own Southern Health and Social Care Trust. Three providers have now been appointed to cover the other four trust areas, and the contract for the southern area has recently been advertised, with a closing date of 4 July 2016. It is in place, it is working, and I value the work that it does.

Mr Logan: Where does the First Minister see the future of the Delivering Social Change programme?

Mrs Foster: I believe that the Delivering Social Change project and programme has pioneered the co-design way of doing things, and the partnership approach that has been engaged in in that project is actually helping us to develop the way in which we want to roll out the Programme for Government framework. The Programme for Government framework is very reflective of the principles and objectives of Delivering Social Change. It really has led the way for the outcomes-focused Programme for Government, and I think that it offers real potential to guide further changes that we want to see emerging in respect of the Programme for Government. It has worked well, and we will use the processes now to help us to deliver on the Programme for Government whilst engaging still with our partners in Atlantic Philanthropies.

Civic Advisory Panel: Update

9. **Mr McMullan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the civic advisory panel. (AQO 127/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Steps for the establishment of the civic advisory panel were set out in the Stormont Agreement and implementation plan. It anticipates a panel of six people, with members, including the chair, being identified and appointed by then OFMDFM — now the Executive

Office — and the panel being tasked by the Executive to consider specific strategic issues relevant to the Programme for Government and report to the Executive, although it may also propose subjects that it wishes to consider and seek agreement from the Executive to do so. As I have indicated, consideration is currently being given to identifying and appointing panel members.

Mr McMullan: I thank the Minister for her answer. Can the Minister tell us how this new body will differ from the previous Civic Forum?

Mrs Foster: The Civic Forum, which operated for just two years between 2000 and 2002, was not then reconvened when devolution was restored in 2007. Back between 2000 and 2002, the purpose of the forum was to provide views on social, economic and, indeed, cultural matters. The Stormont House Agreement provides for the establishment of a civic advisory panel as the new model for civic engagement. I think that it will be more focused because it will be a lot smaller, and it is envisaged that it will be on a non-statutory basis. Every effort will be made to minimise administration costs in connection with the new civic panel.

2.30 pm

Mr Speaker: That ends the period for listed questions. We now move on to 15 minutes of topical questions.

EU Referendum: NI “Remain” Mandate

T1. **Ms Mallon** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the First Minister accepts that the people of Northern Ireland have expressed their democratic will by sending a clear instruction to the First Minister and the deputy First Minister that they want to remain in the EU, and to outline how the First Minister intends to act on that mandated instruction. (AQT 96/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Of course, the mandated instruction was not to this place. The mandated instruction was to the United Kingdom Parliament. As I think Mr Allister pointed out in an intervention earlier today, when we voted on Thursday, we were asked whether we wanted the United Kingdom to leave the European Union or to remain. I do, of course, accept that the majority of people in Northern Ireland — mostly in the west of the Province, which I represent — decided that they wanted to remain in the European Union. There is no real surprise there. At the beginning of the referendum campaign, we were told that up to 75% would vote to remain in the European Union. As it turned out, it was 56% and 44%.

I have heard a lot said today, principally from the Member's party, about respecting the 55% who voted Remain, and I will, as will the deputy First Minister, respect that view. However, the Member has to respect the view that 44% of people in Northern Ireland voted to leave, and the United Kingdom, which is the member state that engages with the European Union, voted to leave.

We can talk about all these different computations, but the campaign is over, the vote has been taken, and now our focus in the Executive, particularly between the deputy First Minister and me, is to make sure that Northern Ireland's best interests are preserved in the negotiations to leave.

Ms Mallon: I welcome the fact that our First Minister respects that democratic view, but I think that what people

want to know here is how she will act on what was their clearly expressed democratic will.

Mrs Foster: When I indicated what our party position would be, I said also — something that I repeated at the Executive Committee just a couple of weeks ago with the deputy First Minister — that whatever the outcome of the referendum, I would, after the referendum, work for the good of all the people of Northern Ireland in any negotiations. I know that there are a lot of people in Northern Ireland who are disappointed, there are a lot of people who are angry, and a lot of people who have made all sorts of terrible prophesies of doom. If others want to engage in navel-gazing, that is fine. My focus is on doing what is right for all the people of Northern Ireland in the negotiations that will be coming up very soon.

EU Referendum: Migrant Community

T2. **Mr Maskey** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the First Minister will join him and many others in assuring our migrant communities that they, and the contribution that they bring to our society, will continue to be much appreciated and welcomed in the future, in the context of the EU referendum result. (AQT 97/16-21)

Mrs Foster: I absolutely want to take the opportunity — I thank him for giving it to me, although I was probably going to touch on it during my wind-up to the debate, which is coming up soon — to reassure them that we absolutely value what they have contributed to Northern Ireland. I do not think that any right-thinking person would say anything different because we recognise how they have come into our society, how they have integrated, and how they are helping us to develop economically.

Mr Maskey: I thank the First Minister for that response. Obviously, I did expect that, and I very much appreciate it. However, would the First Minister again appeal to all other parties and representatives to equally make it clear publicly, where they need to do that, that migrant residents here are very welcome?

Mrs Foster: Absolutely. It is something that we should send out a strong message on from here today. The vote on Thursday was to leave the institutions of the European Union; it was not to leave Europe. We have close ties with the peoples of Europe, and those close ties will continue.

EU Referendum: Powers for the Assembly

T3. **Mr Lyons** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the First Minister agrees that, as a consequence of last Thursday's vote, there are now many new opportunities for the Assembly as a result of the powers that will be brought back that were previously ceded to the European Union. (AQT 98/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Yes. Over the weekend — maybe this is a sad reflection on me — I was reading a very good book, which I recommend to all Members, by John Bew on Viscount Castlereagh. When he was developing plans for the Act of Union in 1799 and 1800, he talked about the potential and ambition that could come from it. Likewise, I absolutely and fundamentally believe that this vote gives us the opportunity for ambition, innovation, flexibility and imagination. I hope that everybody steps up to the mark and takes that opportunity.

Mr Lyons: I thank the First Minister for her response. This morning, the European Commission said that the Republic of Ireland cannot abolish water charges. Does she agree that it is only by leaving the EU that Northern Ireland can escape the threat of imposed water charges?

Mrs Foster: We were aware of a threat from the European Union that it would insist that we brought in some charging for water services in Northern Ireland. That the threat has now been lifted by our leaving the European Union is something that I very much welcome. We opposed water charges again recently in our manifesto during the Assembly election. I note that the Republic of Ireland has been told by the Commission that it cannot get rid of water charges, and that is something for everyone to ponder on the opposite side.

EU State Aid Rules

T4. **Mr McCausland** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the First Minister agrees that one of the important benefits of an exit from the European Union is that Northern Ireland will no longer be bound by EU state aid rules, which have been negative and restrictive, and will, in a way not possible before, be able to support its local industries in building up their employment and capacity. (AQT 99/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Absolutely. I have been listening intently to the debate on the European Union and the UK's exit from it. I note that Mr Beggs talked about FG Wilson and the manufacturing that went on there. In the past, we were constrained, by state aid rules and energy policy, from stepping in and helping manufacturing companies. We all know that. We have been constrained in when we can intervene to help the mobile and broadband market because of state aid rules. I think that Mr Aiken mentioned air passenger duty as well: we have been really constrained in what we can do to increase connectivity while helping airlines and airports. So, there are opportunities. Of course, they all have to be costed; I recognise that fully. I am not suggesting that we have a free hand to do everything that we would wish to do, but there is more flexibility now and that is something that we need to explore.

Mr McCausland: Will the First Minister undertake to explore as fully as possible what opportunities there are to make Northern Ireland and, indeed, the United Kingdom as a whole much more economically competitive and, in that context, to consider what can be done to rebuild our fishing industry in Northern Ireland?

Mrs Foster: As I mentioned on Friday, the fishing industry will very much welcome the vote last Thursday. It has been given back some control over something that has been really constrained over the years, particularly when our Agriculture Minister was at the fisheries meeting in December. The industry will very much welcome that. I know that other ministerial colleagues are talking to their officials and asking them to assess where we can be more flexible and competitive. I welcome that. As I said before, I look forward to receiving information on how we can take that forward.

Euro 2016: Northern Ireland Football Team

T5. **Mr Frew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in an attempt to lift the doom and gloom being

felt by some Members by bringing a bit of light relief to the Chamber, whether the First Minister will take this opportunity to congratulate the Northern Ireland team on its performance at the European Championships and to pay tribute not only to the manager and the team but to the support staff who make it happen. (AQT 100/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Because I am in this privileged position, I had the opportunity to go out and be with the team on two occasions. Let me say that I am so proud of Michael O'Neill and the Northern Ireland football team. I have to mention, in particular, Michael McGovern, who is from my home town of Enniskillen. My goodness, that game with Germany was difficult to watch. I think I was behind the settee for most of it. It was an absolutely fabulous masterclass in football. I take the opportunity to thank the support staff as well. They were marvellous in the way in which they supported the team and provided information to all the fans, so that we knew what was going on through social media. They had a marvellous social media campaign that allowed everyone to keep in touch.

Mr Frew: I take the opportunity to thank the First Minister and the Chief Whip for allowing me the time off to follow my dreams. [Laughter.] Does the First Minister agree that the fans, both those in France and those who remained in the Province, did the country proud and sent messages and set a lasting legacy, not only in France but throughout the world?

Mrs Foster: At the start of the tournament, there was a lot of concern about fans because of some of the threats that were around and also because of, let us be honest, the English and the Russian fans. However, I am very pleased to say that the Northern Ireland fans, and Republic of Ireland fans, played a marvellous role. Both sets of fans were brilliant. They really lifted the spirits. 'Will Grigg's on fire' is now trending in France. Who would have thought it? And poor Will did not even get a kick of the ball. That just shows the quirkiness of our fans, and I thank them. There are many behind me who were out in France with the fans, and I thank them for their positivity and professionalism.

I also want to reflect on the fact that two fans lost their life when they were in France. It was really very sad to watch the images of Darren Rodgers's funeral and that of the other gentleman who died of a heart attack. We recognise that there were moments of great sadness, as well, during the campaign. We hope that their families take some comfort from the fact that they are part of a much wider family.

Ballymurphy Massacre: Truth and Justice

T6. **Mr Carroll** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the First Minister, having met the families last week, agrees that the families of those killed in the Ballymurphy massacre, who have been campaigning for justice since 1971, have the right to that justice, and to state whether her office will do all that it can to assist those families in their pursuit of truth and justice. (AQT 101/16-21)

Mrs Foster: Indeed, there are many families right across Northern Ireland who still pursue truth and justice. It is one of the saddest indictments of society in Northern Ireland that so many people who had loved ones cut away and murdered will never be able to have justice and closure. I spent some time with families yesterday in Killen, Castlederg. They lost loved ones to terrorism

along the Tyrone border. My message to them was this: I will not allow the past to be rewritten. I am very clear on that. There are some attempts to do that, and I will not countenance it.

Mr Carroll: I thank the First Minister for her response. The Ballymurphy families have been campaigning for justice for over 40 years since the massacre was committed. Eleven innocent victims were shot down, over a three-day period, in cold blood by the state. Their families have yet to receive any recognition of the atrocities committed at the hands of the state or, indeed, any legal redress for the crimes carried out. The years of grief and suffering for the families are a shocking indictment of a state that has sought to wipe its hands clean.

Mr Speaker: Mr Carroll, can you come to a question?

Mr Carroll: Will the First Minister support the call for an independent, international investigation to examine the circumstances surrounding all those deaths?

Mrs Foster: Of course, the dealing with the past part of Fresh Start is something which, we regret, could not be taken forward at that time. We are engaged in trying to move that forward; I am hopeful that we will be able to move it forward. Then all victims, and indeed those who have suffered in a very real and tangible way, will be able to get closure on their issues.

2.45 pm

Infrastructure

Mr Speaker: I welcome Mr Hazzard to his first Question Time as Minister.

Gortcorbies: Climbing Lane

1. **Mr Robinson** asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment of the provision of a climbing lane at Gortcorbies, on the A37 Coleraine to Limavady main traffic corridor. (AQO 133/16-21)

Mr Hazzard (The Minister for Infrastructure): A proposal to provide a climbing lane on the A37 Broad Road at Gortcorbies between Limavady and Coleraine has been developed by my Department. This project envisages the construction of a new road just to the north of the existing road to deliver a 2.4-kilometre length of climbing lane, providing a positive overtaking opportunity that would reduce queues and the potential for collisions caused by driver frustration. The scheme would complement the existing lane on the Coleraine side of the mountain. As the House will be aware, all capital road improvement schemes must compete for funding alongside other Executive priorities. I must, therefore, prioritise spending on those areas with the greatest need.

My Department remains committed to improving connections for people and goods and services, and I have already stated my commitment to two of the Executive's flagship projects to improve road connections to the north-west. As such, my Department is pressing ahead with the plans for dualling of parts of the A6 and dualling of the A5. Currently, no funding is available for this project. However, a climbing lane at this location has

benefits and will, therefore, be considered further should further funding become available.

Mr Robinson: I thank the Minister for his response, which sounded fairly positive. As this is a vital tourist and economic road link between Londonderry, Limavady and the north coast and there is road accident potential, will he try to prioritise this stretch of road for the provision of a climbing lane when roads funds become available? I know that money is short, but it is essential that this part of the road is upgraded.

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for the supplementary. As the Member will know, the scheme looks to provide more than 2.4 kilometres of overtaking opportunity. I am led to believe by officials who have been looking at the road that this may be possible without going for the full extent of the scheme outlined in plans previously. We are prepared to have a look at it because the Member is right in saying that there are obvious opportunities and benefits for that area from a scheme like this.

Mr Mullan: I thank the Minister for his answers thus far. As Mr Robinson stated, the A37 is a major transport corridor for the north-west. Will the Minister give assurances that, after many years of delay, this scheme, as well as the Dungiven bypass, will progress in this mandate?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. I can certainly give guarantees that the Dungiven bypass, as with the dualling works on the A6, remains a priority for me and my Department in this mandate. As I outlined to Mr Robinson, the money is not there at this time to do this project, but there may be other engineering solutions that we are prepared to look at.

Magherafelt Bypass

2. **Ms Dillon** asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the completion date for the Magherafelt bypass. (AQO 134/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Work on the construction of Magherafelt bypass began in May 2015. Whilst progress on the bypass was initially hindered by inclement weather after construction began in May 2015, the recent spell of good weather has been timely and enabled the earthworks element of the works to be completed. The overbridges and drainage are also almost complete, and the side roads have been reopened to traffic. Pavement construction is well under way, and approximately 30% of the carriageway has been laid. Work to create new roundabouts at Moneymore Road and Aughrim Road is nearing completion, and work on a new roundabout on Ballyronan Road is scheduled to commence in July. It is anticipated that the new road will be open to traffic in October 2016.

Ms Dillon: I thank the Minister of his answer and welcome him to his first Question Time as Minister. Will he give an indication of when construction will commence on the Randalstown to Castledawson section of the A6?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for her kind words. We are taking on two major dualling projects on the A6: the Randalstown to Castledawson scheme and the Derry to Dungiven scheme. The 15-kilometre Randalstown to Castledawson scheme comprises two sections of dual carriageway either side of the Toome bypass. Detailed design is ongoing, as are discussions with the appointed contractors regarding agreeing a target cost.

Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of these discussions, and DOF approval of the business case, construction should get under way in late summer 2016.

Mr Lunn: The Minister will be aware of the many promises that his predecessor made — before the election, of course — about major road projects. He seems to be saying the same thing now: it will be as and when money becomes available. He has just given us the timescale for the Randalstown project, but can he give us any idea of the timescale for any of the major projects?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. He mentioned the tight economic times in which we operate, and, despite us having a number of very worthwhile projects in the planning process and going through different stages, inevitably, our ability to deliver some of them will come down to hard cash. I outlined that construction work on the A6 is due to commence later this summer. I hope that construction on the A5, following the Planning Appeals Commission inquiry, will begin at a similar time next year. The Magherafelt bypass is nearing completion. A number of large road schemes are taking place and, as moneys become available, that will continue.

Mr Speaker: Before we move on, I inform the House that questions 3 and 13 have been withdrawn.

Roads Infrastructure: South Antrim

4. **Mr Aiken** asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans he has to improve roads infrastructure for the main towns in South Antrim. (AQO 136/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As the Member will be aware, at the end of last year, the £133 million A8 dualling scheme between Belfast and Larne was completed, which represents one of the largest investments in the road infrastructure in the North in recent years. I am also pleased to confirm plans to resurface the A8 between Corr's Corner roundabout and Houstons Corner roundabout on the outskirts of Newtownabbey. The scheme is expected to cost in the region of £900,000 and will include an overlay of the existing carriageway and the creation of a new pedestrian and cycle path on the southbound side that will link into the national cycle network. The scheme is out to tender and expected to commence on-site later in the summer.

I can also confirm plans to invest £130,000 in local transport and safety measures in the South Antrim area this financial year. These will include the provision of new puffin crossing facilities at Mossley Primary School and Ballynure Road, Ballyclare, and a collision remedial scheme at Doagh Road in Newtownabbey. Plans are being prepared for the upgrade of the Doagh Road/Station Road/O'Neill Road junction at Cloughfern in Newtownabbey; the widening of the Manse Road between Prince William Way and Carnmoney Road North; the widening of the Hyde Park Road in the vicinity of Boghill Road and provision of a footway on Carntall Road, all in Newtownabbey; and the provision of a footway at Shore Road, Toome.

Details of all work being carried out by Transport NI in the mid and east Antrim area can be found in Transport NI's annual report to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, which is now available on the departmental website.

Mr Aiken: I thank the Minister for his answer and welcome him to his first Question Time. I also thank him very much

for his detailed description of what we are looking to do in South Antrim. My constituents and I thank him for that.

Will he and the Minister of Finance look at innovative financing arrangements for the much-needed Ballyclare relief road and new bridge over the Sixmilewater? Ballyclare is in a position quite unlike other places in Northern Ireland, in that it is growing and growing fast. We need to be able to support the people of Ballyclare. We need to improve the social well-being of people in South Antrim, and significant work is needed to improve the economy of that area as well.

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary, and, indeed, for his kind words. I think that it is important that all Ministers, especially in light of the decision taken last week, are innovative and think outside of the box when looking at funding arrangements.

The Ballyclare bypass, or western relief road, is identified in the Belfast metropolitan transport plan as being required to support development proposals in the area. Therefore, it is termed a developer-driven road, and it is the responsibility of developers to build it. As such, the Ballyclare relief road will not be funded from the public purse and is not programmed for delivery by my Department.

Mr Girvan: I thank the Minister for his answers thus far and for detailing the list of projects that are under way. I want to come back to the Ballyclare relief road. On the understanding that we know that mechanisms exist elsewhere — maybe not in this jurisdiction — whereby a Department can access funding to deliver a project and draw it back over time, will the Minister look at that for the Ballyclare relief road, if possible?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary question. As I outlined in my previous answer, I am more than happy to meet with any Members who have innovative ideas and approaches to the situation. Our options and the number of places where we might be able to look for alternative finance may be limited, on the back of decisions last week. As I said in my previous answer, I am more than happy to sit down with the Member and discuss some of those ideas.

Mr Kearney: Guím gach rath ar an Aire san Aireacht úr seo. I wish the new Minister the best in his future portfolio. I bring to his attention the serious road safety concerns on Main Street, Glenavy and the nearby Glen Road and Chapel Road. I ask that his Department undertakes the necessary surveys required for urgent remedial works to be completed.

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary question. Some of the safety measures that I outlined in my initial answer to Mr Aiken included some of those measures, such as the puffin crossings at Mossley Primary School and Ballynure Road in Ballyclare, traffic calming measures on Avondale Drive in Ballyclare, a collision remedial scheme on Doagh Road and general traffic management measures, such as pedestrian refuge, footway upgrades, bus measures and traffic signal upgrades. I am not aware of the particular issue that the Member raised, but I am more than happy to sit down with him and other Members to discuss some of those concerns.

Ballynahinch Bypass

5. **Mr Wells** asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the progress of the Ballynahinch bypass. (AQO 137/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: A significant amount of work has been completed on the A24 Ballynahinch bypass to progress the scheme through the preliminary options, preferred option and proposed option scheme assessments. This work enabled publication of the environmental statement, draft direction and draft vesting orders in March 2015. The former Department for Regional Development received a number of objections during the statutory consultation period for the draft orders, and it was determined appropriate to convene a public inquiry to examine the case for and against the proposed scheme. The inquiry was held on 26 and 27 January this year. The inspector's report of the inquiry was subsequently received in March 2016. The Transport NI project development team considered the report and its recommendations and is preparing a report for my consideration, which will be ready later this year. Subject to a satisfactory outcome, my Department will publish the environmental statement and notice of intention to proceed, and it will make the direction order for the proposed scheme.

Mr Wells: He, of all Ministers, knows the importance of the Ballynahinch bypass. Like me, he has been stuck in Ballynahinch far too many times. Can he give the House a commitment that he will cut the ribbon to open the Ballynahinch bypass within his five-year term?

Mr Hazzard: As local MLAs, we know the back roads to avoid the congestion in Ballynahinch town. That is not to suggest that the bypass is not a significant priority for my Department. Whilst it is not a flagship project, it is very important for not only tackling congestion in Ballynahinch town but the wider south Down area. I remain committed to seeing the project through so that, if funds become available, we should be able to progress with it.

Mr Speaker: Before I call Ms Armstrong, I remind her that this is a constituency-specific topic. Therefore, I expect the question to be constituency specific.

Ms Armstrong: As an MLA for Strangford, where Ballynahinch is, I certainly will stick within my constituency. It is not just an important point for people getting through Ballynahinch. Quite a number of people have contacted me with their concerns about safety on the Belfast Road, particularly where Assumption Grammar School is and where quite a lot of elderly residents live. Have the Minister's considerations, following the public inquiry, included anything about a crossing for that part of the road, given that it is so dangerous?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for her supplementary question. I am, as a local person, well aware of the road safety concerns in recent years for some pedestrians inside and outside the town. Road safety is paramount for my Department, and any plans will take that into consideration.

3.00 pm

Grass Verges: Cutting Schedule

6. **Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will reinstate the policy of providing two cuts of grass verges per year in rural areas and five cuts per year in urban areas. (AQO 138/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The provision of grass-cutting services, along with many other routine maintenance activities, has been adversely affected not only by budgetary constraints in my Department over the last two years but as a result of our economic climate, at the behest of Tory Ministers in London. As Members will appreciate, the provision of all public services depends on the availability of funding. The restoration of grass cutting and other maintenance activities to normal levels ultimately depends on the available budget. I am pleased to say that, as a result of the Finance Minister's announcement of an additional resource allocation as part of the June monitoring round, an additional grass cut across all areas will now be undertaken. That means that rural grass verges will be cut twice this year.

Grass-cutting operations carried out by my Department are for road safety reasons and not for cosmetic or amenity purposes. I fully realise that the reduced level of service has had a significant impact on the appearance of our towns and villages and across the road network generally. I hope Members will welcome the restoration of the second grass cut in rural areas. However, within the funding envelope available, it is not possible to reinstate five cuts per year in urban areas, although I note the welcome intervention of some councils to maintain grass in urban areas.

I am determined to ensure that my Department delivers an acceptable level of routine maintenance services, and I look forward to continuing positive engagement with Executive colleagues to secure the necessary funding.

Mrs Dobson: I thank the Minister for his answer. He will be aware that the issue has been raising, if he excuses the pun, growing concerns from motorists every year. Does he agree with me that a closer working relationship between Transport NI and councils could lead to a better response to grass cutting next year? Will he instigate that new working relationship?

Mr Hazzard: To a large extent, there is work taking place behind the scenes between my Department and other agencies to look after grass cutting. I know that councils sometimes get involved in the amenity areas, and that is something I am more than happy to look at and to extend in the future.

Mr Storey: I welcome the Minister to his first Question Time. This proves that being a member of the Education Committee is very advantageous.

The Minister will be well aware of the concerns that have been raised about grass cutting. Given the collaboration there is with local farmers on gritting in the wintertime, where they are used as a means of delivering a service, will the Minister consider expanding that relationship to grass cutting? They could become a valuable asset to the rural community, freeing up the facility to ensure that the urban network is maintained in a way that is safe and is returned to how we would like to see it.

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary and, indeed, for his good stewardship of the Education Committee while he was Chair.

Yes, absolutely, I am very prepared to work with anybody who can help us with this. We know that the farming and rural community came to our great aid during the recent winter storms, when snow blighted areas such as mine in south Down. Farmers came to the rescue when they were needed. I know I am due to meet farming representatives over the next few months, and that will certainly be on the agenda.

Ms J McCann: I also welcome the Minister to his first Question Time. I know that grass cutting has been a big issue in urban and rural areas, but will he outline the effect June monitoring will have on all areas of road maintenance? Does he believe that cross-departmental working would help?

Mr Hazzard: As a result of the outcome of June monitoring, Transport NI has been allocated £5 million to enhance routine maintenance services in a number of areas. Not only will a second grass cut happen everywhere, despite the fact that it happened only once last year and not at all the year before, but the majority of potholes will now be repaired and the renewal of road markings will be accelerated. An additional gully clean will be programmed in all urban areas, and the repair of street lighting outages will continue well past the autumn. Weed spraying, none of which was done last year, will also begin again this year.

Mr Lyttle: I thank the Minister for his update. What impact will the additional finance secured by his Department have on grass cutting in our capital city — the Belfast City Council area?

Mr Hazzard: As I outlined to Members who asked questions previously, the additional finances will enable us to have a second cut right across the network, which includes the capital city, as the Member put it.

Knockmore Rail Line

7. **Mr Ford** asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the progress made on reopening the Knockmore rail line to create a spur to Belfast International Airport (AQO 139/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The priorities for investment in our rail network over the next 20 years are contained in the railway investment prioritisation strategy, which was consulted on and published in 2014. While the strategy contains a commitment to explore the potential for establishing a rail link to Belfast International Airport, it was estimated that annual passenger numbers would need to rise to around 10 million to make a rail link economically viable and enable the provision of a regular and frequent service. Passenger numbers throughout 2015 totalled 4.4 million. A network utilisation strategy developed by Translink more recently sets a detailed, costed timetable of potential investment that reflects that strategic decision. The document identifies possible future new network connections, including reopening the line between Antrim and Knockmore via Crumlin. However, the document suggests that reopening the line is considered a long-term option only.

Mr Ford: I also welcome the Minister to his first Question Time, and I thank him for his response. Given that it is now

in excess of 20 years since I discussed the reopening of the Knockmore line with a senior Translink engineer, is there any hope for my constituents in Crumlin and Glenavy that they will see something a bit more satisfactory than the 109A bus service, even if it were done on a limited and experimental basis using the existing line?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary question and his welcome words. To reopen services on the Knockmore-Antrim line, Translink would need to completely re-signal the line, re-rail it with continuous welded rail, upgrade 23 user work crossings, completely refurbish the halts and, depending on the timetable operated, potentially reinstate a passing loop. It is difficult to cost that work without undertaking a full feasibility study. However, provisionally, Translink estimates that the cost would be in the region of £100 million. Without the relevant passenger numbers, I do not know that that would reflect best value for money.

Mr F McCann: I think that the Minister has partially answered the question that I was going to ask. Does he foresee a time when a rail link to Belfast International Airport will become viable?

Mr Hazzard: As I outlined to Mr Ford, the onus has to be on increasing the passenger capacity of the rail network before we can look at reopening the line.

Mr Durkan: I am sure that the Minister appreciates the importance of rail connectivity with our airports in developing our economy through business and tourism. In light of that, does the Minister have any plans to look at the prospect of establishing a rail halt at City of Derry Airport?

Mr Hazzard: It would be remiss of me not to consider it in the future now that the Member has raised it, but we should break away from the notion that, to be successful, we need to have a rail halt at an airport. Dublin Airport has expanded massively in recent years and is a good success, but it does not have a rail halt. Public transport is very important. Translink has a strong bus network that services many of our airports. If passenger numbers remain as they are, that is probably the best way forward for now.

Mr Speaker: I remind Members that, when the initial question is constituency-specific, it is incumbent on Members to keep their supplementary questions pertinent to that constituency question.

Ms Gildernew is not in her place.

Coastal Erosion: Strangford

9. **Mr Bell** asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment of coastal erosion in Strangford. (AQO 141/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am very aware of the issues relating to coastal erosion and coastal management not just in the Strangford constituency but across the whole coastline of the North. There is clearly a need to tackle the issues in a more strategic way than has been the case up to now, and I will play my part to help to achieve that. I commend the work of the Ards peninsula coastal erosion group in the Member's constituency in raising the profile of those important issues.

I can advise the Member that Transport NI has recently carried out a survey of the Ards peninsula coastline to

assess the impact of coastal erosion on sea walls and verges adjacent to the carriageway. While the results of that survey have not yet been finalised, it is anticipated that they will provide a clearer picture of the extent of the investment required to carry out proactive repairs to prevent incidents such as road collapses in the future.

The survey will help to inform the necessary financial planning and prioritisation of the required works.

Mr Bell: I welcome the Minister to his post and welcome his interest and positive comments about the Ards group that is looking at the issue, along with many other individuals.

Will the Minister give us an idea of when that survey will be finalised and when he will be in a position to come to the House with a timeline and an action plan to address it?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his kind remarks. I do not know when the survey will be complete; I expect it will be later this year. It is something that, as a Member for South Down and someone who has worked on enhancing and protecting our coastline, I will take very seriously. I have had initial discussions with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Michelle McIlveen, a constituency colleague of yours from that part of the world. It is something that we are keen to work on together as coastal erosion and the need for innovative and strategic solutions become a bigger problem every day.

Ms Armstrong: Thank you, Minister, for your positive remarks. As far as I am aware, the survey was a road survey, and I think that there were 68 or 69 points in it indicating problems that needed to be addressed. Coastal erosion is more about maintenance and preventative measures on a long-term basis. Will that be taken into consideration in the survey?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for her interest and work on the issue; I know that it is close to her heart. I guarantee that, if those issues are not included in the survey, I will certainly want to look at them afterwards. As I have previously outlined, innovative solutions will have to be a part of this. There are research and development projects into how, for example, tyres can be used to offset coastal erosion. Planting specific plants along our coastline can also play a very important role. If those solutions are not included in the survey, it is a piece of work that I will be keen to do afterwards.

Street Lighting Maintenance

10. **Mr Beggs** asked the Minister for Infrastructure how much of the funding received through the June monitoring round will be allocated to street lighting maintenance. (AQO 142/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have allocated £0.5 million of the additional resource funding that my Department received in the June monitoring round to bolster my Department's street lighting maintenance service. The new allocation is in addition to the initial £1 million budget that had already been allocated for routine street lighting maintenance in 2016-17. In street lighting, routine maintenance covers activities such as the repair of outages, underground cable faults and safety defects. At present, a full street lighting maintenance service is being provided. Repairs are being carried out as normal by the Department's external contractors and by Transport NI's in-house operation and maintenance staff.

Mr Beggs: Maintenance is a basic issue that is often required to maintain road safety. Will the Minister assure my constituents and me that the maintenance of street lighting will be part of his initial budget, guaranteeing that failing lights will be repaired, rather than having the Department continually seeking emergency funding in-year?

Mr Hazzard: As I stated in my original answer, repairs are being carried out as normal. In the last 12 months, my Department has received reports of 48,000 street light outages, of which 42,500 have already been repaired. The number of street lights awaiting repair is approximately 2%, so we are operating a normal service. Perhaps the Member should take stock of the improvements since his party colleague was in position, when the grass could not be cut and the street lights could not be kept on.

Mr Speaker: I call Mr Alex Easton for a very quick question to the Minister.

Mr Easton: How long will it take to fix the backlog of street lights across Northern Ireland still to be fixed that the Minister mentioned?

Mr Hazzard: As already outlined, this additional finance enables us to run a maintenance service up to the end of the year, when the 2% of street lighting will be dealt with in adequate time.

Mr Speaker: That ends the period for listed questions. We now move on to 15 minutes of topical questions.

3.15 pm

Derry Railway Station

T1. **Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister for Infrastructure, after congratulating him and welcoming him to the House for his first Question Time, whether, although the Queen will travel by train to Bellarena tomorrow, she is not coming to Derry because of its dilapidated railway station. (AQT 106/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question and for his welcome. He would need to get in touch with the Queen's diary secretary to find out why she is travelling to a particular place.

Mr Eastwood: Maybe he can give me her number. I thank the Minister for his answer, I think, but he has not really addressed the fact that our railway station in Derry is in a dilapidated state. I am, along with many other people, disappointed today that he has rejected the idea of a halt at City of Derry Airport. Will he give some commitment that we will have, once and for all, a proper, fit-for-purpose railway station at the old Waterside site?

Mr Hazzard: I will, perhaps, correct the Member: I did not reject the idea of a halt at City of Derry Airport; I said that it would be remiss of me if I did not look into it. Hansard will correct the Member on that. My Department remains in negotiations over the purchase of a site, and it would be remiss of me, as Minister, to come down in favour of one site or the other when negotiations are ongoing. I remain committed to the transformation of the transport network in the north-west. We will see a 21st-century transport hub develop in Derry, and I am committed to that, despite the fact that the recent Brexit vote makes investment in a lot of our projects across the North that little bit more difficult. On my watch, a transport hub in Derry remains a priority.

Pothole Claims: Rural Roads

T2. **Mr Girvan** asked the Minister for Infrastructure how much his Department is paying out for claims for damage caused by potholes on rural roads, albeit that he appreciates that money was allocated in the June monitoring round to deal with road maintenance. (AQT 107/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. I do not have that detail in front of me. Due to the economic situation in recent years, our resource budgets — certainly for maintenance — have not been what we wanted. There is no doubt that claims are higher than we want to pay. The Member mentioned rural roads in particular, and, since coming into post, I have focused on the need to look at the rural road network. I hope that that can be addressed with an initiative in the very near future.

Mr Girvan: I appreciate that I am a great believer that “A stitch in time can sometimes save nine”. If it is identified that we spend a large percentage of our budget on paying out claims, will there be an opportunity to reprofile next year’s budget to ensure that a greater emphasis is put on maintenance as opposed to claims?

Mr Hazzard: The Member is right: while money is needed for road safety concerns, investing it in fixing potholes is not the best way to spend it. “A stitch in time” is definitely the best way of looking at the issue. If we can, in any way, increase not just road maintenance but road resurfacing in a more strategic fashion right across our network, including our rural roads, that will be of benefit to us all.

Climate Change: Coastal Lines

T3. **Mr Carroll** asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he agrees that the real danger posed by climate change represents a big threat to our environment, including the coastal lines, and, if so, whether he shares the concerns of many about our coastal lines. (AQT 108/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. I have spoken to officials about this since coming into post, and I share the Member’s concerns. I am not up to date with all the science in this regard, but, despite the fact that the sea level is rising incrementally around Ireland, it is the case that the earth’s crust is also slightly rising, which is perhaps buying us time. Whether in Belfast or the west of Ireland, this is an issue that we need to grapple with and that the Executive and the Assembly need to take control of, and we need to do so in a more strategic fashion.

Mr Carroll: I thank the Minister for his response. Does he agree that the fact that there is not one body that is responsible for monitoring coastline erosion is deeply worrying, given the scale of the risks mentioned and the danger that this represents? Does he support the call and will he take necessary steps to ensure that a single organisation is set up that is tasked with caring for the coastline to ensure that the effects of erosion are monitored, managed and prevented?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary question. However, there is such an organisation. It is something that the previous infrastructure Minister, Michelle McIlveen, kicked off; the coastal management forum. I will have further discussions with her on that with regard to which Department takes the lead or

has the greater focus. I actually like the idea of the two Departments working together on this. There are infrastructural concerns, but there are also environmental concerns. I think that both Departments can come together and provide more strategic solutions to the problems.

Downpatrick Traffic Plan

T4. **Mr McGrath** asked the Minister for Infrastructure, after wishing him well in his first Question Time, what he and his Department have done to implement the Downpatrick traffic plan, given that residents have been waiting for many years, and to state whether there is a timescale for the plan’s implementation. (AQT 109/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question and indeed for his kind welcome. I extend a welcome to the House to him. I hope that, as two constituency MLAs, we can work together on a number of issues.

I was well aware of the need for the transportation study before I came into this post, but certainly, since my coming into post, it is something that has been on my desk. As you will know, my Department commissioned consultants to review the numerous transport studies that have been carried out over the years for Downpatrick town centre, including the Down District Council’s town master plan, and to advise the Department on the best way forward to manage traffic progression through the town. This review has now been completed. Transport NI has recently undertaken a full consultation process with key stakeholders and two public information events for the general public. I am pleased to advise that all events attracted considerable interest, allowing the Department to fully engage with elected representatives and the public on the various traffic-management proposals currently being considered. Full consideration is now being given to the key findings and recommendations of the report and also the feedback received at these events in order to decide how the Department should proceed with its plans to improve traffic progression and road safety in Downpatrick.

Mr McGrath: I thank the Minister for that answer. I know that part of that plan was to see a resolution to the problems in Edward Street in Downpatrick and to deliver that resolution as part of the overall plan. I ask him to give particular attention to that issue, which sees articulated lorries on the footpath as schoolchildren are trying to get into a primary school; a situation which cannot continue and needs to be resolved long before the implementation of this plan.

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary. Indeed, he is right. He will be well aware of the problem of HGVs not only in Edward Street but in Fountain Street. Edward Street will be key to the solution going forward. I would like to give the Member the assurance that this is a very important problem that I want to address in the years ahead. Again, I am more than happy to meet him to discuss this in person.

A8: Public Contracts Regulations 2006

T5. **Mr Allen** asked the Minister for Infrastructure, after wishing him well for his time in office, to comment on the fact that, in light of the judgement in the court case into the

award of the A8 tender in 2009, there has been a breach of regulation 30 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. (AQT 110/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question and indeed his kind welcome. My Department was disappointed with the outcome of that particular case, but I do not think that it is appropriate to say any more at this time.

Mr Allen: Thank you, Minister. Clearly there is a serious issue. The public needs assurance that, when a Department awards a major contract such as this, the procurement process must be fair and above board to ensure that the facts of the case are understood and any lessons are learned. Will the Minister self-refer this case to the Northern Ireland Audit Office to investigate and report on it?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary question. Let me make it very clear: if there are lessons to be learned in this regard, I will make sure that those lessons are learned for everybody involved. I am more than confident in the Department's procurement processes. I will look again at this issue with officials to see what can be gleaned in the short term so that long-term practices are what the public require.

Mr Speaker: Mr John O'Dowd is not in his place.

Flooding: Fermanagh

T7. **Mr Lynch** asked the Minister for Infrastructure what, following the June monitoring round, he will do to fix the roads in Fermanagh, given that he will be aware that serious flooding happened in Fermanagh over the winter months, cutting off communities and damaging roads. (AQT 112/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. I am pleased to advise that funding has been allocated to my Department as part of the June monitoring round to enable five flooding relief schemes to be delivered in Fermanagh this financial year. The five schemes are: the B127 Newbridge Road, Lisnaskea; the B533 Wattlebridge Road, Newtownbutler, at Derrykerrib; the C436 Inishmore Road; the C444 Boho Road; and the U6525 Wellington Road. The first three schemes are on key roads from one side of Lough Erne to the other. The other two locations are routes prioritised on the basis of inconvenience caused. The schemes are considered to deliver the greatest benefit to the wider community.

All schemes require an element of design, in particular the highest priority scheme on the B127 Newbridge Road, Lisnaskea, near the Share centre, where a piled reinforced concrete slab solution is now being developed.

Mr Lynch: Gabhaim buíochas as an fhreagra. I thank the Minister and wish him well in his new post. I know the roads that he talked about, and they have a major impact when they flood. Does he have a timetable for when the work will begin?

Mr Hazzard: Thank you for your supplementary question. Access to land will be required in some cases, but, with a fair wind, I expect that works on the ground will be carried out in late summer and early autumn.

Mr Speaker: Mr Robbie Butler is not in his place.

Roadside Verges: Grass Cutting

T9. **Mr Clarke** asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether the June monitoring round, which allocated additional finance to his Department, will provide enough funding to address all the road safety issues related to cutting roadside verges. (AQT 114/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. It enables us to do a second cutting. When road safety comes into view, if you excuse the pun, everything else is secondary. Road safety is paramount for my Department. While we are looking to do second cuttings, we will cut sight lines and pull them back when necessary as often as possible.

Mr Clarke: I appreciate what the Minister said, but many areas have not had their first cut. Will he outline when his Department is supposed to have its first cut finished before it goes on to the second one? When will the weed spraying start?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his supplementary. It is thought that the first cut will be complete in the next few weeks. We have had a period of very wet and hot weather, which provide perfect growing conditions and increase the amount of time that it takes to get around that. As far as I am aware, the weed spraying will begin in the few short weeks ahead.

A5/A6: Progression

T10. **Mr McCartney** asked the Minister for Infrastructure, after welcoming him to his first Question Time, to outline how the A5 and A6 projects will be progressed, given his recent visit to Derry when he provided the chamber with an update on both schemes. (AQT 115/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. I very much enjoyed presenting to the Chamber of Commerce in Derry. It was a very worthwhile venture to speak at and to give assurance to people of the north-west that they will remain a priority and that a priority of mine will be to address the infrastructural deficit west of the Bann.

As far as the A5 is concerned, in February 2016, the then DRD published draft statutory orders and a new environmental statement for the A5 scheme. Draft vesting orders and a direction order were published for sections between New Buildings and Ballygawley. The orders for the section between Ballygawley and the border at Aughnacloy are not being taken forward at this stage until we have confirmed details of the link with the N2 at the border.

Four public exhibitions on the scheme proposals were held in March 2016, with more than 1,000 registered attendees. My Department also received almost 1,000 formal representations on the proposals. A public inquiry to be administered by the Planning Appeals Commission is due to commence on 4 October. The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) has arranged a pre-inquiry meeting for this Wednesday, 29 June, in Omagh. The PAC will report on the inquiry around May 2017. Subject to successful completion of all the statutory processes and satisfactory outcome of the PAC inquiry, it is hoped that construction can begin in late 2017.

Mr Speaker: I call Mr McCartney for a quick supplementary and a quick answer from the Minister.

Mr McCartney: I welcome the Minister's answer. Is he satisfied that all the funding is in place to allow that project to go forward?

3.30 pm

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. As is the case in many Departments, funding is an issue that will constantly be on the table. Whilst the A5 and A6 are not heavily reliant upon European funding, last week's decision will make funding a number of projects a lot more difficult for my Department. I am content that the A5 and A6 are not reliant upon this scheme of money, and they certainly remain a priority for me and my Department in the years ahead.

Mr O'Dowd: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I would like to apologise to you and the House for not being present for topical questions.

Private Members' Business

United Kingdom Withdrawal from the European Union

Debate resumed on motion:

That this Assembly notes the result of the referendum on European Union membership; and calls on the Executive to set out, in the immediate future, their response to the consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. — [Mr Nesbitt.]

Mr Attwood: From where we sit, and in virtually all whom I spoke to over the weekend, there is a palpable sense of loss after the vote last week: a sense of loss of place, of who we are and want to be; a sense of loss of influence and identity; and a loss of funds. I say that because the bombastic approach taken by some in the DUP during the debate is in marked contrast with the scale of the decision last week and its consequences. I hope that the bombastic approach of the few will be replaced by a more discerning approach by the many. I hope that, even in the last hour or two, that has been better understood by the DUP.

There has been discussion about how nationalism has responded to the vote last week. Speaking on behalf of those who have been democratic and nationalist, without apology and without exception over the last 45 years of the SDLP, we find the decision upsetting, game-changing and immense in its consequences. Maybe that is quite natural, because the democratic nationalist tradition on this island, be it in the North or in the South, identified itself more as European. We were more influenced by John Hume and his recognition that the European project was the biggest peace project in the western world, and we were more attached to the three strands of the Good Friday Agreement and its unspoken fourth strand of accommodating difference in the European context.

I think that there is a sense of loss, bewilderment, upset and even anger within nationalism and republicanism, but I sense that those feelings exist also, to some degree, within unionism. The figures will confirm that a greater percentage pro rata of unionists in Northern Ireland voted to remain than the percentage of nationalists who voted to leave. For all those reasons —

Lord Morrow: Nonsense.

Mr Attwood: Well, the figures will confirm that. For all those reasons, the scale of what happened last week, in the politics and culture of this island, needs to be recognised. That is not about a rush to a vote for a vote's sake on the existence of the border, which has been the approach of some in recent days. It is to recognise that, because of last Thursday, the dynamic in the politics of this island and these islands is different from any time over the last 50 years. In my view, the consequence of that — this is why I am hopeful and positive about the future — is that people will begin to reimagine a future different from the past and try to make the future bigger and bolder than the good that we achieved in the past.

I say, especially to the First Minister, that in the management of this issue over the next two years, the scale of this cannot be handled, as Mark Durkan put it to the Assembly group this morning, through the usual diplomatic channels. The paradigm has changed, and it

has changed utterly. Those in the DUP and elsewhere in politics in the North, who want to put all their eggs in the Boris basket, will quickly learn how shallow a strategy that is. That is why the SDLP again calls on the Irish Government to invite the parties in the North and the South to come together in a forum for the future —

Ms Hanna: Will the Member give way?

Mr Attwood: I will shortly. That is why we call for a forum to recognise the paradigm shift that occurred last Thursday and to recognise that to rely on London in the next two years is a strategy of folly — thoughtless folly at that. I will give way to the Member.

Ms Hanna: Does the Member agree that the protection of free movement on this island is paramount, not just for the 30,000 who cross the border every day but for businesses that trade in Ireland?

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr Attwood: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That is why the Irish Government should convene a forum for the future. We need to recognise that those who, as Mark Durkan said, tailgate London as the road to the future, will realise that they have been left behind in some other place down that road. Every time we rely on London, especially when it comes to money, in every negotiation with Blair and Brown or Cameron and Villiers, they have come up short.

Mr Storey: Will the Member give way?

Mr Attwood: I will give way in a second.

How much shorter will they be in this negotiation, given the trauma and fallout of what has happened?

Secondly, I ask the deputy First Minister how we will deal with the immediate consequences of what will happen — this is the next two years, it is not even beyond two years. Higher inflation —

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to conclude his remarks.

Mr Attwood: — a revised downwards economic forecast, the fiscal surplus by 2019-2020 out the window, corporation tax in jeopardy, firms denied market access and —

Mr Speaker: The Member's time is up.

Mr Attwood: — investment deferred. How, in real time —

Mr Speaker: The Member's time is up.

Mr Attwood: — in the real lives of people will we deal with all that?

Ms Bradshaw: Health is, without question, one of the areas that will be most negatively affected by the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. That is why it was so outrageous that the "Leave" campaign used the notion of redirecting £50 million per day from EU contributions to the NHS when it was clear that they had neither the intention nor the power to make that happen.

Even according to the "Leave" campaign's figures, Northern Ireland is a net beneficiary from the EU, and the economic damage that is already apparent in the withdrawal of investment, only this morning, demonstrates that that supposed extra money simply does not exist —

Mr Storey: Will the Member give way?

Ms Bradshaw: I will give way in a minute.

It does not exist, even at a UK level, in any case. Yet, many of the people who voted to leave last Thursday to will have listened to that pledge and, more importantly, will have believed it. It will have informed their choice. Many of them will be very vulnerable and very reliant on the health and social care sector and will now feel very deceived by the political class, who, frankly, should have known better.

It is well documented that the most marginalised communities across the United Kingdom will be those most reliant on an effective and responsive health and social care sector. People living with a long-term condition or those who care for them were led to believe that Brexit was an opportunity to invest in local services, to provide more appointments with GPs and to speed up surgical procedures. As all in the House know, all politics is local, and some people will have naturally seen the referendum through that prism of being reliant on a well-resourced health sector.

Already, prominent "Leave" campaigners have admitted that that is simply not so. The reality of leaving the EU, particularly if we are forced out of the single market, is that there will be a very significant impact on medical advancement through the end of EU-funded, EU-wide medical research projects in which academics and medical researchers share knowledge and resources to contribute to the advancement of less-intrusive screening, quicker diagnoses, and the discovery of treatments and medical equipment that improve prognoses for patients. We will now be outside those processes, and it will cost us dearly, not just financially but in human costs, to avail ourselves of that research for local application.

I turn now to our nearest EU partner. Thankfully, over the last few years, we have seen the emergence of mature political cooperation on the island of Ireland, nowhere more so than in healthcare.

There are now high-profile cross-border arrangements for children's cardiac surgery procedures, for example, that 25 children from Northern Ireland have benefited from since 2014, and there is the cross-border healthcare directive, which is an EU directive that allows people to avail themselves of services and programmes in other EU countries if they are not available in their own country. For example, the Smarmore Castle Private Clinic has helped many individuals in Northern Ireland avail themselves of residential treatment for drug and alcohol addiction, which is a service that is not available here. Those are just a few examples.

Most recently, the very high-profile expert panel, which is led by Professor Bengoa, told us, as I suppose he told all parties, that he is holding meetings with the Health Department in the Republic of Ireland to see where both of us can look at aligning all-Ireland reform of our neighbouring health and social care sectors. We both have finite resources and see that strong cross-community cooperation is vital.

The question now for the Executive is this: what is the contingency plan to ensure that that cross-border cooperation can continue to ensure that Northern Ireland's health and social care sector can access the latest medical research and avoid being forced to withdraw from a single market against the will of the majority of people in Northern Ireland? I emphasise to the House that it would

be the height of irresponsibility if the Executive have no such plan in place.

Mr Agnew: I went to bed at around midnight on Thursday night listening to Nigel Farage effectively give up the ghost and accept that the vote was going against him. I woke up at 4.00 am to see Nigel Farage on the TV again making his victory speech. I have to say that it has been one of the most sickening experiences I have had since I got involved and interested in politics. That is a very emotional response. It is not what is important, but I think it speaks to a lot of this campaign. It has been emotional; it has been emotive.

I also think it has put together strange bedfellows. The "Leave" campaign consisted of what was, on the one hand, the far right, and on the other hand, the far left, united in a campaign to leave the EU. Already we have seen the numerous claims tumble. The £350 million a week that we were supposed to save by leaving the EU was a blatant lie, and those in the "Leave" campaign admit now that that was the case. They said we could spend that money on the NHS. They were clever in their choice of words; they said "could", not "will", but it was a clear and intentional deception.

Mrs Long: Will the Member give way?

Mr Agnew: In one second I will. Then they talked of control of our borders. There was the idea of a fortress UK, and at the same time they told us here in Northern Ireland that we did not need to worry about border controls.

Mrs Long: I thank the Member for giving way. On his point about the choice of words in particular, does he agree that it went beyond a careful choice of words when it said on the poster, "Let's" spend it on the NHS, not, "We might" or, "We could"? It is quite a serious thing in an election or referendum campaign to blatantly lie about how money will be spent.

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr Agnew: I thank the Member for her intervention. I completely agree with her that it was a deception. When we have such a close result, there are questions to be asked about how much people, already and still today, stand over the vote to leave. It is clear in Northern Ireland that we did not vote to leave. I think that presents a challenge to our First Minister, because, whilst the Prime Minister announced his resignation because he did not get the vote he campaigned for, it is clear that our First Minister did not get the vote she campaigned for. Going forward, we need to ask whether the First Minister will represent the people in Northern Ireland. We are going to have negotiations —

A Member: Will the Member take a point?

Mr Agnew: I have given way, and my time is running out. We are going to have negotiations about how this will affect Northern Ireland. Will she represent the 56% in Northern Ireland who voted to remain? Will she ensure that her colleagues in the "Leave" campaign meet their commitments that there will be more spending on public services in Northern Ireland as a result, and that there will not be stricter controls on the Irish border?

3.45 pm

One of the startling things for me about the response was the number of people who said to me they had

sentiments along the lines of, "I went to bed on Thursday as a constitutional unionist. I woke up on Friday as a nationalist". I think that the degree of instability that this vote has thrown up — *[Laughter.]* Members may laugh, and it is shocking that people are saying that, but it is what I am hearing. We have seen the evidence, and we have seen Ian Paisley MP talking about people coming to him for an Irish passport. I have certainly seen people come to me for Irish passports. That may be a practical measure rather than an emotional one, but I think that it is part of the indication of the instability —

Lord Morrow: Will the Member give way?

Mr Agnew: I have said that I will not give way at this point.

I think that it is part of the indication of the instability that this vote has thrown up.

We need to act with clarity, calmness and caution. We are going to have a new Prime Minister, and there is a possibility that we could have a new general election. We need our First Minister acting on our behalf. What we do not need is a First Minister for unionism or a First Minister who puts first being leader of the DUP. What we need is a First Minister who will represent the people of Northern Ireland, who said that they wish to remain, and we need her to take that argument in the negotiations going forward in the days, weeks, months and, indeed, possibly years that are ahead of us.

Mr E McCann: Let me deal first with the nonsense that was talked earlier today in the Chamber about people on the left who advised a vote to leave — that such people must be in alignment with and supporting Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and the rest of that crew across the water. That is absolutely untrue. People Before Profit is quite able to articulate its own particular position, which is different from that of Boris Johnson and is also different from that of the leadership of the "Remain" side. Some years ago, I was active in a referendum in the South —

Mrs Long: I thank the Member for giving way. He said that he can articulate a position that is different to Boris Johnson's. Can he deliver it?

Mr E McCann: I will articulate it now and explain how we propose to deliver it. If you had waited a few minutes, you would not have had to jump to your feet and ask the question. *[Laughter.]* I fully intended to do that. Yes, I will. It is an obvious question, and it is in my mind too. You do not have to invite me to do it.

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr E McCann: Thank you very much. That is great.

People Before Profit has always rejected — I have always rejected — the European Union. We reject it now because we reject the rottenness that the EU represents. If you want to know the true nature of the EU, just look back a year. We heard an awful lot of the argument that leaving the EU will threaten spending on community projects, destroy jobs, destroy wages, destroy infrastructure and all the rest of it. Will it, indeed? If you worried about that in the referendum, look back to what the EU did to Greece, when the Greek people in a referendum voted to reject the austerity policies of the European Union.

Ms Hanna: Will the Member give way?

Mr E McCann: Yes, indeed.

Ms Hanna: Does the Member acknowledge that the people of Greece, with respect to the Government in Greece, made very poor domestic decisions? Does the Member acknowledge that the ratepayers and taxpayers across Europe had an entitlement to not keep paying the bailout money?

Mr E McCann: So much for the lady's commitment to democracy. Do I agree that the Greek people voted in a stupid way? That is what she is asking. It does not matter how the people in the cradle of democracy voted. That was the clear implication of your question; of course it was.

The EU rejected that referendum result precisely because it wanted to impose austerity, it wanted the Greek Government to cut social spending and it wanted funding withdrawn from all sorts of community groups.

Mr Stalford: Will the Member give way?

Mr E McCann: No, thanks.

In other words, they wanted to do all of the things that some people in this House are now claiming that we could not do if we left the EU.

They should consider the words of Walter Scott:

*"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!"*

And they were deceiving. So was the "Remain" camp, and the "Out" camp across the border.

Mr Dickson: The Member suggests that the European Union was a tangled web to deceive. Was it deceiving when it gave women rights? Was it deceiving when it gave us environmental rights? Was it deceiving when it gave us employment rights? Was it deceiving when it saved refugees? No, it was not. *[Interruption.]*

Mr E McCann: I will start at the end: the EU saving refugees? It has erected barbed wire barricades around fortress Europe. Somebody referred to fortress UK and immigrants. The main fortress being erected in Europe is in the European Union. Not only do we have barbed wire fences around the edges of it, we have barbed wire fences within it to stop the movement of people who do not qualify. Around the borders of Hungary and in Serbia and Slovenia, you see barbed wire fences.

This is not an organisation that is pulling people together in a benign way. It is dividing people; it is racist. The agreement made between the EU and Turkey was, "You take one back, and we'll send one over". That is treating human beings like commodities to be swapped in a barter market. What a disgusting and disgraceful thing to do. Why is it that not a mention of that has been made?

People here talk about the EU and give the impression that it is a benign organisation that has the interests of ordinary people in this country or anywhere else at heart. They are out talking, rightly so, about the need to go to Dublin and talk to the Dublin Government. Anybody remember what happened in the South of Ireland when the European Commission disapproved of what the elected Irish Government were doing? They were told by the European Commission, "Do what you're told or — the quote was — 'a bomb will go off in Dublin'". That is what they were told. Not an explosive device, presumably, but a financial and economic bomb threatened them.

Now, so many people in Dublin are praising the EU that they seem to be suffering from Stockholm syndrome. There were times over the past few days watching the football when I thought that I was transferring my allegiance from one day to another from the occupied Six Counties to the occupied Twenty-six Counties. *[Interruption.]* One hundred years after 1916, national independence, how are you? The European Union will not stand for national independence in any sense at all. It is an oppressive body.

Who is the European Commission answerable to? Does anybody here know? I will tell you: it is answerable to the bankers; that is in whose interests it has operated throughout the period of austerity. It is answerable to the more belligerent sections of the European bourgeoisie; it is not answerable to anybody else. Nobody elected it.

Of course, the British Commissioner resigned on Friday. Anybody know who he was?

Some Members: Lord Hill.

Mr E McCann: Lord Hill was the man. How many people are aware of Lord Hill? *[Interruption.]*

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to conclude his remarks.

Mr E McCann: Sorry?

Mr Speaker: Conclude your remarks.

Mr E McCann: You did give me that extra minute, you know. *[Laughter.]* I will end with this, on the question of Scotland and Northern Ireland —

Mr Speaker: I call Mr Jim Allister.

Mr E McCann: OK, I will leave it, but I have more to say in some other place. *[Interruption.]*

Some Members: Hear, hear.

Mr Speaker: Mr Allister, you have up to four minutes in which to speak, including interventions.

Mr Allister: What a broad and appealing church the "Leave" campaign was. *[Laughter.]* The 23 June 2016 will go down in our wonderful history as the day that the United Kingdom shook off the shackles of the decomposing EU and began its rebirth as an independent nation, outward-looking to the rest of the world, taking our trade where the growth is, deciding to spend our own money on our own people, and deciding to control our own borders. The 23 June was the day when this country turned itself around to face in the right direction.

It is sad today that the bad losers of the "Remain" campaign could not face the future. All they could do was re-fight the battle that they have lost and try to tear down our country even more in the doing of that. The worst point of that came from the leader of the SDLP, a party that lectures us all on the purity of its commitment to democracy, but who told us today that he does not accept the result. The result is emphatically clear. The question was emphatically clear. It was not, "Does Northern Ireland want to stay in Europe?", but, "Does the United Kingdom want to stay in Europe?" Yes, it is interesting to know what the component parts of the United Kingdom thought about the question; but that is not the definitive outcome. The definitive, autonomous vote was that of the entire United Kingdom. It is that which those who refuse to accept the outcome of the referendum are rejecting — the sovereignty

of the United Kingdom. They cling, in their little minds, to some little part of the United Kingdom. Some were never so attached to the entity of Northern Ireland, never so respectful of the views of the people of Northern Ireland. However, it is the people of the United Kingdom who have made this decision. We joined the EU as one nation, and we leave the EU as one nation. That is how it must be.

There are many challenges for the First Minister and many things to do, among them identifying the opportunities. We now need a programme across Departments identifying what regulations and directives imposed upon us by the dead hand of Brussels can now safely, properly and swiftly be repealed. There also needs to be a programme to identify how we will cope with new powers. Is it not ironic that some who, week in and week out, bleat for more powers for the House are now amazed and disturbed that, in consequence of leaving the EU, we will have more powers for the devolved Assembly, powers over fishing, agriculture, the environment —

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to conclude his remarks.

Mr Allister: Yes, the First Minister has a job to do, and it is to identify how we exercise these powers and make a bonfire of hideous regulations.

Mr Speaker: I call on the First Minister to respond to the debate. She has up to 30 minutes.

Mrs Foster (The First Minister): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not think that I will need 30 minutes. I am responding on behalf of the Executive. This has been agreed with the deputy First Minister.

Following the outcome of the referendum, the deputy First Minister and I will act to represent the best interests of Northern Ireland. Until such times as new arrangements are negotiated and take effect, we want to make it clear that business continues as usual and that normal arrangements for the flow of goods and services and travel remain in place.

We assure citizens from other European Union countries living here that we value and recognise the contribution they make to our society; I have already indicated that in response to a question from Mr Maskey earlier today, but it is important to underline the point.

The priority of the Executive will be to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and that new opportunities are developed as part of any arrangements with the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland as well as with other European neighbours. We will seek to work with Executive colleagues to plan for the new realities and maximise the benefits to Northern Ireland of this changed situation.

The deputy First Minister and I were elected with a huge mandate to work for our people, and we remain determined to do so. We have a window of opportunity in the coming months to ensure that we do all we can to deliver the best possible outcome for all our people.

We have already spoken to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The deputy First Minister and I have also requested an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister in the coming weeks to discuss matters further. We will meet with the Irish Prime Minister, Enda Kenny, next Monday to commence discussions on the nature of our relationship going forward. Executive

Ministers have been in contact with one another throughout the weekend and over the course of today, and a full meeting of the Executive will take place on Wednesday, at which the main discussion point will be how we deliver the best possible outcomes for Northern Ireland.

4.00 pm

Sir Malcolm McKibbin, as head of the Civil Service, has also held formal discussions with his UK counterpart this afternoon, and we have asked the head of the Civil Service to establish individual departmental teams at senior level and to put in place an overarching central administrative and political governance structure, as well as formal east-west, North/South and EU liaison teams that will report directly to me and the deputy First Minister. Each Department will establish a senior team to consider the potential implication for their departmental functions, legislation and regulations, as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. Those teams will liaise with Whitehall, Irish and EU counterparts to ensure that we get the best possible deal that we can for Northern Ireland.

For our part, as leaders of the Executive, we are agreed and determined that our specific circumstances in Northern Ireland must be accounted for in any new arrangements that are developed.

The chief executive of Invest Northern Ireland is, this week, in the United States and will establish a liaison group with the business community in Northern Ireland. In foreign direct investment, we almost exclusively target cost-centre opportunities, as we do not yet have a tax profit advantage, something that we hope to have in the future. Cost centres are mainly offshore services centres for their parent operations, and the majority of them are based in the United States of America or GB, so market access is not an issue for them.

You will know that our proposition majors on two key factors, talent and cost, and those have not changed. We expect to continue to drive forward on foreign direct investment. If you consider the list of FDI successes over the past five years — Allstate, Concentrix, Alexander Mann, Deloitte, PwC, EY, CME Group, WhiteHat Security, Capita, Cayan, Baker McKenzie, Allen and Overy, Herbert Smith Freehills, and Teleperformance to name but a few — you find that they are all servicing either the United States of America or the United Kingdom.

Sir Malcolm McKibbin will also travel to Brussels later this week to meet our Members of the European Parliament and British, Irish and European Union representatives, as well as meeting senior Whitehall representation next week in London. Representatives from our three international offices in Brussels, Washington and Beijing will consider implications from their perspectives and provide briefings to us shortly.

We are determined to use our influence to build for the future, provide stable leadership at home and reassure those concerned that Northern Ireland will continue to be an excellent place to do business. The coming weeks and months will, I have no doubt, present many challenges both to the deputy First Minister and myself. However, we have both made it clear that, whatever the outcome of the referendum, we would work to do what was right for the people of Northern Ireland. We said that before the referendum. We told the Committee that that would be our

position. Our position has not changed. We will continue to work for all the citizens of Northern Ireland and that is our clear mandate.

Mr Speaker: I call Mr David Ford to make a winding-up speech on the debate.

Mr Ford: We are currently facing the biggest crisis in the United Kingdom since at least 1945. It is a political crisis, at least as far as it affects the two largest parties at Westminster; and it is an economic, financial, institutional and constitutional crisis. The decision that was taken last Thursday affects every part of the UK, and yet there are specific issues for Scotland and Northern Ireland that need to be addressed in a separate and distinctive way.

The issue highlighted just now by Mr Allister, about repealing European legislation, is one that may well come to this House. Mr Allister and his friends — well, his current friends on the DUP Benches — may find that they will have difficulty in getting a majority to repeal some aspects of European legislation that some of us would support. So it is not half as simple, or simplistic, as has been presented by some speaking in the debate.

Mr Allister: Will the Member give way?

Mr Ford: I will give way later. In opening the debate, Mr Nesbitt highlighted a few key points. He talked about the issue of corporation tax; and there is a fundamental issue, on the basis of what has just been said by Mrs Foster about skills and costs, whether we could now afford corporation tax, if we are not to get the benefit of having the wider EU market to companies based here.

Mr Nesbitt also talked about issues like funding from the European Union, of which there was very little talk from those in favour of "Leave". He referred to the potential consequences for the Barnett formula, with a potential change of track by the Government. He referred to the common travel area, which is a very significant issue for those of us who live in Northern Ireland, especially those who live close to the border. Those are key issues on which we await answers from those who led "Leave" nationally and locally. Mr Eastwood and Mr Murphy talked about some of the benefits: the Peace programme, INTERREG and the European social fund. Those are key issues that need to be addressed but have not been properly covered.

We had some lectures from the DUP about democracy and accepting the will of the people expressed in the referendum. I just wish that members of the DUP had accepted the views of a somewhat larger majority of the people of Northern Ireland in the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement or of an appropriate majority in Belfast City Hall on how often the Union flag should fly on that building. Decisions that the DUP took led to mayhem on the streets and costs to this community of millions of pounds. Let us be clear that accepting democracy cuts both ways.

Sixty per cent of those who contributed to the debate, more or less all of this corner except Mr McCann and Mr Allister, talked about the need for stability and certainty as we go into a very difficult future. It is clear that the only bit of economics that we have seen from some people on the "Leave" campaign is their being very, very economical with the truth. As highlighted by Naomi Long, it is clear that the reference to spending £350 million a week on the NHS was a complete fabrication that they retracted last

Friday. We now have the further back-peddalling that it is supposedly an aspiration. It did not look like an aspiration on the posters and the bus.

Mr Poots: Will the Member give way?

Mr Ford: I think that we have had enough from your side of the House, thank you.

Some very specific issues show the inadequacy of what was said there. We have had an admission that the so-called immediate controls on immigration simply could not work if we are seeking to maintain access to the market. Funnily enough, that truth came out from some of the "Leave" campaign only last Friday. Philip Smith highlighted the work done by the governor of the Bank of England to provide stability in the financial markets, but we do not actually have a quarter of a trillion pounds every week to prop up sterling. That is the kind of issue that came up, yet when some of us talked about the dangers to finances and the UK economy, we were accused of scaremongering. We were absolutely right in what we said on that, and those who said that we were scaremongering have been proven to be absolutely wrong.

We have had a litany of "Keep calm" messages from the DUP Benches today. Frankly, Corporal Jones should have been in the Chamber. The messages were delivered with slightly greater calmness than Corporal Jones would have delivered them, but they were complete nonsense because it is clear that the "Leave" campaign nationally had no plan A if it won and the "Leave" campaign in Northern Ireland had no plan A as to what to do with it. We have had hopes, wishes and aspirations from the DUP Benches. We have had nothing of substance. I would prefer to go on the basis of what the governor of the Bank of England says about the future of the UK economy than the pious aspirations that have been expressed by those who wished to leave.

We have also had patronising references to "little people" coming from the DUP Benches. On the "Remain" side, we did not talk like that, but that is the way that they have patronised the people. I suspect that, when some of the decent people who believed the stories told by the "Leave" campaign see what it actually means, they might change things. This was not the little people. This was a fight about the future leadership of the Tory Party, with all the problems that that involves. Those who are wishing to draw a pension in the near future will have real difficulties because of economic uncertainty. They will realise that straight away. Our students studying or hoping to study on things like the ERASMUS programme across the EU will also see problems. Mr Beggs highlighted the significant drop in the exchange rate to £1 equalling €1.20.

(Mr Deputy Speaker [Mr Kennedy] in the Chair)

Steve Aiken talked about the cut in potential foreign direct investment, but, in fact, we have already seen 1,000 financial services jobs moving from London to Paris. If jobs are moving from London to Paris, who is to say that they are not going to move from Belfast to Dublin as well? It is not a cut in potential future investment; it is a loss of past investment. The First Minister has just highlighted a number of companies as successes. How much of a success will it be if those companies relocate to the EU over the next two, three or four years?

It is simply not correct to say that we are in a state of business as usual, because business is adapting a lot

more quickly than the politicians who led the “Leave” campaign.

Patsy McGlone highlighted a key issue — the peace process. It is an important issue: how peace was established between France and Germany, the expansion to central and eastern Europe a decade ago and the support for our peace process. None of us on our side of the argument talked about World War III, but the “Leavers” suggested that we did and got away with another bit of misinformation.

Some have aspirations similar to the vision expounded by Eamonn McCann. Despite the challenge by Naomi Long, he gave us a wonderful socialist vision, but he told us nothing about putting that vision into practice.

I have a little recent knowledge of justice issues, and I know that we have major problems now. We will lose the European arrest warrant (EAW) and have no certainty about how we could reinstate something like that. The previous legislation in the Republic has gone and is no longer available to Northern Ireland. That is just a casual thing, because it is all about asserting our sovereignty, but, if we do not get something like the EAW back, some people will be very sore. Where are we on cooperation with Eurojust and Europol, on sharing information about justice and on asset seizures? These are all key matters that were lost by the vote last week and to which the “Leavers” gave no thought and, at this stage, have no answers.

The motion highlights a series of questions, and I will briefly put a few of them across the Departments. The Executive Office needs to give us a clear statement on the position of citizens from elsewhere in the EU working in Northern Ireland. The Department of Justice, as I said, needs to talk about issues such as shared intelligence and European arrest warrants. The Economy Department needs to talk about how we will maintain free movement of labour, particularly for those who cross the border regularly. We need to look at whether we will still get access to R&D funding under Horizon 2020 or student exchanges. The Department of Finance really needs to do detailed work on the impact of a potential reduction in corporation tax, and the Infrastructure Department needs to see what is happening to things like the York Street interchange and the A6. The Department for Communities will have a massive obligation to make up European funding for voluntary and community groups and housing associations. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs does not know what will happen after the loss of CAP funding. The Department of Health, as Paula Bradshaw said, has issues around medical research, cooperation and the massive numbers of workers in health and social care from across the EU. The Department of Education needs to provide assurances to the young people who, at this stage, are hopeful of going further in the future.

There are key issues — massive issues — that need to be addressed, but they simply have not been covered. The challenges are real, and there is no point in people behaving like ostriches. The First Minister and deputy First Minister have an obligation to represent all of Northern Ireland, including the majority of us who voted “Remain”. The UK is now a very divided society. It is up to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to supply a coherent negotiating team for the benefit of all of Northern Ireland, and the First Minister must live up to the promise that she has made.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That this Assembly notes the result of the referendum on European Union membership; and calls on the Executive to set out, in the immediate future, their response to the consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. — [Mr Ford.]

Assembly Business

Committee of the Regions: Membership

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): As with similar motions, this will be treated as a business motion, and there will be no debate.

Resolved:

That this Assembly nominates Mr Declan McAleer as a full member, and Mr Colin McGrath as an alternate member, on the UK delegation to the Committee of the Regions. — [Ms Ní Chuilín.]

Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4): Suspension

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I call the Minister of Finance to move the motion.

Mr Ó Muilleoir (The Minister of Finance): I beg to move

That Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4) be suspended for 27 June 2016.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Before we proceed to the Question, I remind Members that the motion requires cross-community support. I ask the Minister to speak to the motion.

4.15 pm

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I beg to move

That the Budget (No. 2) Bill [NIA Bill 1/16-21] do now pass.

The passing of the Final Stage of the Budget Bill will facilitate legislative cover for Departments and other public bodies to deliver services in this financial year. I emphasise again the critical importance of the legislation completing its passage through the Assembly.

The Budget Bill is written to the Executive's agreed Budget for 2016-17. Therefore, the result of the referendum on exiting the European Union, which we have just debated for three hours, does not change that. However, Members and the public will want to be assured —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Order. Minister, I ask you to resume your seat. Procedurally, I need to go through a process. I apologise to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved (with cross-community support):

That Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4) be suspended for 27 June 2016.

Executive Committee Business

Budget (No. 2) Bill: Final Stage

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I now call on the Minister to move the Final Stage and open debate on the Bill.

Mr Ó Muilleoir (The Minister of Finance): Thank you again, Mr Deputy Speaker. I beg to move

That the Budget (No. 2) Bill [NIA Bill 1/16-21] do now pass.

I will go back to where we were. I wanted, as Finance Minister, to touch on the Brexit vote and give my reassurance to the public and the House that we are focusing resolutely on that crisis at this time. Like other Members, I want to emphasise that I will resolutely defend the interests of all our people across the North in the time ahead.

As Finance Minister, my plan prior to the referendum was to seek contingency papers from Department heads to prepare ourselves as best as possible for the fallout from the referendum. On Friday afternoon, directors in the Department went through some of the key issues. I thank all the officials in the Department of Finance who put their shoulder to the wheel on Friday and before that to ensure that we responded robustly but calmly to the aftershocks of the Brexit decision. I welcome the steps outlined by Mrs Foster on behalf of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to respond to Brexit. I look forward to the necessary measures being taken to minimise the damage being caused by the crisis.

I am in no doubt that people are fearful of the consequences of Brexit. That is why I took steps on Friday and over the weekend to assure potential investors and directors and, in particular, representatives of the Special EU Programmes Body, who, as you know, were worried about the decision. I also spoke to the vice president of the European Investment Bank, Jonathan Taylor, and groups that are in receipt of EU funds. I assured them that I would apply a firm hand to the wheel in the days and weeks ahead, and I look forward to meeting shortly the Special EU Programmes Body and senior representatives of business, the trade unions and social enterprises to discuss our response.

It was my intention to do this before the Brexit decision, but I will work closely with our colleagues in Scotland, where there was an unequivocal "Remain" vote. In discussions with the Scottish Finance Minister, Derek Mackay, on Friday, I agreed to coordinate my approach closely with his. I will meet Minister McKay on 11 July in Cardiff with the Finance Minister in Wales, Minister Drakeford. Similarly, the Irish Government have a pivotal role in defending the mandate to remain here and the interests of all the people here, and I have taken steps to contact the Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, whom I met last week, and Minister Donohoe. It is important that the Irish Government speak out firmly to protect our interests.

I want to say one thing before I move on to the core of the Budget discussions. I want to address the young people who voted last week in overwhelming numbers to stay in Europe. As they look to the future and assess the budgets and how this Government will proceed, I urge them to not be downhearted or forced from the path of creating a shared, diverse and prosperous society. We have come too far on this journey to be diverted into a cul-de-sac

of splendid isolation. It is my intention to ensure that our young people are not denied the bounty of Europe any more than Europe should be denied the right to share this continent with them.

I urge them, therefore, to keep their head up in the time ahead.

I will now move on to the detail of the Budget (No. 2) Bill. I have listened with interest to the debate over the last few weeks. It is a debate that has covered many important issues: issues that are relevant not only in the current financial year but for the future of all the people we represent. I thank everyone who contributed to those debates, particularly the two lengthy debates we had two weeks ago. I once again place on record my thanks to the Committee for Finance for its role in ensuring that the Bill could pass through the Assembly via accelerated passage.

It is worth emphasising again that the Bill approves the expenditure of Departments and other bodies for this financial year, 2016-17. Members will no doubt be very interested in the impact the referendum result has had on those spending plans. The Bill is written to the Executive's agreed Budget for 2016-17; therefore, the result of the referendum does not change it.

As we move into negotiations on the fiscal relationship with London, I will act resolutely to protect the interests of all our people. I have taken steps to contact the Treasury, even since Thursday, on not only this Budget but future Budgets. In the coming weeks, the Executive will be considering their Budget plans for future years. I have no doubt that the impact of Brexit will then become clear, and we will respond accordingly.

Members will also be aware that the Bill is not the end of the legislative process for this year. Irrespective of the referendum, there will be changes to departmental budgets agreed through the Executive's monitoring rounds. Indeed, I was able to announce the outcome of the Executive's June monitoring round on 14 June, in which over £140 million of resource and over £29 million of capital were allocated. The June monitoring changes and all other in-year changes will be reflected in the spring Supplementary Estimates, which will be brought to the Assembly in February.

When the Assembly debated the Bill's Second Stage two weeks ago, I made clear my ambition for the Executive to deliver over the new mandate. The expenditure being approved in this Bill will see investment in high-quality public services and a commitment to oppose the austerity programme being driven by the Westminster Government. I aim to work with all our local communities to create a prosperous, shared society and to help grow a stronger economy with opportunity for all.

I am proud that, as Minister for the new Department of Finance, I have the opportunity with the first Budget Bill of the mandate to signal that I will, of course, oppose austerity. This country is not just an economy; it is a society made up of people, and each person has their own needs and ambitions. We will grow the economy, not as an end in its own right but as a means of providing for all our people.

The Fresh Start Agreement represented a good start. It provides significant additional funding in 2016-17. In addition, the Executive agreed to set aside £135 million to top up the UK welfare arrangements. Additional money

was also provided for 'A Shared Future' for bodies to deal with the past, for shared and integrated education, and for shared housing.

I believe that this Budget will serve our people well. I am proud that we are delivering the most generous welfare protection in these islands to ensure that the most vulnerable will be protected from the worst excesses of austerity.

I believe also that it is important not to forget the bigger picture. The Budget (No. 2) Bill, which I hope Members will support again today, does not exist in a vacuum. It is a critically important element of our financial cycle and the principal mechanism through which the Assembly can hold Departments to account for their expenditure.

I remind the House that behind the dry figures are the lives of the people we serve, as well as the schools, the hospitals, the community centres and the cultural centres. To serve those people and to provide for our front-line services, it is essential that we move through this debate today and pass the Bill into law. Every public service provided for under the authority of the Assembly is affected by the Bill and requires the legislation to operate legally in this financial year. With that in mind, I ask Members to support the legislation and pass the Final Stage of the Budget (No. 2) Bill.

Mrs Little Pengelly (The Chairperson of the Committee for Finance): I will speak first in my role as Chair of the Finance Committee. As outlined, the Bill makes provision for the balance of cash and resources required to reflect the departmental spending plans in the 2016-17 Main Estimates. As I indicated in previous debates, the Committee agreed, under Standing Order 42(2), to grant accelerated passage to the Budget (No. 2) Bill on the basis of it having been consulted appropriately on the Bill's expenditure provisions.

It is imperative that the Department meets that requirement for appropriate consultation on each occasion, given the importance of such Bills progressing through the Assembly before summer recess.

At its meeting last week, the Committee agreed that Assembly and departmental officials should follow up on the work undertaken in relation to the memorandum of understanding, which will, if implemented, provide opportunities for Statutory Committees to engage with their respective Departments for the forthcoming multi-year Budget at appropriate stages in the process. The public expenditure envelope is, as we know, constrained. Therefore, for those successive years, Departments will need to ensure that every penny of public money is maximised in order to efficiently deliver the level and quality of public services expected by those whom we have been elected to represent.

There will, no doubt, be many challenges ahead, some of which will be unprecedented. In that regard, speaking on the Committee's behalf, I am confident that, as we progress, a positive, constructive and productive working relationship will develop with the Department. It is my hope that the Committee will assist and support the development of improved policy and better legislation, while continuing to fulfil a valuable scrutiny and advisory role.

As I draw my remarks to a close in my capacity as Chairperson, I highlight the fact that, in scrutinising the forthcoming Budget, Departments and Statutory

Committees alike must prioritise that work to maximise the limited time available. Early engagement by Committees in the process will assist in providing a degree of certainty in respect of Budget allocations for the coming years, which will enable Departments to plan their spending needs. Indeed, the Committee wrote to other Statutory Committees just last week to highlight that very matter.

I will now speak in my capacity as a DUP representative. We are entering an exciting new chapter for the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. The next Budget, which, at this stage, is still likely to be a multi-year Budget, will incorporate for the first time the implications of leaving the European Union and the additional resources that we will no longer, as the United Kingdom, be giving to the European Union. It will be a time of considerable opportunity. Being freed from the obligations and rules around trade constraints and state aid will provide potentially game-changing opportunities to stimulate our economy and form new trade relations across the globe. The changed context opens up and creates the space for an exciting conversation about what new initiatives can be created and driven forward for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

There will, of course, be some apprehension. We have heard that from some business organisations and around the Chamber. There will be, as there is at every time of significant global events, market movement, followed by recalibration. It was ever thus. However, to fear or avoid change and improvement because of that would be foolish. To shy away from changing what is wrong and what is not working due to uncertainty and fear creates only stagnation. Let us be brave in stepping forward; let us take this opportunity and take the essential steps required to lay the foundation for a better, more vibrant and sustainable economic future for Northern Ireland out of the European Union.

In Northern Ireland, we needed a game-changer. Before this, we had the shackles of the European Union. We now have an opportunity to maximise and examine best practice and innovation from around the world. The negotiations in the autumn in relation to the multi-year Budget will be essential for that, particularly if we are to stimulate economic growth; increase the size of our private sector; use our well-skilled workforce, low staff turnover and other attractive attributes here to attract foreign direct investment; and use innovative tools to grow our indigenous businesses and increase exports and business development. To talk and lament where we are now will not change anything, so let us move on positively by working collaboratively to bring about the economic transformation that we need and want to see. Let us see the opportunities, not the challenges.

I have stated before that the DUP is committed to a strong and sensible approach to the Budget and fiscal matters. We want to see collaborative working, evidence-based policy and the transformation and reform of processes to ensure effectiveness. We advocate fiscal responsibility. There is nothing to fear in that, but we want a context of taking brave steps and necessary decisions and showing leadership on rebalancing and stimulating the economy of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

4.30 pm

Mr Smith: Since the previous stage of the Bill, the economic and budgetary landscape has fundamentally

changed with last week's referendum result. Fortunately, the Bank of England and the Treasury had contingency plans, but the question is this: are we as well prepared, and do we have contingency plans? On Friday, the First Minister and the deputy First Minister said that we do not have a plan B, but I was pleased to hear the First Minister mention in her comments earlier that, at last, we are now taking action.

I hope that the Minister of Finance has a plan, as every Department detailed in the Bill will be affected by our leaving the EU. Some of the funding may be covered by additional budget from Westminster, and some may not; at this stage, no one knows. The expectation is that the Estimates in the Bill will not be affected by Brexit and that it will be two years at least before the full ramifications become clear. Again, no one knows.

What we do know is that our Budget will be affected by two issues, both of which are outside our control. First, as we have already seen, a significantly weaker pound will reduce the value of EU payments in the short term to the Executive and to funding recipients such as our farmers. There is, of course, an element of swings and roundabouts, as a weaker currency should help our exporters and our tourism industry and encourage cross-border shopping, but it will also make imports more expensive, including oil, which will increase energy and transport costs. The net impact is likely to dampen growth in investment in the short term, thereby reducing the revenue generated by Northern Ireland. Of course, this is in the context of Northern Ireland being the lowest growth region in these islands, so we are starting from a relatively low base.

Secondly, we must also look at debt and the potential for increased costs to fund that debt. Let us also bear in mind that the Executive are indebted to the tune of over £1,200 per person compared with Scotland — with an oil industry and a top 100 plcs that we sadly lack — where the debt is £530 per person. On Saturday, as I mentioned in the earlier debate, Moody's downgraded the UK's long-term debt rating from stable to negative. Its analysis is that:

"the negative effect from lower economic growth will outweigh the fiscal savings from the UK no longer having to contribute to the EU budget."

Of course, any EU contribution is still an unknown outworking of the negotiations yet to come. If the UK made the same deal as Norway, we would still contribute a net £3.5 billion to EU funds as the price for access to the single market. This reduced credit rating will result in higher borrowing costs for government, businesses and households in the longer term. It could have a negative impact on the Budget before us, as increased interest payments mean less money for services and will, of course, mean that the Minister of Finance's desire to increase debt becomes a more expensive option.

The Minister's war cry — we have heard it again already this afternoon — is that we must oppose austerity. Moody's also pointed out that the UK has one of the largest budget deficits among the advanced economies, thanks, as I pointed out in my previous speech on the Bill, to the Labour Government's mismanagement of public funds. As this deficit becomes more expensive to finance, the pressure to further reduce the deficit and raise funds to pay for it will lead to increased taxation or further pressure on budgets.

Therefore, despite the potential lead time for our leaving the EU to be well outside the scope of this Budget, it is highly likely that the impact of Brexit on currency, debt growth and government income could mean that the Budget will need to be revisited in the autumn. The expectation at Westminster is that a Budget may well be required once the initial turbulence settles, and that will require a response from our Executive as, undoubtedly, it will affect our spending plans.

As I said in my contributions during the debates on previous stages of the Bill, the Budget comes at the start of a challenging time for the Executive. This Budget is relatively benign compared with what is to come for the remainder of the mandate. The Minister of Finance has had the benefit, as he has already pointed out, of having over £170 million for reallocation as part of the June monitoring round. I assume that this met the needs of his Executive colleagues; I say “assume”, because, like most in the Chamber, I do not know. We no longer have the option to see the bids from Departments, as they are now a secret. I know that officials are drawing up new processes. I hope that the Minister can confirm that future rounds and other Budget processes will be more transparent to aid scrutiny and the ability of the Assembly to hold Ministers to account.

I mentioned a challenging financial environment; this has just become significantly more uncertain with last week's events. The challenges and uncertainty are exacerbated by the failure of the previous Executive to mend the roof while the sun shone. That failure to reform and drive change in the public sector means that this Budget fails to meet the requirements of the people of Northern Ireland. The Executive's prevarication and inaction have got us to this point, and attempts to divert blame will not work.

While I appreciate that this Budget Bill is not the vehicle to do it, we need a coordinated response from the Executive that will produce a plan to protect our local economy and public services. For example, the Minister stated last week that he is committed to the rate and timetable for the reduction of corporation tax. This, of course, is the Executive's main policy for attracting foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland as part of a strategy to rebalance our economy away from its over-reliance on the public sector. The Minister stated that he is seeking a meeting with the Treasury to discuss secondary benefits and the final cost to our Budget. Of course, that is now all up in the air. The Azores ruling would no longer apply if we were fully outside the EU; but, again, no one knows how much in or how much out we will be at the end of this. Will we get a free hit to reduce our corporation tax rate without having to reduce our block grant or will the Treasury refuse this because of the implications for other devolved countries and regions? Will the policies still make Northern Ireland attractive to investors if we are outside the single market or will we still be able to negotiate access during the article 50 process? The Minister, on behalf of the Executive, needs to have an emergency meeting with the Treasury to try to obtain clarity on these key issues.

The same level of uncertainty exists in other areas too, such as agricultural support, EU part-funded infrastructure projects, access to higher education, border controls with the Republic and with GB, Peace funding, and other funding for third-sector projects: all this tallies to a significant portion of the funding within the Budget Bill. I urge the Minister and

his Executive colleagues to produce an emergency plan to ensure that Northern Ireland's voice is heard at Westminster and throughout Europe and that they are clear in their demands to protect our funding streams.

This is a steady-as-she-goes Budget. It was never good enough to meet Northern Ireland's requirements before the referendum; it certainly does not cut it now. We will oppose the Bill. We urge the Minister and the Executive to show some urgency and start to plan for this new economic and political environment.

Mr O'Dowd: A number of Ulster Unionist Party members said that the Executive should have planned when the sun was shining. Maybe I missed it. I was a member of the Executive from 2011 to 2016 and I can assure you that there was no sun shining on the Budget during the period when I was Minister of Education. In fact, I can remember as far back as Gordon Brown being Prime Minister. He introduced a number of emergency Budgets when the economic crash hit, and the then Executive's Budget was slashed at that time. The sun has been hiding behind a financial cloud for at least seven to eight years. If we are going to talk about what the Executive need to do or should have done, let us talk about it in the reality of the situation we were in and are now in.

The theme that runs through all this — I mentioned it this morning during an earlier debate — is that it works on the theory of the trickle-down economy, which is supposed to ensure that wealth trickles down to all citizens. The difficulty with the trickle-down economy and economics is this: when things go wrong, the trickle turns into a tide of austerity against those at the very bottom of the stream. Since the economic crash in 2007-08, we have been dealing with the consequences of that tidal wave coming down the stream, which has meant that public services have been cut, investment has been cut and the Executive have been managing against a very difficult economic climate to protect public services, create investment and ensure that we try to stabilise our economy with the limited economic levers that they have. Do you know what? They have been quite successful at it.

Some 40,000 jobs were created during the last term. That is a success. Our education results since the end of direct rule have been going up year on year, and our universities are seeing graduates coming out that the world's investors want to get hold of. So, it is not all doom and gloom, but there are major difficulties for our economy and society.

The Budget Bill, which has been brought forward today, sets out spending plans for the rest of the year, but do we know what will happen in a month's time or six months' time? No, we do not. Those who favour Brexit refer to the £350 million that will come back every week. We know that it will not be spent on the health service or on a range of services. They have told us that, but they have not told us what it will be spent on. There is a fault line in that argument as well because that £350 million did not include the rebate, so it is around £180 million a week. I am sure that someone has the exact figure in front of them. That will depend on the attitude of the Government and Chancellor at that time, and it will depend on their attitude to a number of things. Do they support public services? If they support public services, that money will be invested in public services, and our Executive will get the Barnett consequential of that, especially if it is invested in health and education because it is a direct read-over, but if

the person or persons in charge do not support public services, why would they invest any of those savings in public services?

The figure also relies on the economic wobble, catastrophe, or whatever is going to happen after the EU exit. It will have a trickle-down effect on investment and jobs, and, if it has a trickle-down effect on all that, there is not the same amount of revenue being collected as there once was. So, if we lose investment, such as has been suggested, from the international banking system and other investors etc, we will not have the same amount of revenue being collected. Therefore, the Chancellor will sit back and say, "I am not receiving the same intake that I was receiving a year ago", and, if he is wedded to austerity, what will that Chancellor do? He will use the money that was allegedly saved from exiting Europe to pay off this famous thing called the deficit. We will pay off our deficit for now or never, we will continue to restrict spending on public services, and the sunny day that the Ulster Unionist Party refers to will never come.

So, there are too many things outside our control to look into the future with confidence, but, as I said in the earlier debate, I have confidence that the First Minister and deputy First Minister will work to get the best deal possible for our people, and, to do that, they will have to work together. I have confidence that they can do that, and I have confidence that the Finance Minister and the other Ministers will work together to ensure that, whatever shape our Budget is in, we will continue to invest and to struggle with the challenges that we have and will continue to invest in our public services moving forward.

I am not picking on Mr Smith, but he presents an argument that is worth responding to, which is the idea that there has not been enough reform over the last five to 10 years. In reality, in the first term of the Assembly following the restoration of the institutions, we, as a collective political body, were learning, and we had a steep learning curve to go through. When you are learning the mechanisms of power and politics, you will not always immediately go into a reform programme — I do not like that term — a programme of change, a programme of betterment to ensure that public services are fit for purpose, but, in the last mandate, a significant amount of work was carried out in that area. We have seen the reform of our local government. We have seen our education bodies reduced to one. We have seen ongoing work in relation to the voluntary exit scheme. I do not intend to spend the next five years referring back to my time as Minister of Education, but we also saw major reform in education around the number of schools that we have. People say to me that we are afraid to make difficult decisions. Those decisions were made because they had to be made, and that will have benefits as we move into the future.

4.45 pm

That brings me on to borrowing. The figure of around £2.1 billion is thrown out as the Executive's debt, but we found out last week in the Finance Committee meeting that that figure is not all the Executive's debt. It is, in fact, a legacy debt from local government. I am looking round and there are many former councillors in the Chamber. That debt is your debt from when you were sitting on local councils and borrowing, quite rightly, to deliver public services. That debt remains and is now on the Executive's books.

A significant proportion of that Executive debt relates to local government borrowing. The Finance Minister has not suggested that he will borrow in a reckless or negligent way, but it is still an opportunity that needs to be explored. I raise the issue of where the debt is broken down to because we need to have the full facts and figures in front of us so that we can then make informed decisions about how we invest and what mechanisms we use to invest in the future.

I want to end on the point that, unsurprisingly, I will support the Finance Minister's Bill. I am of the view that, despite the challenges over the last five to 10 years, the Executive have been a bulwark against austerity and will continue to be so. Mr Allister told us earlier that, all of a sudden, now that the EU referendum is through, we have more powers. I have not seen the list yet, but, if Mr Allister is prepared to take on more powers to benefit this society, he will not find us blushing or being shy about introducing those powers, because we need more economic levers to create the vision that we all share on ensuring that investment in our public services is secured.

Ms Hanna: I thank the Minister. I will keep my comments brief because we discussed the Bill at length earlier in the process. Quite clearly, you have an incredibly large job ahead of you in picking up some of the pieces from last week. I welcome the Minister's very rational comments in the debate and, indeed, in the media earlier and urge him to continue to ensure that the Northern Ireland Executive represent Northern Ireland's interests in the absence of any plan coming from London or anywhere else to make sure that our financial interests are not just washed away in the chaos that surrounds the Brexit decision.

We remain of the view that this Budget treads water by having policies and spending priorities that we do not feel are delivering very effectively for Northern Ireland. They were not ambitious. Obviously, we do not have the detail yet, but we do not see anything specific in the Programme for Government that leads us to believe that that will change very radically in transforming the economy or adding significant value to what we already get from devolution and from copying things over from London. In particular, we feel that investment in skills is lacking, and that will make a challenging foreign direct investment proposal even more challenging. Given that we will no longer be a gateway to Europe, being skilled and having infrastructure is ever more important. We are concerned about increased funding going to the likes of SIF and the Executive Office, which we do not feel are sufficiently transparent or have a particularly good record of delivery.

We also raised concerns previously about transparency and the direction of the joint government manifesto commitment for an extra £1 billion on health and the extent to which that money would be used sustainably. As I say, we urge that more of a priority be placed on infrastructure, childcare, early years and apprenticeships, and we have outlined extensive proposals elsewhere during the debates. I know that the Minister is keen enough on the idea, but we would like a move to a slightly more zero-based budgeting approach so that every time that any party — government or opposition — makes a funding proposal, it cannot be just pitched as robbing Peter to pay Paul, and, essentially, we have to go from the start and redesign our budgets and spending priorities that fit

our specific needs rather than just, as I say, the baseline budget given to us by the Treasury.

We heard a pretty optimistic view of the post-Brexit world from the Committee Chair, who, I appreciate, is not here. I do not share her enthusiasm about the opportunities. If the opportunities were so fruitful, they should have been fleshed out. Instead, what we now know to be campaign priorities — the NHS and immigration — were the subject of a world-record breaking reverse ferret: people were in the media literally hours after claiming victory to recant those horrible promises.

I have a couple of specific questions. Will the Minister outline what impact the Azores ruling will have in his negotiations, if he can find somebody to negotiate with, on corporation tax with the Treasury? Of course, in theory, the Azores ruling will no longer be an issue, and my understanding is that they do not have to take the consistent amount off our block grant.

Will the Minister consider implementing a sunset clause on corporation tax? We consider that that would be useful. If we do not see the arrival of 21st-century serious, decent jobs because of the drop in corporation tax — I have long since been of the view that entrepreneurs are not hanging around waiting for a tax cut but looking for the other circumstances to be right — will he consider writing in a sunset clause? That would mean that, if we did not get those jobs, we would no longer have to subscribe to what could crudely be called “corporate welfare”. We could put the rate back up and get back into the public purse what was not necessarily coming in through high-quality jobs. We await a wider political and constitutional strategy from the Executive about what to do post-Brexit, but I am keen to hear the Minister’s plan.

Earlier, I expressed the view that some on the hard end of the left wing were very casual about Brexit. They threw up the argument about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as a campaigning tool during the election but refused to answer questions on the absolute quirk in their screwy logic, which was that it would not be better for that to be negotiated by 28 countries than handing it all to Boris Johnson and Michael Gove. I suspect that, primarily, they see Brexit and the resulting austerity as an opportunity to sell more pamphlets and put up more placards and posters. Who needs to care about protecting the economy and public services when you can just cry about them being cut again?

When we were talking about it this morning, I thought about the scale of the ramifications for markets, law, workers’ rights and public services. I am not that much of a conspiracy theorist, but it put me in mind of Naomi Klein’s shock doctrine. Basically, that is the theory of disaster capitalism and neo-liberals using national crises, and the distraction and emotional shock that they cause — to utterly redesign systems and force through the most controversial of reforms in what is, essentially, a form of shock therapy carried out on the entire economy. Will the Minister outline what strategies he can bring forward so that he is vigilant against and can prevent a raid by the incoming UK Government? I suspect that they will not spend more than a couple of seconds thinking about the nuances, complexities and differing needs of a region that will be massively disproportionately affected by Brexit.

Throughout the campaign, we said that one third of our exports were agrifoods; across the water, the figure is just 3%. The current Government do not really understand our economy, and I am sure that the new one will not either, and they will have many other things to deal with. Will the Minister outline what his strategy will be to ensure that there is not a raid on our block grant or the Barnett formula?

Dr Farry: I will start by talking about the Budget (No. 2) Bill in the context in which the resolution to approve was originally tabled, accepting, by implication, that the world has changed significantly since. My party had considerable scepticism about the Bill in its original format and, indeed, context and to what extent it provided for a sustainable and strategic Budget

When Mr Smith made the point about the Executive not making hay while the sun was shining, he was challenged by Mr O’Dowd, who said that the sun was never shining. I concur with Mr O’Dowd, particularly in the context in which we now find ourselves. I do not recognise a situation in which the Executive were making strategic plans for the future. Rather, we were in a series of crisis modes to try to arrest decline — some of them imposed by the UK Government, and some of them self-inflicted wounds, but, still, there was very little planning for the future. It was basically about making do, day by day or month by month, at times.

Opportunities to reform our public services and put ourselves in a stronger position to support our economy have suffered. That is not to say that good work was not conducted across a range of Departments and by the Executive as a whole on a range of issues, including our performance in job support, job creation, investment in skills to an extent — we could have done more, obviously, with more resources — and some changes in health and education. At the same time, there were a lot of big, missed opportunities, including a reorientation of our public services, particularly in health and education on a more long-term basis, and taking into account the opportunities to move ahead with integration in what is still, sadly, a divided society.

Moving forward, we find ourselves with a Budget that still has those inbuilt structural flaws. We have not yet tackled the cost of a divided society. We are still not tackling effectively issues around waste and inefficiency in a range of areas. Some of those may well be related to division; some of them are not. The reform of our health service is a key example of the latter category. I concur with comments that have been made; it is not simply about allocating up front a set amount of money to go into the pot to keep the health service going or to try to catch up with healthcare inflation irrespective of the implications for all other Departments in the process. This has to be about deciding what reform is required, and, if we need more money to support that process of reform, by all means make that happen, almost on an invest-to-save basis.

I also think that we were not planning ahead sufficiently for changes in the economy. We have not been investing sufficiently in skills. We have the policies and practices in place that would allow us to make the best use of resources, but we have not scaled up sufficiently, particularly in what was the context — it may still be the context — of a lower rate of corporation tax. Those investments, I believe, are absolute inescapable realities. They are not some sort of optional extra that we would do if we had the resources.

While I welcome the money that was confirmed by the Finance Minister for skills in the June monitoring round a few weeks ago, it is worth stressing again that that money is already factored in, rightly or wrongly, to budgets for the current year, based upon the promissory notes from the previous Finance Minister. We still have major structural deficits, particularly in higher education. The figure of £55 million has been cited by the vice chancellors. Let me stress that that is to reflect the steady state situation in terms of ensuring that we have parity of funding with other parts of these islands. It does not reflect the quite right hopes that many have for the expansion of our higher education sector, particularly in the north-west.

I think that there is the potential for fundamental changes to occur in our financial landscape. Like others, I wish the Finance Minister well on what will be a very difficult road ahead. We would be deluding ourselves if we simply pretended that it is business as usual. It is not. There are fundamental financial challenges ahead, and we are going to have to work as Northern Ireland to mitigate those as best we can and to see if we can put in place special arrangements and circumstances that will allow us to, potentially, continue to benefit from the European Union in a way that is consistent with the views of the electorate in Northern Ireland, if not necessarily the electorate of the UK as a whole.

The continuation of corporation tax may be one of those issues, but I think it is inevitable that we will have to pause and reflect on the way forward with regard to corporation tax. This time last week, we were all set to go with a rate, potentially by 2018, subject to some minor negotiations with Treasury. However, that could not and should not happen without further investment in skills.

Today, I think we need to take a step back and have a more fundamental reassessment of the model. Corporation tax was envisaged in the context of our continuing to be part of the European Union and to participate in the single market. As anyone who has worked in investment will know, the single biggest issue for businesses looking to Northern Ireland is access to markets, and that means access to the European Union. That is closely followed by political stability. We do not have either of those at this stage. The third issue is skills, and we have a good foundation but have not scaled up. There is a question mark over that as well. In the context of our not having guaranteed access to the single market, we may need to reassess the exact approach we take. In the context of a declining Budget in particular, is it something we can afford if it is not going to be effective?

5.00 pm

The contrary argument to all that is that, if we do not have access to the single market, we are taking two steps or three steps back in our competitive position in the world, so perhaps a lower rate of corporation tax is now more essential than ever to compensate for what is the foolish decision that has been taken over the past number of days about our participation in the European Union. That can happen only through a fresh look at the model on all this, and it is important that we keep an open mind on that. At the same time, we cannot plough on regardless as though nothing has happened. I am sure the Minister will be acutely aware, as Claire Hanna mentioned, that, potentially, the terms of the Azores ruling do not apply, in

the sense that the UK Government have to ensure that the money is recouped from us. They still have the discretion to insist that the money is recouped or not, and that will be a live issue.

On the wider financial context that arises from the decision, we need to be mindful that there was a lot of debate during the campaign about who got what money and the money that comes in and the money that comes out. Even if you work on the assumption that Northern Ireland maybe gets just slightly more from the European Union than local taxpayers pay in and that, therefore, it is not really something worth quibbling about, you also have to bear in mind that that is in the context of much a greater economic argument about the economic benefits that come. It is about not just the flow of money in cash terms but access to markets, the economic boost that comes and the finance that is generated from that.

In the context of our being out of the European Union, there is no guarantee that we will achieve the same amount of money coming from London that we currently have coming from Brussels. It is OK for people to say, "It is great that the UK Government will reclaim the net effect of the money that is paid in and will be very generous in their largesse to the regions", but there is no guarantee whatsoever that that will be the case.

We have to bear in mind that the UK Government do not follow the same approach to us under devolution in terms of what our priorities are. For example, we place a much heavier emphasis on support for agriculture and agrifood. Those are two important elements of our economy. They are far more important on a proportionate basis in Northern Ireland than they are in the rest of the UK, so there is no guarantee that a future UK Government are going to place the same focus on that type of support. Also, I do not imagine that the UK Government are going to worry to the same extent about support for something like the European social fund when they, particularly the current Conservative Government, do not see the value of that focus in training and supporting marginalised communities.

Mr Attwood: Will the Member give way?

Dr Farry: Yes.

Mr Attwood: To develop your point, is it also not the case that, when it came to the successor programme to Peace, the British Government made no argument whatsoever to the Brussels authorities for the continuation of Peace and that it was left to the Irish Government and our own Government to make that argument? Is that not further evidence of what London will do on a pound-for-pound basis to support the North post-EU withdrawal? Look at what happened with the Peace project. They did not back it at all.

Dr Farry: I very much concur with the Member, and I am sure he will also reflect on this from his period in office. When Northern Ireland has been working in Brussels, we have often had to rely upon our own resources, our own administration and support from our own Northern Ireland bureau in Brussels to get access to the European Commission. Frankly, at times we have had stronger allies in the Irish Government when we have needed extra leverage to get points over the line. The UK representation in Brussels has been next to useless in supporting the interests of Northern Ireland. They pay lip service to it but,

frankly, it is a complication they do not often want. They have their own aspirations in that regard.

Another example is the potential use of the European anti-globalisation fund, which Members have expressed interest in using whenever jobs have been relocated out of Northern Ireland. That is a fund available within the European Union — another benefit — but our UK Government have set their face against the use of that fund in its entirety, in contrast with our neighbours in the Republic of Ireland. So there are a whole host of things there that we risk losing in terms of cash.

The most fundamental point that we have to bear in mind is the context of a shrinking UK economy if, as now seems inevitable, we are going to see a UK recession. Whether it is a technical recession or a more sustained recession, it is a recession nonetheless, and something that will affect people. We will see the UK economy shrinking. There will be less tax revenue coming in. It is in that context that the UK Budget as currently set begins to unravel. That is the context in which we will potentially see our own Budgets being unpicked here in Northern Ireland. There is a reasonable chance that we will be spared in the current financial year, but in the next comprehensive spending review the chances are we are going to see even a smaller Budget than has been allocated to us in terms of future planning. That is going to cause us difficulties in terms of already difficult decisions to be taken.

If I go back to the comments I made at the start about structural difficulties within our own Budget that have not been properly addressed to date, we are going to get an ever tighter situation, which puts an ever greater premium on trying to address those types of issues. In closing, Mr Deputy Speaker —

Mr Attwood: Will the Member give way?

Dr Farry: Yes.

Mr Attwood: I do not agree with the Member that there is not going to be a supplementary Budget this year. The Chancellor flagged up this morning that, on the far side of the new Cabinet in the autumn, there may well be. In that event, is it not now the case that the Minister of Finance will be obliged under the law established for Fresh Start to come to this Chamber and make a statement about the changed financial position, that being a requirement of the British Government for the Fresh Start?

Dr Farry: That may well be the case, but I want to stress that I agree that there may well be a statement this year, but I suspect that the 2016-17 Budget may be spared, although any statements made in the autumn will have application from the 2017-18 financial year onwards. It is in that context where things could begin to unravel to an extent. No matter what way you look at it in terms of precisely when things are going to happen, we are in perilous times. Even if we do not see an economic collapse overnight, that does not mean we are out of the difficult, choppy waters. These things are going to happen over a period of time. Companies will take time to make decisions over what is going to happen. Investment decisions will slowly unravel. We will never actually see the investment decisions that could have been taken that never happened. We will never see the effect of those that we have missed out on.

It does trouble me, and we have heard this from the Chair of the Finance Committee already, about this wonderful

nirvana that we are now entering into, free from the shackles of the European Union. I wonder why we still have countries queueing up to join the European Union, if it is such a straitjacket on your ability to invest resources. Of course, we can do more without state aid rules, but that presupposes that we have a Government that want to actually invest in supporting our industry. You just have to go back to the 1980s, when we were part of the European Union and state aid rules were a bit more lax, and we did not have a Government that wanted to support industry in different ways. So there is no guarantee that, free from the European Union, that is going to happen.

We had Mr Bell talking about the shrinkage of the EU's share of the global economy. Albeit that growth has been slower in the EU than in many other parts of the world, that reflects the fact that we have modern economies in the European Union, where growth has occurred over many decades before. The reason we are seeing an imbalance in the global economy is the very welcome rise in development in many other parts of the world, particularly the Far East, and that is good news.

That, in turn, is where a lot of investment will come from over the coming years. They will look to the European Union to make those investments, not a United Kingdom on the fringes of the European Union.

We also heard the nonsense that there would be lower youth unemployment outside the European Union. The reason that we have different approaches to youth unemployment across the European Union is that different policies on training are applied at the national level. Countries that invest in highly vocational systems of training, including high-level apprenticeships, have lower youth unemployment figures because there is a much stronger match between supply and demand in the economy and because employability skills are taught at an early age. Hence the Germanic countries and Scandinavia have lower rates of unemployment. European countries with national policies that do not follow those models have high youth unemployment. The European Commission is keen to promote vocational training on the Germanic model and show the countries in Europe that do not have good figures that there is a different way. It is important to put that on record.

We have concerns with this Budget as we find it. It is not sufficiently sustainable or strategic. In its current format we have opposed it through the Executive and the Assembly, but we recognise that it will be passed. The world is changing. Looking ahead to the wider context, as is the custom at Final Stage, we are in an extremely difficult situation, and it is important that we are fully alert to the dangers and work closely with the Finance Minister. He has our best wishes for a difficult and challenging job.

Mr Bell: Many Members will be confused about whether parts of this debate belong to the previous debate, so we need to be clear about a number of points so that this does not carry over to debate after debate. The referendum has been held, and the decision of the United Kingdom has been made. The Prime Minister in the House of Commons today was explicit that there would not be a second referendum. My distinguished colleague Gavin Robinson asked the Prime Minister to dismiss the constitutional nonsense that devolved bodies could somehow frustrate the decision of the United Kingdom to go for Brexit, and he did so. And just to clarify for those who came out with the

nonsense of a border poll, the Prime Minister has said that there will not be one.

Now that the decision of the United Kingdom has been made, it is incumbent on all of us to follow the instructions of the people of the United Kingdom and to do our best with the Budget before us. All of us could do more if we had more money. However, we are not tasked to have a debate about fantasies or what might be; we are tasked to deal with the allocation that we have and to show to the people of Northern Ireland effective stewardship of the Budget by delivering something better than they would have got without a devolved Government.

Dr Farry: I thank the Member for giving way. I welcome his repudiation of fantasy budgets. On that basis, can he tell us when we are getting our first share of the £300 million per week that will be returned to us to invest in our hospitals?

Mr Bell: Let me repeat this in case the Member just did not get it: the referendum has been held. Secondly, the people have spoken. Thirdly, we are not going to have a second one. Can we move on to the Budget?

I voted to leave on the basis that I wanted to spend the money that we have in Northern Ireland in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland. When we have considerable difficulties across the board, we should not have been giving the levels of money that we gave to the European Union, when it would be better spent on the most vulnerable people in Northern Ireland, who are suffering. That is not a laughing matter.

5.15 pm

Let us get the point: there is not going to be a border poll or a second referendum. The team has been set up by the Prime Minister to take forward the terms of the Brexit, and it is now incumbent on all of us to do what we can to ensure that we deliver the maximum with the resources that we have.

I turn to the economy. Claire Hanna is not here. I am not sure what she was talking about when she said that we were not going for high-value jobs, nor am I sure where she has been for the last number of years. Anybody who has been in the House or is moderately aware of the jobs that have come into Northern Ireland will know the significance of some of those jobs. I offer two examples. Citigroup came here with 369 jobs and now sits with over 2,000 jobs in Northern Ireland. Ten years ago, we did not have a financial technology industry of the significance that we do today, when the 'Financial Times' refers to us as the fintech capital of the world. We are the most entrepreneurial region of the UK, as defined in the past by the 'Financial Times'. This is the part of the United Kingdom where you can most quickly grow your business to £1 million. In our universities and further education colleges, we have the ability to give our young people the skills in the future areas — not least cybersecurity — that can attract high-value jobs to Northern Ireland.

Dr Farry: Will the Member give way?

Mr Bell: I want to make some progress.

We have to make sure that we look forward and unite across the House to see how we can get those high skills and high-value jobs into Northern Ireland.

I know that the Minister has been active in markets outside the European Union, not least the United States. Earlier, Mr Farry referred to the huge growth in the economies to the east and how we should try to link into them. I come to the Budget debate believing that the British economy is strong and that we are open for business. In the past, we have made a strong contribution in terms of talent. With our education system, we can continue to produce young people who, many businesses and others have told me, are, as a rule of thumb, about 10% ahead of the UK average. Groups like Allstate publicly say that they came to Northern Ireland for our business costs. We all know that our business costs are about 50% or less of those in London, 85%, generally, of those in the rest of the United Kingdom and about 95% of business costs in the Republic of Ireland. We can win on cost, education and talent. I hope that in the future, as the First Minister and Finance Minister outlined, we can make sure that we have a tax rate that will attract investment into Northern Ireland.

You remember that we were told that we could not attract more foreign direct investment than London and that London was a high-water mark, a global city. We were told that we should not try. Yet, sometime around August 2014, we overtook London and attracted more foreign direct investment per head of our population to this part of the United Kingdom than anywhere else.

Dr Farry: Will the Member give way?

Mr Bell: No. There is no reason at all why we cannot continue an upward trajectory.

One thing that has been missed is that we did some sterling work to ensure that we had mitigation measures in place for the most vulnerable in our society, and I pay tribute to Professor Evason on the work that her team and the working group did.

I am not sure that she and the team in their work have got the credit that they deserve for giving us the evidence base to bring forward policies that will mitigate the worst effects of what is a difficult time for many vulnerable people out there. We will do work in the House later on other items that are going to be brought forward in communities. If the referendum has taught us anything, it is that there is a significant disconnect among people who are struggling to get by. This House must be on their side. We must use the mitigation methods that we have at our disposal to help the most vulnerable people in society and show the people in our society —

Ms Mallon: Will the Member give way?

Mr Bell: I am not prepared to play political games with vulnerable people. I am speaking about Professor Evason's report. It is not a joke. It is not a political game. It is about helping the most vulnerable people in our society. I hope that, as we go forward with this Budget, we can continue, with some of the best knowledge base that Professor Evason and her team have given us, to look to help and support the most vulnerable people in our society.

The Minister mentioned it. We will disagree on whether or not there is hope for young people out there. The UK figure of unemployment among under-25s of 13.4% is not acceptable. It is 13.4% too much, but, as I said in the earlier debate, look at the unemployment in Greece of 48.9%, in Spain of 45.3% and in Croatia of 40.3%. While I do not boast about the state of our youth unemployment,

I do welcome the fact that the last set of figures that I saw showed another fall in the overall unemployed. We had more people in employment. Long-term unemployment, economic inactivity — albeit by a small margin — and youth unemployment are falling. It is incumbent on us in this Budget to make sure that that trajectory continues.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I call Mr Declan Kearney. As this is Mr Kearney's first opportunity to speak as a private Member, I remind the House that it is the convention that a maiden speech is made without interruption.

Mr Kearney: Go raibh maith agat, a LeasCheann Comhairle, as ucht na deise labhartha. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. Go raibh maith agat, a chara, agus guím gach rath ortsa san Aireacht úr atá os do chomhair amach anseo. I am honoured to replace my friend and comrade Mitchel McLaughlin in the Assembly and to represent South Antrim. I pay tribute to his role as an architect of the peace process and latterly as Speaker of the House. Since childhood, I have been inspired by a proud Antrim republican tradition founded on the egalitarian and anti-sectarian ideals of Jamie Hope and Roger Casement and the commitment of personal friends now deceased such as Anne McCoy, John Davey, Malachy Carey and Peter Gallagher.

Dearbhaím go bhfuil mé tiomanta mo dhícheall a dhéanamh ar son leas na ndaoine go léir ar bhonn trasphobail. The purpose of the economy must be to serve the needs of society. Budget allocations should be aligned with society's priorities. This small regional economy contends with deep structural weaknesses and depends on a public expenditure settlement from Westminster that has reduced in net terms year on year since 2010 due to the austerity policies of this British Tory Government and the previous Administration of Tories and Lib Dems.

British Government policy has been a direct cause of political instability here in recent years. The North remains a low-wage economy with unyielding and unchanging patterns of social and economic disadvantage and the worst living standards of any region in Ireland or Britain. Tory austerity has run down our public services and forced our people into food banks. It has undermined economic growth and prevented balanced regional investment, job creation, all-Ireland economic competitiveness and the eradication of inequality. Add to all of that the denial of fiscal independence to the Executive.

Austerity is the cost of the Union and the context of the Budget debate, within which the new Programme for Government (PFG) must be implemented. The PFG offers a new policy paradigm, which puts the well-being of community at the heart of governmental decision-making. The proposed consultation process should be embraced as a strategic opportunity by local businesses, our trade unionists, our urban and rural-based community sectors and wider civic society to democratise further the process of government in this state. I urge the Executive to listen carefully, very carefully.

Increased engagement and partnership with wider civic society should now define how our regional government works. Ní mór don Choiste Feidhmiúcháin agus don Tionól malairt slí straitéisteach a mhúnlú amach anseo. A step change is required. Renewed commitment to power-sharing and partnership has to be central to the new

mandate, and that will be as much a test for the parties that chose to go into opposition as it will be for the parties that are entrusted with governmental responsibility. The approach to the forthcoming PFG should be radical, innovative and transformational. It should also refuse to be fettered by institutional orthodoxy and absolutely and resolutely oppose austerity. These institutions need to continue to act as a bulwark against British Tory austerity.

I believe that justice and policing remain central to the continued democratic transformation of this state, and, as my party's justice spokesperson, I will advocate for increased investment in front-line policing, community restorative justice programmes and effective service delivery to make our community a safer place for everyone. Justice agencies and processes must be appropriately resourced to ensure that they administer not only appropriate punishments but deterrence and rehabilitation. The justice system must become more responsive to young people, vulnerable women, disadvantaged families and our elderly citizens, and everyone must have adequate access to justice. That includes the families denied truth and justice because of the British Government's refusal to finance legacy investigations and inquests.

There must also be greater accountability on the use of public funding. In the Public Accounts Committee, I have already noted an absence of transparency and accountability and a culture of disregard concerning the use of public funds in this state. That is never acceptable, especially when our Executive Budget is being raided by Tories and far too many families are living on the breadline. There must be zero tolerance of the misuse and abuse of public funds.

In recent days, the EU referendum has dramatically changed the political and economic landscape here. The majority of voters from across the political spectrum in this state voted to say that the North should remain in Europe. This referendum was always about a civil war between British Conservative right-wing factions, and it is unacceptable that the democratic will of this region should be overruled by English voters. Our economic and financial future is now one of unprecedented uncertainty. Two hundred thousand jobs in Ireland directly and indirectly depend on €1.2 billion worth of trade, North and South, on this island every week. Brexit directly threatens all of that and more.

I have previously challenged Theresa Villiers to say whether Brexit would benefit our people and whether her Government would replace the lost investment, trade and funding that would go with a Brexit. She refused to answer then and has refused since. However, the majority of our people know the answers to those questions, and they registered that answer last Thursday. Their outrage is justified, so Theresa Villiers should follow David Cameron and resign. She has absolutely no authority to represent the economic or social interests of the people of the North of Ireland or on matters regarding Europe. Brexit is the price of Ireland's continued partition.

I predict that we will face an even more right-wing Tory Government and greater austerity in this state.

5.30 pm

The Assembly and Executive should respect and underpin the democratic decision of the North and not, as other

Members advocated, simply roll over and acquiesce. We are better than that. Our urgent focus must be on retaining our special relationship with the EU and protecting the trade, investment and funding that are essential to support our regional and island economies. The Executive's Budget, the Programme for Government and the democratic will of our people must not be held hostage to the anti-democratic agenda of British right-wing Tories.

The British state, as we know it, is in crisis. The political imperative for the Assembly must be to stand up for local democracy and face down the austerity coming from Britain.

Mr McGrath: I want to talk about the many constituency-based issues and priorities that I would like to be in the Budget. I was raised on the old maxim of, "If you don't ask, you don't get", so I would like to take this opportunity to ask. The things I am asking for are relevant to all of Northern Ireland and are the very basic things that we should have. They are the things that protect life, educate our children, help our elderly to feel safe and make our communities better places. In short, they are the things that we should be asking for.

As you all know, I hail from South Down, a rural community that feels exposed and vulnerable, especially when it comes to health matters. I have been an active participant for nearly a decade in the Save the Downe campaign. In that time, we have had life-saving and critical services downgraded or removed from our facility. At times, the trust told us that it was down to personnel issues and that the sunnier climes of Bondi Beach were much more attractive than Newcastle, something that is, I might add, without foundation. On other occasions, we were told that the cuts were financially led. That was the case in the stripping of our coronary care facility, which provided much-needed local heart services, often to the most ill in our community and the elderly. That facility was shut by the trust to make in-year savings of just £300,000. I noted that, in the June monitoring round, nearly £200 million was going to health. I was going to say that I hoped that some of that would trickle its way down so that the Downe Hospital might be able to reopen the facility. However, I got an Assembly answer this afternoon that said, "No, it will not." Once again, we will have to do without.

One of the vulnerabilities most keenly sensed comes from the lack of appropriate ambulance cover, especially in rural areas. My community has had waiting times in excess of an hour for emergency ambulances when somebody has rung 999, which is deplorable. We are failing our elderly population when they must lie, as a constituent of mine had to, for an hour and a half with a broken hip, waiting for an ambulance to come. We are letting our community down when a constituent of mine, who is in the midst of a severe mental health episode and cannot be injected by a paramedic, has to wait two hours for a doctor to come out to help her. We are letting people down. In a case that I had, for example, a young lad who had broken his leg had to wait two and a half hours for an ambulance to come and provide basic care.

The service is staffed by some of the most competent life-saving individuals in our health system, but they are pushed to their limits. They miss meal breaks and stay late after work. That is unfair.

Ms Mallon: I thank the Member for giving way. He shared a story about a constituent suffering a severe mental

health episode. Does he agree that we need greater investment in our mental health services, particularly early intervention support and within the community? Would he, like me, welcome hearing the Minister's views on any plans the Executive might have to put investment in physical and mental health on a more equal footing?

Mr McGrath: I thank my colleague for her intervention. I know that some reports published in England have stated that it is a necessity to try to provide mental health coverage as close as possible to patients to enable them not to have to travel long distances, as that can have a detrimental impact. There therefore needs to be financial intervention to help the mental health services in Northern Ireland.

We have to resource our Ambulance Service adequately, and I would like to see this Budget specifically mention that. I ask the Minister to consider additional funds for the Ambulance Service. I do not mean just a few quid to sticky-tape over the problem. It needs wholesale financing to allow it to respond to our rural population in particular.

I want to see an education budget that goes much further than the one that we have at present. A few extra quid periodically may have helped grease the odd ministerial visit —

Mrs Palmer: Thank you very much for giving way. You highlighted inefficiencies in the Ambulance Service. Do you agree that it is despicable that, this year, 33 calls have been diverted to Scotland, which, in turn, slowed the delivery of an ambulance to an urgent case?

Mr McGrath: I welcome the intervention, which further highlights the pressure that our staff are under. If staff in a call centre are not able to deal with the pressure, that too needs some resolution. I know that staff there are dealing with immense pressure, as are staff in the ambulances.

I was saying that the few extra quid for education that may have greased the odd ministerial visit in the previous mandate is not going to help, because our schools are at breaking point. This week, probably even today, they have been taking decisions on whether to let staff go. They have been contemplating letting more-experienced staff go so that they can employ cheaper, newly qualified staff, and they are shedding classroom assistants, who are critical to the delivery of tailored education for some. Schools are stripping away the curriculum support that our children get, in the form of field trips and study visits, and diluting classroom resources that complement learning. We are taking the additional out of education and leaving stressed teachers with little support in the classroom and increasing class sizes, yet we throw in the Education and Training Inspectorate inspectors and expect them to see a miracle.

We must adequately resource our schools and allow our education system to deliver children's fullest potential. The current debacle of passing on the superannuation and pay increases to school budgets is so short-sighted that whoever decided that the Department should not step in and help should be sent to detention. School budgets are definitely like balloons at the minute. They are filled to capacity, and this decision is like a pin, and it is going to cause them to burst. It will impact on education and on our children. It is a bad decision and is being implemented without any help. As I said, it impacts on our children and their future, and for the Budget and this Executive not to address that is unforgivable.

I also hope that the short-sighted and ill-thought-out campaign by the three Brexiteers of England, Wales and the DUP does not mean that we will not see a direct and detrimental impact on tourism in Northern Ireland. It is the jewel in the crown. In South Down, we are well aware of that. We have Saint Patrick's Country around Downpatrick and the fantastic Saint Patrick Centre in the town centre, with St Patrick's grave at Down cathedral. We also roll right the way through to Murlough and Newcastle and down to Carlingford bay.

South Down does indeed have it all. We have the forest parks, hiking, world-class golf courses and tourist centres. I am doing a good advertising job for the area. The population in Northern Ireland is small, however. We must be outward-looking, and I hope that we can adequately resource Tourism NI and charge it with bringing in visitors from these islands and beyond. Our product is unique in Northern Ireland, and I do not need to rehearse it. Unless we make the effort to reach out and sell our area, however, the return is going to be low. I accept the maxim that you have to speculate to accumulate, and it is so true with tourism. I hope that the Budget can direct much-needed additional funds to tourism sellers to equip them to do our area justice.

The impact that the tourism industry can have on our local economy is massive. That is certainly the case in South Down, where so many jobs, businesses and households rely on the income from tourists. If we cannot maximise that benefit, it is families in my area that will be impacted.

The Budget is for eye-watering amounts of money, and I know that Members from all sides will make their case for priorities, but I have focused on the few that are priorities for my constituents: health, education and tourism. I hope that those can be reflected in the final out-turns to the Departments. Northern Ireland can be better if the funds the Executive distribute are allocated and spent correctly. However, I fear that this Budget will do little to achieve that.

Mr McNulty: I rise to speak specifically on how the Budget will affect our people: our businesses, our farmers, our healthcare users, our tradesmen and our newcomers. Newry and Armagh is a great constituency. However, things are not all positive. There are constant threats to services in Daisy Hill in Newry. The withdrawal of services in Armagh city is hitting our people hard. Hard-working families, the vulnerable and the elderly are constantly being squeezed. Our young people need jobs at home, and our education system needs fixed. We need real investment in our roads, rail and communications infrastructure, and we need solutions to the problems facing our farmers and rural communities.

As a member of the Infrastructure Committee, I will highlight public transport. Thousands of people in my constituency get in their car every morning and travel to Belfast because there is inadequate rail provision. I know that many of those people would much prefer to use the train for their commute to work. Over the past number of years, we have seen rail services between Belfast and Newry becoming less frequent and more expensive. There are 46 trains from Portadown to Belfast every day and only 10 from Newry. The last train for Portadown leaves Belfast at 11.00 pm; the last train for Newry leaves at 8.00 pm. I have previously asked the Minister for Infrastructure what he intends to do to address that inequality in rail provision, and I repeat that call today. Northern Ireland must have a

modern rail infrastructure, and we must see the continued development of a modern railway system throughout the North and across the island.

A vibrant and equitable economy cannot operate without a modern road network. Chronic underinvestment in the past means that Northern Ireland's road network is no longer fit for purpose. The SDLP wants to see a roads strategy using 20 years' modelling and agreed in cooperation with the Dublin Government. In the situation in which we now find ourselves, that cooperation is even more crucial.

Alongside delivering roads, the maintenance of our current roads is vital. I also called on the Minister to prioritise rural road repairs. He knows so well, being from a rural constituency, of the impact of dangerous driving conditions and the damage and danger that they cause. Investment in road upgrades will continue to help to improve road safety and ensure access across the North. So far, in my short time on the Committee, I have seen that the outlook is bleak. We have heard about the 9% budget cut and the £1 billion backlog in investment. The Minister and the departmental officials did not seem to have any suggestions about how to deal with that backlog other than trying to keep on top of it, which does not fill us with much confidence. If that is the way in which the Department deals with issues such as road maintenance, we are right to be concerned. How does it plan to deliver all of the A5 and A6, never mind the much-needed east link and north and west link roads in Armagh and the southern relief road in Newry? Minister, can you tell me how much of the Northern Ireland Executive's Budget is match funded by the EU?

Moving back to my constituency and turning to health, I reiterate the words of my colleague Mark H Durkan: we need to spend money on health much more wisely, as opposed to just spending more. Daisy Hill Hospital and its emergency department are vital resources for our community. Recently, there have been discussions about staff shortages and the failure to fill publicly advertised posts. Health trusts have collectively spent over £50 million on temporary staff alone. They should focus on reducing that and recruiting permanent staff as a cost-saving measure.

5.45 pm

Report after report on high waiting times, coupled with the recent Assembly debate on waiting times, highlights the need for urgent action. By addressing those problems, the Minister can begin to tackle emergency room waiting times, which have spiralled out of control. People in my constituency are angry because they feel that decisions about healthcare are made to save pennies rather than to save lives. They do not want to travel further and longer for healthcare treatment or wait longer for consultations and essential treatments.

We have already seen the potential for cross-border initiatives with the new radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin. That is a pioneering project in terms of North/South cooperation, facilitated by our membership of the EU. In Newry and Armagh, we hope that that type of relationship can be extended to other border communities to pool resources and expertise and help our people. The question that the Finance Minister has to answer is this: how has Brexit impacted on our ability to expand services on a cross-border basis?

I live in a border constituency. An estimated 30,000 people cross the border every day, a large proportion of whom are from Newry and Armagh. I have been out speaking with people, and last week's referendum result has left a sense of shock. People are worried about the consequences for them. The result has huge ramifications, not only for people in Newry and Armagh but for Ireland. I have spoken to our farmers in south Armagh, and they want to know if the single farm payment is guaranteed for the next two years. They want to know if the export of live lamb to the South will continue. They have huge concerns. Minister, are you not worried about the tractors coming hurtling up the avenue because the farmers have not received their subsidies? They will not be coming to see me; they will be coming to see the First Minister and they will be coming to see you. Where is your plan?

People in our tourism industry are worried about the images we are sending out to the world as an outcome of last week's vote. I have talked to our newcomers in Armagh city. They say that nobody knows what is going on or what the future holds for them. They are worried about travelling and their jobs. Can you reassure them? They want answers.

I have met industry in Newry city. They are worried about their competitiveness. Will there be tariffs? They want answers.

What are the implications for Invest NI? An outcome of Friday's decision is that access to market now has a big question mark over it. Will Invest NI have no certainty for two and a half years? What do they do now? Do they just press the pause button?

I have spoken to our voluntary and charitable sector. They have had sleepless nights. How is your Budget linked to the charitable organisations? They say that, without EU funding, they will not have jobs. Can you reassure them?

I have spoken to our tradesmen, men who leave in their vans for Dublin every morning. They are worried about the impact that Brexit will have on them. Can you give them any comfort?

Many of our major stakeholders do not know, as of last Friday, the status of their budget. The QUB cancer researchers, the aeronautical researchers and other higher education research departments rely heavily on EU funding. For us to remain competitive, we need a strong tertiary education system with strong research functions. What reassurance can you give them? What is your plan?

How relevant is your Budget now, given Friday's outcome? Does it need to be rethought? It is not my intention to catastrophise. The tsunami has landed; we are where we are, and we need cool heads. We are in the situation that we are in, and the First Minister's party proposed this. We need to see leadership from her and from the Minister of Finance. We need to see her plan. This has so many implications across our society and across our Ireland. On this island, 30 out of 32 counties want to remain part of the EU. This outcome has disrupted relationships at best.

Our leadership has a duty to be conciliatory and not triumphalist. Unionists need to reflect on the disuniting nature of this outcome. For the Irish Republic to remain part of the EU, it must now join the Schengen agreement, which, inevitably, will lead to a hard border, but where?

The land border must move to the island of Britain. This decision will have an impact on all our islands.

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I thank everyone who contributed. I see that it has proved too much for the Chair of the Finance Committee because she left after 15 minutes, but I want to thank her and her Committee for granting accelerated passage for the Bill. I will start at the end, as I am wont to, by dealing with Mr McNulty's points. It is the first time that I have been blamed for Brexit; there is a first time for everything.

I want to give him advice for when people come to him to say that they are worried. We had a small group of sixth-form pupils here today from Omagh who were very concerned, worried, fretful and trepidatious about the future. The first thing that we have to do in showing the cool heads that the Member asked for is to assure everyone that we have a firm hand on the tiller. There is chaos in London and there is absolute uncertainty and a lack of leadership. It is clear from all sides in the aftershocks of Brexit that there is a lack of clarity in London about the way to proceed. However, there is no lack of clarity in this House. We differed on the vote before it happened and we still differ afterwards on its outcome and how it will proceed, but the one thing that we are united on is that we will act in the best interests of our people.

The Member mentioned newcomers, and they come not only from EU states but from other parts of the world. They are anxious because of the tone of some of the debate. The first thing that we should say is that we are here to protect the newcomers and that we respect them and will defend their right to be here. We say to young people who are worried about being cut off from the beauty and bounty of Europe that we will insist that they remain at the heart of Europe. We say to those in the border regions in particular, although it applies to Belfast as well, I can assure you, who fear being cut off from the rest of this island, that we will ensure that our destiny and that of the rest of this island is wedded together in the time ahead.

To those in receipt of European or Invest NI funding, who depend on INTERREG or transnational funding in Wales and in both parts of this island, we should say that it is our intention to ensure the continuity and success of their funding. Do we know how this will shake out in the medium or long term? We do not. We were, of course, anxious and we resisted the policies of Mr Cameron, but I fear that his successors have even less of a clue about how to proceed with building jobs, especially in this part of the world. Maybe they are experts in looking after the south-east or parts of London, but I fear that those who replace Mr Cameron will have even less regard, if that is possible, for the desires of our people to have good housing, sustainable jobs, and a good quality of life.

I spoke to the Special EU Programmes Body on Friday and I said that it has to be business as usual and that we cannot give in to fear. The alternative is to sit on our hands and wait for the new Brexit ideologues in London to come forward with ideas. We have to steady our ship — I missed parts of the Brexit debate — and send out word from everyone in the House that we are determined and resolved to act to safeguard the interests of all our people.

I will add one other thing. Mr McNulty is a big fan of the railway network and wants it improved. I am in favour of that as well. I travelled by train from Dublin last week and we stopped in Newry, which has a wonderful train

station. I cannot remember the name of the Minister who ensured that it was built. We stopped in Newry, and two ladies beside me from Bangor asked me whether Newry was in the North or South, presumably because they saw the bilingual signage. I was able — I do not know whether it was with regret or not — to tell them that Newry remains in the North. I am in favour of investment in all this infrastructure. I think that my colleague Chris Hazzard will bring that forward in the time ahead.

Ms Pengelly has left us, but I have never heard as sunny a depiction of the future under Brexit as that which she outlined. I do not know what she is on with regard to Brexit, but I think that a lot of people need it because Neil Gibson's Oxford Economics report, which was delivered on the watch of the previous Minister — he may not have commissioned it — said that, in every criterion and outcome, Brexit is bad for us. Mr Gibson of Oxford Economics said that —

Ms Mallon: Will the Minister give way?

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I will in just one minute, when I finish this. He reckoned that Brexit was bad for our neighbours across the water and of course for the South, but he said that, on every index, Brexit would be worse for us because we share a land border with the South of Ireland, depend so much on manufacturing and rely on FDI. Rather than having a sunny outlook, I have not heard even the advocates and those who said that we should vote "Leave" posit such a bright and positive future under Brexit.

I will give way.

Ms Mallon: I very much appreciate the Minister's giving way. I would like to get some clarity from him on the narrative that we are hearing a lot today about this joint strategy to protect the best interests of Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin's position is very clearly that our best interests lie within Europe, and the DUP fundamentally believes that they are best served out of Europe. Sinn Féin has an understanding and analysis of the impact of a Brexit vote that is fundamentally different from that of the DUP. It would be really useful if we could get some light shed on what this joint strategy will look like, considering that you hold polar opposite views on nearly every issue to do with Europe.

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I thank the Member for her question. Maybe she was not here when the First Minister spoke earlier and outlined that strategy. In fact, I think that that common purpose does unite us, but let me just say again what I have said in the media several times: in my view, the majority of people in the Six Counties voted to remain in Europe, and that vote should be respected and recognised. I do not accept the right of anyone to drag us out of Europe. I will stand by the best interests of the people here and make common purpose with anyone from any part of this House or elsewhere who wants to stand with me in doing that.

I think that I will leave Ms Pengelly's comments, since she has left us, except that she did mention the memorandum of understanding. For other members on the Committee, we are still working on a memorandum of understanding about the Budget process. Work is proceeding. It is not proceeding as quickly as we might want it to, but I hope to have that memorandum of understanding in place.

It is good to be back at the dance hall with Mr Smith. He is back where he was: at the slow dance. He was saying that

no one else has a plan for the economy, but unfortunately he has no plan for the economy either. He is now telling us that we have no plan post-Brexit, but he has no plan either. What I would suggest on both counts is that he should come forward with his alternative plan for growing the economy and let us assess it and take a decision on whether it is a cogent plan or a plan which does not hold water, and let us and the people then vote on how sensible that plan is. The Achilles heel of Mr Smith's argument is that I can say, hand on heart, that no one in my party voted for Brexit, but I can also say that I stood outside Botanic Primary School with a member of the Unionist Party who was canvassing and urging people to vote "Leave". If you have some advice on how we should respond to Brexit, I suggest that you first speak to your own members who were telling people that it was in their interests.

Of course, the second fault line in Mr Smith's argument is that while he bemoans austerity — he certainly decries my attacks on austerity — his party supports it. I have seen no evidence yet that he will oppose resolutely the austerity coming from London — the 4-5% decrease in our resource budget between now and 2021, or the cut in our budgets from 2010. You cannot have your cake and eat it on this one, Mr Smith.

Either you need to tell us that you are opposed to austerity and will oppose it, or you have to admit that you accept that the Tories in their wisdom — *mar dhea* — have the right to assault and cut our budgets.

6.00 pm

I absolutely stand over the outcome and processes of the June monitoring round, and I think that the public will endorse that. Some people said that it was a June monitoring round in June, which, in itself, was praiseworthy. Not only was it the fastest June monitoring round but it delivered over £170 million into services and needs, which our people were requesting. If that is not a good way to do business and he wants to go back to horse-trading and stop-start, I am afraid that I am not an advocate of that. Whether or not, of course, we have the same type of money in our budgets in October for the next monitoring round is another matter.

Other Members talked about the effect of Brexit, and Mr Farry touched on it. This is a 2016-17 Budget, and it is my hope that it will not be affected by the Brexit vote. That said, that should not be taken to mean that I do not think that the damaging effects of Brexit will not be felt immediately. I think that they will be felt immediately. A lot of decisions are being taken in business, and I am not going to relay conversations that I have had with other people, which perhaps would prove my point, because I do not think that this is the place to do it, but there are conversations taking place even day that indicate to me that the impact of Brexit will be immediate and will not be helpful, and I will not say any more than that. So, you never know, the October monitoring round could be an attempt to minimise some of the damage of Brexit. That said, I think that the budgets will hold. There may be some extra money needed to help people to deal with the aftershock of Brexit. If so, we will have to deal with that in the monitoring round, but I think that this Budget holds.

That said, there is no chance that we can proceed with our budgets for the period ahead as we had hoped to later in the year oblivious to Brexit. Brexit is the most damaging,

fundamental change that we have seen in our economic circumstances in 40 years. It would be unwise, and I say this again in relation to corporation tax and all the other issues, for any of us to proceed ramstam into the future thinking that the plans that we had on Thursday are good enough for today. So, let us take stock together, let us assess where we are and let us proceed confidently to protect our interests but not be naive about the huge damage, chaos and crisis that has been triggered by Brexit.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a thabhairt do mo chomrádaí, John O'Dowd, as aird a tharraingt arís ar an dochar a rinneadh le linn na géarchéime eacnamaíochta a thosaigh in 2007. I thank John O'Dowd for pointing out that many of our woes date back to the economic crash, and, in fact, the irony is that Brexit perhaps has its roots in the crash of 2007-08. I look forward to looking at all the options ahead. If that includes prudent borrowing, so be it.

The reform programme that he and I defend has been a success thus far. Some £4.5 million was allocated in the Budget to take forward the programme during 2016-17, and, during 2016-17, the programme work will focus on undertaking feasibility studies to establish the full potential of each reform. Our mission is to improve our services and to be more effective, but can we do it at a lower cost so that we can free money up for education, the economy and other matters?

Ms Hanna returned to the Budget that she does not like but does not have an alternative to. She is not sure that the £1 billion that we had promised for health will be sustainable. I share that. It has been echoed by everyone in this House that money alone will not resolve the deep-seated problems in the health service. Therefore, when we spend money in the time ahead and make sure that the health service has the financial resources that it needs, we are cognisant of that. It is to the fore of our minds that money alone will not solve the problem. I agree with that, but I say again that, if the SDLP or Ms Hanna have an alternative to this Budget, I would like to see it, and when we do see it, we can make up our mind on whether it is anything other than a wish list.

As the Minister of Finance, I state again, as I have stated many times, that I would like all the fiscal levers, not just corporation tax but income tax, air passenger duty and stamp duty. I would like all those taxes. The issue is what we do with them when we have them, and I stand behind that, even as we assess the landscape ahead.

Ms Hanna said that she opposes the Budget Bill because the Executive are not investing enough in our infrastructure and in childcare. I think that you will find that our infrastructural investment will increase. There have been years of unprecedented cutbacks in capital expenditure because of the Tory policies and the allocation in the spending settlement, but I think that you will find that infrastructure will be increased. As for childcare, let us not forget the flagship projects. I know that we have a Member who wanted to stop, I think, all seven flagship projects previously, but let us not forget the new women and children's hospital, which demonstrates our commitment to improving and building on our services to women and children.

Some Members mentioned working closely with our colleagues in Scotland and Wales. I have met the Finance Minister for Scotland, Mr Mackay. Some of us were calling him Mr Mackie, but I was informed recently that it

is Mr Mackay. I also met Minister Drakeford from Wales. We have had one useful meeting. I met each of those gentlemen. We have a lot of issues in common, not least our belief that, when we speak together for 10 million people, the Treasury does listen. However, our meetings took place pre-Brexit, and the urgent need to meet again is not lost on any of us. I spoke to Mr Mackay on Friday. The three Ministers will meet in Cardiff on 11 July, and, as you might expect, all the issues that we had on the table are now being relegated, and the exit from the European Union is being brought to the fore and will dominate our conversations. I do not know whether Ms Hanna or someone else brought it up, but the Chancellor, George Osborne, requested that meeting. That might give you an indication of the depth of the crisis because, for the last three years, he has been refusing to meet us. It is essential that we meet Mr Osborne. It is equally important to me that we meet the Finance Minister in the South, Mr Noonan, and Mr Donohoe, who handles public expenditure, because we need to make sure that those who are on the other side of the negotiating table with the 27 states not only understand where we are coming from but will defend, as Mr Farry said, the fact that a majority here voted to remain. That is at the front and centre.

Mr Stalford: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. The Minister outlined earlier that the Executive will work very closely to ensure the best possible outcomes following the vote in the European referendum. He will be aware that the Finance Minister in Wales advocated a "Remain" vote but that the majority of Welsh people voted to leave. Does he agree that, regardless of the position of the Government of Wales, the Finance Minister in his country will be doing his best to work for the benefit of the people of Wales and that that is what the Executive should do as well?

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I thank the Member for his question, and I look forward to bringing that up with the Minister from Wales when we meet shortly.

It pains me to say this, but Mr Farry speaks a lot of sense when he says that we need to reduce the cost of division, invest to save and make sure that, in the time ahead, regardless of what direction the economy goes in — hopefully, despite Brexit, it will be a forward direction — we invest in skills and investment. He makes a good point about what will replace European funding, and I think that, in the last three years, it has been around £350 million per annum from Europe. He will have noted that the Secretary of State, Ms Villiers, has refused point blank to give a guarantee that she will replace the moneys that were received under the SEUPB, the Horizon 2020 programme, INTERREG or the many other programmes. While I agree that the Member has his finger on the pulse of many issues, he is wrong in saying that this is not a sustainable Budget and that we have made the wrong choices. There are budget choices to be made, and, even in regard to the opportunity cost that he speaks of, we have made the right choices.

In relation to his particular interest, he will be aware that an additional £5 million was committed to the Department for the Economy in the Budget to contribute to the skills enhancement agenda. He will also be aware that the previous Finance Minister left a "promissory note", as he called it, for £20 million, and we have honoured that. I want

to assure him that we are on one page when it comes to investing in skills and in higher and further education.

Mr Bell was still in ministerial mode and talked up our economy. I agree with him about the great work that has been done, especially by our entrepreneurs, to create business. We have a very talented workforce and people who are deeply entrepreneurial and want to build a successful society. However, I have to say as well that we should not be blind to the crisis that is unfolding and the difficulties that we will face in the time ahead in making sure that international talent, especially from the European Union, wants to come here to work and live. I endorse his comments about the great work done by our businesses.

Dr Farry: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. It is an important point that builds on the comments of Jonathan Bell. I pay tribute to the work that he has done, particularly in the Far East. All three of us have done work in different capacities over the past five years to work for investment into Northern Ireland. Will the Minister comment on his experience? In all his work, has he ever come across a single business that advocated that Northern Ireland would be better off outside the European Union? *[Interruption.]*

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I believe that, in the trade, that is called a leading question. Those are the difficulties that we face. I know that he said that in jest, but the hardest job of all is the job of Alastair Hamilton, the CEO of Invest NI, and we wish him well in the time ahead in dealing with the particular predicament that he has been placed in by Brexit.

Ba mhaith liom cúpla focal a rá faoi mo chomrádaí Declan Kearney —

Mr Bell: Will the Minister give way?

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Of course, yes.

Mr Bell: I wonder whether he will want to comment on some very positive news. I think that we all understand that it is a very difficult job in Invest Northern Ireland, but it is one that has been done hugely successfully by Alastair Hamilton. I understand that he said that he was talking to two Boston firms that were about to invest, and they were not nonplussed at all about the fact that Britain has voted for Brexit.

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Perhaps I should put on the record that I spoke to Alastair Hamilton on Friday and to his — I do not know whether it is his father — Simon Hamilton, the Minister. *[Laughter.]* I also spoke to the vice-president of the European Investment Bank and, as I said earlier, the directors of the SEUPB. Everyone is determined to steady the ship, but no one is blind to the challenges ahead.

Ba mhaith liom cúpla focal a rá faoi mo chomrádaí Declan Kearney, a labhair faoin bhuiséad. Thug sé le fios, ar ndóigh, gur laghdaíodh ar na Buiséid ó 2010. Tá sin fíor. Dúirt sé go bhfuil bealach fada le treabhadh againn sula mbeidh eacnamaíocht agus geilleagar láidir againn, agus aontaím leis sin. Labhair sé go láidir in aghaidh na déine. I welcome and thank my colleague and comrade Declan Kearney and commend him on his maiden speech. He pointed out some valuable contextual points. We talked about the crash earlier, but the DEL resource budget has been reducing since 2010. Despite the success of many of the companies that we have attracted here, we remain a low-wage economy, and that is not acceptable to me. The

self-defeating ideology of austerity certainly undermined our growth in the past.

In all the debates — several times — Mr Attwood has invited me to make a statement to the Assembly on the Budget. I can assure him again, as I have assured him previously, that the Budget (No. 2) Bill and my statement will stand. If there are any changes to the block grant in the time ahead, I will return to the House with a statement in that regard. However, the Budget (No. 2) Bill has been written into the Executive's agreed Budget for 2016-17. There have been no changes to the block grant following the referendum, although it is early days, and we do not know what perils lie ahead. I assure him and other Members that, if there any changes in circumstances, I will make a statement to the House. I add the caveat that the job of preparing a Budget in September just got considerably more difficult.

I welcome the comments of Mr Colin McGrath. I tried desperately to get the Health Minister, the Infrastructure Minister and the Education Minister on the phone. He made strong points for his constituency. I think the Education Minister was the only one who got my call and came down to the House. I think they are strong points. I visited South Down, recently. You focused particularly on tourism. I think South Down deserves a greater share of the tourism peace dividend.

I would like to see Ireland's Ancient East extended across the border. It is bonkers that it stops at Dundalk. If we could extend it, in conjunction with the Narrow Water bridge, I think we would let people enjoy the great treasures of south Down. Tourism has created more jobs south of the border in the last four years than any other sector. I met Niall Gibbons of Tourism Ireland in Dublin, last Thursday, I think, and we discussed how we could do more to attract more visitors north of the border. We mentioned in particular south Down, and he has made a commitment to visit south Down in the near future.

6.15 pm

The area that continues to give me some cause for worry — you touched on it — is the willingness of people to visit from the South of the country. That is the responsibility of Tourism NI. In the Budget, we provide £27 million for Tourism NI and, I think, around £10 million or £11 million for Tourism Ireland. One of the many responsibilities of Tourism NI is attracting visitors from south of the border. Those numbers have not been growing. They give us all cause for concern. I can assure you that in my role as Finance Minister — I am not responsible for tourism — I will be asking that we get more bang for our buck. Terence Brannigan, chair of Tourism NI, was in earlier, and I know that that is his wish as well. We need to grow the tourism numbers from south of the border. In that respect, and to finish with Mr McGrath's comments, is Brexit helpful to that? I will let you answer that yourself. I am happy to pass on the issues on the Downe Hospital, and the other issues, or to have the Ministers pick them up, including the education issue. The Minister is now here.

I started with Justin McNulty, and I will finish with him. I know that he is unhappy with the Budget, but, in the round, do we have enough money? Demand is infinite, and the amount of money available is finite. In the Budget, we have made choices, and I stand by those choices. Agriculture has received £200 million; Communities, £820 million;

Economy, £814 million; Education, £2 billion; Finance, £141 million; Health, £4.7 billion; Infrastructure, £372 million; Justice, £1 billion; and the Executive Office, £62 million, with the vast majority of that to be redistributed to other organisations. I believe that I present to the House a Budget that will meet our needs in the time ahead, even in this time of crisis and economic peril.

If I missed any Members or questions, I will be happy to address them if they write to me. Ba mhaith an óráid a chríochnú. I will bring my remarks to a close. I believe that the Budget Bill is essential to provide our Departments with the legislative cover they need. As I outlined in my opening speech, the decisions that we as an Administration take have wide-ranging and long-term consequences for everyone in this state. I hope that all Members will keep that in mind and do what is right for the people we serve. On that note, I commend to Members the Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Before we proceed to the Question, I advise Members that, as this is a Budget Bill, the motion requires cross-community support.

Question put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 54; Noes 29.

AYES

Nationalist

Ms Archibald, Mr Boylan, Ms Boyle, Ms Dillon, Ms Fearon, Mr Hazzard, Mr Kearney, Mr Lynch, Mr McAleer, Mr F McCann, Ms J McCann, Mr McCartney, Mr McElduff, Mr McMullan, Mr Maskey, Mr Milne, Mr Murphy, Mr Ó Muilleoir, Mr O'Dowd, Mrs O'Neill, Ms Seeley, Mr Sheehan.

Unionist:

Mr Anderson, Mr Bell, Ms P Bradley, Mr K Buchanan, Mr T Buchanan, Ms Bunting, Mrs Cameron, Mr Clarke, Mr Douglas, Mr Dunne, Mr Easton, Mr Frew, Mr Girvan, Mrs Hale, Mr Hamilton, Mr Humphrey, Mr Irwin, Mrs Little Pengelly, Ms Lockhart, Mr Logan, Mr Lyons, Mr McCausland, Miss McIlveen, Mr Middleton, Lord Morrow, Mr Poots, Mr Robinson, Mr Ross, Mr Stalford, Mr Storey, Mr Weir, Mr Wells.

Tellers for the Ayes: Mr Boylan and Mr Robinson.

NOES

Nationalist

Ms S Bradley, Mr Durkan, Mr Eastwood, Ms Hanna, Mr McCrossan, Mr McGlone, Mr McGrath, Mr McNulty, Mr McPhillips, Mr Mullan.

Unionist:

Mr Aiken, Mr Allen, Mr Allister, Mrs Barton, Mr Beattie, Mr Beggs, Mr Butler, Mr Chambers, Mrs Dobson, Mr Nesbitt, Mrs Palmer, Mr Smith, Mr Swann.

Other

Mr Agnew, Ms Armstrong, Mr Dickson, Dr Farry, Mr Ford, Mr Lunn.

Tellers for the Noes: Mr Aiken and Mr McGrath.

<i>Total Votes</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>Total Ayes</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>[65.1%]</i>
<i>Nationalist Votes</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>Nationalist Ayes</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>[68.8%]</i>
<i>Unionist Votes</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>Unionist Ayes</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>[71.1%]</i>
<i>Other Votes</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Other Ayes</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>[0.0%]</i>

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved (with cross-community support):

That the Budget (No. 2) Bill [NIA Bill 1/16-21] do now pass.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I advise Members that, at half-time, Italy were leading Spain 1-0.

I ask Members to take their ease while changes are made at the top Table.

(Mr Deputy Speaker [Mr McGlone] in the Chair)

Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): The next three motions are to approve statutory rules relating to welfare supplementary payments. The Business Committee has agreed that there should be a single debate during which the Minister and Members should address all three motions. I shall ask the Clerk to read the first motion and call on the Minister to move it. The debate on all three motions will then begin. When all who wish to speak have done so, I shall put the Question on the first motion. The second motion will then be read into the record, and I will call on the Minister to move it. The Question will then be put on that motion. After the Question has been put on the second motion, the third motion will be read into the record, and I will call on the Minister to move it. The Question will then be put on that motion. If that is clear — I hope that it is — I shall proceed.

The Minister for Communities has written to the Speaker to indicate that he is not available to move the motions on the Order Paper in his name. The Minister of Education has therefore agreed to move the motions on his behalf.

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): I beg to move

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

The following motions stood in the Order Paper:

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Premiums) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the more observant Members of the House will see that I am not the Minister for Communities. I have, however, received assurance from him that if there are any mistakes made this evening he will of course tender his resignation in the morning. [Laughter.] I seek the Assembly's approval for the Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016. The regulations are being brought in under article 137 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 and will make provision for mitigating changes to welfare benefits introduced under article 82 of the Order. The three draft statutory rules were approved by the Communities Committee on 16 June.

This is the second tranche of regulations to be made following publication of the welfare reform mitigations working group proposals. The group advised on how the Executive should help the most vulnerable as a consequence of the introduction of changes to the welfare system. I thank Professor Evason and her colleagues on the working group for the work completed in bringing forward recommendations to the Executive that were subsequently endorsed on 21 January.

I seek the Assembly's approval for three sets of regulations that will introduce mitigation payments to claimants impacted by the loss of disability living allowance (DLA),

disability premiums and carer's payments. The regulations will enable the Department for Communities to implement mitigation payments to claimants impacted by the introduction of the personal independence payment (PIP). PIP was introduced to Northern Ireland on 20 June 2016 and will replace disability living allowance for working-age claimants who are aged between 16 and 64.

As there are different eligibility criteria for PIP, all existing DLA claimants of working age, of whom there are approximately 125,000 in Northern Ireland, will be required to claim and be reassessed for PIP. The Department will notify all DLA working-age claimants when they are required to claim PIP. Provided that claimants make their claim for PIP when requested to do so, they will continue to receive their DLA payments as normal through the reassessment process until four weeks after the eligibility for PIP has been determined.

The first set of regulations to be considered provide mitigation support to existing DLA claimants who are financially worse off following reassessment for PIP. There are three categories where mitigation payments may be made under the Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations for the loss of disability living allowance. Two of those support claimants who have been refused PIP, and the third is available to claimants who are awarded PIP but at a reduced rate, compared with what they were receiving under DLA. Existing DLA claimants who appeal to tribunal or, subsequently, to a Social Security Commissioner, after not qualifying for PIP on reassessment, will receive mitigation payments equal to the weekly rates of their DLA payments until the date that the Department is notified of the appeal process but not beyond 31 March 2020.

Secondly, claimants who qualify for PIP at a reduced rate and whose weekly loss is £10 or more will receive mitigation payments for up to one year but not beyond 31 March 2020. The mitigation payments will be equal to 75% of the loss; that is, 75% of the difference in weekly benefit between the claimant's previous DLA payment and the new rate of payment for PIP.

Thirdly, claimants who do not qualify for PIP but are awarded between four and seven points under the PIP assessment criteria in either of the two components can, if they show that their disability is as a result of a conflict-related incident, qualify for a payment equivalent to the standard rate of either component, whichever is more advantageous. That will be paid for up to one year but again not beyond 31 March 2020. It is expected that most existing DLA claimants who have a conflict-related injury will successfully migrate from DLA to PIP. In the event that someone with such an injury does not qualify for PIP, it is anticipated, in the first instance, that they will choose to avail themselves of mitigation payments under the appeal category.

Claimants may avail themselves of payments under only one of those three categories of the welfare supplementary payments for loss of disability living allowance at any time.

The regulations also provide for scenarios where PIP is subsequently awarded or where an existing award is changed and how this affects the mitigation payment.

Let me now turn to claimants in receipt of disability premiums. Disability premiums, or elements, are additional payments that are made to claimants on income-related

benefits or working tax credit who are also in receipt of DLA. The welfare supplementary payments for loss of disability premiums will enable those claimants who lose entitlement to one or more of the disability premiums or the severe disability element of working tax credit as a result of being reassessed from DLA to PIP to receive mitigation payments to cover their loss for up to one year. Eligible claimants must be in receipt of DLA and the relevant social security benefit or working tax credit on the date that they transition from DLA to PIP.

The third set of regulations relates to carers. Claimants who currently receive a carer premium, carer's allowance, income support or an additional amount for caring in the state pension credit will experience a loss of benefit if the person whom they currently provide care for is reassessed from DLA to PIP and does not qualify for the daily living component of PIP. In this scenario, as there would no longer be entitlement to a benefit paid for providing care, the carer would be negatively financially impacted. The Evason working group recommended provision of a supplementary payment to those eligible who experience such a loss of benefit. Following the introduction of PIP in Northern Ireland, carers impacted in this way will receive a mitigation payment equal to the value of the carer award lost for up to one year from the date that their entitlement ceases. Payments to carers will be equal to the loss of the award incurred except for claimants receiving income support on the basis of providing care. In this case, the payment will be equal to the standard rate of carer's allowance.

There will be some common provisions relating to all of the mitigation payments that I have outlined here today. First, there will be a basic requirement that all claimants must be ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland and that they continue to reside here while payments are being made. There will, however, be an exception made for claimants who are temporarily absent from Northern Ireland for a period of up to four weeks, or 13 weeks if the absence is for the purposes of receiving medical treatment. In some cases, payment will not be made for periods of hospitalisation, care home residency and imprisonment. Mitigation payments will be disregarded when considering a person's entitlement to social security benefits.

Her Majesty's Treasury has indicated that mitigation payments in respect of non-taxable benefits, such as income support, will not be taxed. However, as carer's allowance is a taxable benefit, mitigation payments in respect of carer's allowance will be taxable. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs has also agreed in principle that any mitigation payments that replace disregarded income, such as disability living allowance, will themselves be disregarded when calculating entitlement to tax credits. In all cases, mitigation payments will be paid four weeks in arrears.

Claimants who become entitled to a mitigation payment after 1 April 2019 will receive mitigation payments from their entitlement date up to 31 March 2020, the end date of the mitigation scheme. Hence, some claimants will receive mitigation payments for less than one full year.

Finally, further measures recommended by the working group to mitigate welfare reform are being prepared with a view to these being presented to the Executive in the autumn.

Mr Eastwood (The Chairperson of the Committee for Communities): The regulations that we are being asked

to affirm today are the second tranche of regulations that provide the legislative basis for the schemes that underpin the recommendations of the welfare reform mitigations group.

For clarity, I will take each regulation in turn. The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations 2016 will provide welfare supplementary payments for three categories of claimant. The first is where a claimant does not qualify for PIP. In this case, a claimant continues to be paid a sum equal to their weekly DLA payment while the outcome of any appeal is heard or, indeed, beyond this should a further appeal of a tribunal decision be granted — to the Social Security Commissioners — but not beyond 31 March 2020. This is the date to which mitigation funding is currently available. It is worth noting that the scheme will not be available to new claimants from 20 June.

6.45 pm

The second category is when claimants qualify for PIP but at a rate lower than their DLA payment. The statutory rule simply implements the recommendation of the working group so that, when a person qualifies for PIP but their payment is reduced by £10 or more, they will get 75% of the loss paid to them but not beyond 31 March 2020. If the reduction in payment, for example, is £20 a week, they will receive 75% of that, which is £15. It should be noted that this payment is for up to one year; it is not guaranteed for one year in all circumstances.

The third category is when claimants score between four and seven points but their disability or illness is due to a conflict-related injury. That arises from concerns that the working group had that the PIP assessment method might not fully capture the consequences for claimants in Northern Ireland who have conflict-related injury. Under those circumstances, people will be awarded a further four points, bringing them up to at least eight points, which qualifies them for PIP. Again, this payment is for up to one year but not beyond 31 March 2020, when funding for the scheme ends.

The Committee was informed that the Department fully expects most existing DLA claimants who have a conflict-related injury to migrate successfully from DLA to PIP. It is also important to note that payments made under this scheme will not be taxable. The Committee considered these regulations and took oral evidence from the Department, and it was content to recommend that the Assembly affirm them.

The second statutory rule is the Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Premiums) Regulations 2016. Many people who receive DLA also receive income-related premiums for that disability. So if, as a result of reassessment to PIP, someone loses entitlement to one or more of those premiums, they will be eligible for a welfare supplementary payment. The disability premiums that are subject to mitigation are disability premium, enhanced disability premium, severe disability premium or the severe disability element under working tax credit and an additional amount under state pension credit. The payments will be equal to the amount of the disability premium or element that was lost as a direct result of a claimant's DLA to PIP reassessment.

The Committee was advised that the payment will generally be for no more than 12 months, with the

exception that, when a person appeals the decision of their PIP reassessment, payment will continue until the appeal has concluded. That period may also be less than 12 months if the payment begins after 1 April 2019. Again, the scheme and, therefore, the payments end on 31 March 2020. The Committee was content to recommend that the Assembly affirm these regulations.

The third element of this tranche of regulations relates to the Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations 2016. Currently, a person who provides care for someone who is ill or disabled can receive financial support from one of the following: carer's allowance, carer's premium, income support or state pension credit. When the person being cared for is reassessed and loses the daily living component of PIP, their carer will also be subject to a loss of benefit. The regulations will ensure that carers impacted in that way will receive a mitigation payment for up to one year, and payment will be equal to the amount that they have lost.

The Committee was informed that there were two exceptions to that. When a carer is receiving a carer's allowance and a contribution-based benefit that is less than the carer's allowance, the payment will be equal to the difference between the two. When a carer is receiving income support and is also entitled to carer's allowance, the payment will be equal to the standard weekly rate of carer's allowance. Again, the payment will be for no more than 12 months. However, the Committee was advised that, as with the existing benefits system, a change of circumstance will result in a reconsideration of the mitigation payment. It is, therefore, possible, depending on the specific change of circumstances, that the mitigation payment could be stopped.

The Committee was content to recommend that the Assembly affirm these regulations. Therefore, on behalf of the Committee, I recommend that the Assembly approve the three motions related to these regulations.

Mr Allen: The Ulster Unionist Party supports the mitigation package to support those who will be affected by welfare reform. We support mitigation for the loss of disability allowance in Part 2, which provides 100% protection for those who appeal against the refusal of PIP; for the loss of disability allowance in Part 3, which provides 75% protection where PIP is awarded at a lower rate than DLA by at least £10 a week; for the loss of disability-related premiums; and for the loss of carers' payments.

I have my concerns about whether the company involved, Capita, will be able to deliver the sheer caseload timely and accurately. It is essential that people have confidence in the system, so I welcome the assistance for those who decide to appeal. The 75% protection will also ensure that people moving from one rate to another have time to change or adapt their circumstances.

We do not support the proposed mitigation for conflict-related injury cases, which would see perpetrators who set out to cause death and, indeed, who left many with disabilities receive the same mitigation package as innocent victims where PIP has been refused — equivalent to either the standard daily living or standard mobility component. Although my party has repeatedly called for the needs of victims to be kept at the forefront of the reassessment process, many victims will feel only further aggrieved to see perpetrators of terrorist acts awarded

an extra four points, no matter what the circumstances. I urge the Minister to revisit his conscience. How, with any integrity, can he ask the Assembly to approve that? As such, we will not support the loss of disability living allowance regulations. It is a shame, because I support most of what is in them. However, I am not prepared to sit by as the DUP sets this precedent. To be honest, I was shocked that the Minister and his party remained quiet when Professor Evason first proposed this. However, I am shocked that it is now actively seeking its adoption. I therefore call on the Minister not to seek approval of the first regulations before us and to bring them —

Mr Stalford: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for a Member to question the integrity of a Minister?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I am not quite sure that that is a point of order, but we will reflect on it and get back to the Member.

Mr Allen: I thank the Member for that. I urge the Minister not to seek approval of the first regulations and to bring them back with Part 4, relating to conflict-related injuries, significantly changed. The Assembly must not set the precedent of rewarding terrorist violence.

Mr Bell: A lot of work has been undertaken on the work that Professor Evason took forward. I pay tribute to her and specifically to the working group for the recommendations that we have. When we go into a period of proper scrutiny of what has occurred, it will be evident what we have done for the people of Northern Ireland who are at the coalface, very often living hand to mouth. What has occurred as a result of their devolved Assembly is that there are mitigation measures in place to carry them through what are some of the most difficult times.

The Committee Chair outlined, as did Minister Weir acting for Minister Givan, all the issues, but we want to look at the overall design of the new discretionary support scheme, the regulations that are there and what their purpose is, which is to provide the financial assistance for claimants who are in urgent financial need as a result of crisis or emergency. We want that discretionary support administered by the Department for Communities. Eligibility will be income-based, and the new scheme will be made available to working people on low incomes. Following the consultation, the income threshold has been set at the national living wage rate, which is payable for a person over the age of 25 who is working 40 hours a week. All claimants, whether working or non-working, will be subject to the threshold assessment.

We could go through and parse down in detail all of what was necessary, but the vital part of what we are here to do today is to protect the most vulnerable. Our society can be measured by how we treat the most vulnerable. The block grant was affected; decisions were taken in other Houses that had a direct impact on us. However, the success of what we have been able to do is in seeing the people most affected and targeting limited resources — I think that many of us would want to do more — at the people who need them most. We have done that with these pieces of work.

Mr F McCann: I also support the passage of these regulations. I start by commending and thanking the working group that put together the package. Had it been left in political hands at that time, we would not have ended up with a package at all. The fact that we brought in people

with the expertise and knowledge about where this would have the biggest impact has led to us sitting with this package tonight. I commend the group on the work that it has done.

As has already been said, this affects carers, people on DLA who are going onto PIPs and disability related premiums. The last Member who spoke hit the nail on the head: it is all about ensuring that the most vulnerable in our society are paid at a rate that allows them to deal with their disabilities, difficulties and problems.

I want to make one point. The carers element begins only at 16. I listened to a programme, a number of months ago, about child carers who have to look after parents. It impacts on their education and their ability to provide a proper meal in their home. At some stage, we need to come to terms with that and try to deal with it.

This emanates from the Fresh Start Agreement. It is amazing that, tonight, we start to see the roll-out of over £500 million that was put aside by the Executive to deal with that. It was heavily criticised, but it is jealously looked at by other regions. The House has done a good service to people here through the passage of the regulations tonight.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): Before I call the Minister — forgive me; it is Mr Allister next — I have a little bit of technical advice. Broadcasting has asked Members not to stand between microphones. Otherwise, they may not be picked up properly. We cannot have that.

Mr Allister: I will address the first regulation before the House, particularly Part 4, which introduces the most obnoxious and repulsive idea, which was referred to, quite properly, by Mr Allen, that, when it comes to topping up PIPs to guarantee the continuance of benefit, the perpetrator of a terrorist act who causes his disability by his own hand, is to be rewarded on a par with the innocent victim on whom he may have inflicted injury. That is amoral. It offends basic concepts of decency that someone who sets out to injure or kill others and, in the process, disables himself or herself should and will automatically, under these regulations, be treated in the same way as the innocent victim of that or any other terrorist incident.

7.00 pm

I am astounded that a Minister from the DUP Benches is bringing forward such an obscene proposal. The DUP, like many other unionists, since 2006 has rightly raised objections to the equating of perpetrator with innocent victim. I do not think it has fought an election since 2006 when it has not proclaimed its opposition to that equating of perpetrator and victim. I will quote but one of the DUP's manifestos — the 2009 European manifesto:

"The DUP has been clear and consistent that the perpetrator of an act of terrorism should not and must not be equated with the innocent victims of terrorism."

Yet that is precisely what this DUP-written regulation does. Regulation 15 is very clear that the perpetrator of a violent incident gets the same uplift as the innocent victim of that or any other violent incident. It did not have to be that way. All the Minister had to add were a few words to the end of regulation 15(1) to the following effect: "provided that that person was not convicted of or involved in an

offence arising from the violent incident". That would have protected the integrity of the situation.

I heard a Member raise concerns about integrity. Where is the integrity in saying, time without number, to the electorate that a clear and consistent stand will be taken against equating the perpetrator of the act of terrorism with the innocent victims of terrorism and then bringing to the House a regulation that does precisely that? I am sure that many on those Benches who will tonight vote for this obscenity have met innocent victims from time to time. I have been present when groups have been met by multiple parties, including the DUP, and I have heard the avowal — the solemn pledge — that they would never equate perpetrator with victim. Yet tonight, that is precisely what they stand ready to do. Why? Because getting their precious Fresh Start and keeping Sinn Féin happy were more important than keeping their word to innocent victims. That is the sad, chilling reality. That is what has brought the DUP to this position, where it is prepared to hole below the waterline all its pledges about never equating innocent victims with perpetrators. In doing that, of course, they undercut entirely the laudable argument for amendment of the poisonous definition of victim in the 2006 Order. If you can live with it to the point of implementing it in welfare reform, many will conclude that you are happy to live with it in every other dimension of its definition. It is a sorry pass indeed.

When I challenged the Communities Minister about this at Question Time a couple of weeks ago, his pitiful answer was "In welfare we are blind to how you got your injury". Not so, Mr Deputy Speaker; the regulations are not blind to how people got their injury. There is no special treatment for the person who got their disability in a road traffic accident, but there is for the person who got their injury at their own hand through their self-inflicted perpetration of terror. There is special treatment for him. Away with the nonsense that, in welfare, the regulations are blind to how you came by your disability. They are not. They make a special case for those including the perpetrator.

It is no answer to say, "Ah, but most people covered by this will be innocent victims". Maybe, but there is a principle here. It is a principle that could have been preserved by the simple addition of a few words to regulation 15(1) to exclude the perpetrator. Sadly, it is not possible to amend the regulation at this stage in the House, or I would have sought to do so, but it is possible, in the name of integrity, to rediscover your conscience on the matter and not to press the obnoxious proposal in Part 4 at this time. I make that plea. I know that it will fall on deaf ears, as doing the deal that was done was more important than taking the stand of integrity on these issues.

Mr Weir: I thank all the Members who have taken part in the debate, both those who have welcomed the regulations and those who have opposed them. They are all entitled to their position. I thank the Committee on behalf of the Minister. I suppose, in the words of Barry McGuigan, I thank Mr Eastwood for his contribution. Indeed, the Committee looked at this in some detail.

I will deal with a few of the items that came up during the debate. First of all, the Member noted that element 3 of the loss of disability allowance regulations, namely for victims of Troubles-related injury, would award an extra four points and would qualify them for PIP. The extra four points do not qualify somebody for PIP; instead, it qualifies them for

a payment at a rate equivalent to a standard PIP rate. Mr Allen raised the issue of Troubles-related injuries. First of all, the rationale given by Professor Evason in her report explained that, with regard to making specific provision, there was concern that the consequences for claimants with conflict-related injuries in Northern Ireland, particularly mental health issues, would not necessarily be fully captured by the new PIP payment. It has also always been the case in the social security system, with regard to DLA, that the impact of the disability is looked at rather than what caused it. I will come back to Mr Allen in a moment.

The definition of a victim of the Troubles obviously comes from the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. It was brought in under direct rule — much loved by the Member for North Antrim. It is one that we have not been able to change since then; indeed, what is in the legislation reflects the legal position on that definition of “victim”. I wish that the definition was different, but, when this party brought legislation on that basis to the House, we were unable to get it through, so we were left with that.

Mr Allister: Will the Member give way?

Mr Weir: No; I have heard enough from you for one day, Mr Allister.

Mr Allister: I would like an answer. You know that you could have changed the definition.

Mr Weir: With respect, it reflects the current law.

Mr Allister: You could have changed it.

Mr Weir: You seem to be talking from a sedentary position. At least, to be fair, you have been consistent on the issue.

I will deal with one other issue in relation to that. Mr Allen and the other Ulster Unionists are now deeply opposing it. It is very interesting that that was not the position in Committee when no Member of the Ulster Unionist Party spoke on the issue, did not raise any questions on the issue, and did not vote against the proposal. So, we seem to have a bit of a Damascene conversion here today.

Mrs Little Pengelly: Will the Member give way?

Mr Weir: I will give way.

Mrs Little Pengelly: Does the Member agree with me that this is particularly ironic, given that the erroneous definition of victim in the 2006 Order was brought in during David Trimble's reign as First Minister? It was first mentioned in a consultation paper launched by him when he was First Minister.

Mr Weir: The genesis of it came, as you rightly said, during that period, and it was brought forward by a direct rule Minister in 2006. So, it is perhaps a case of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted for the Ulster Unionists.

Turning to one other point that Mr Allen raised, which is the Capita PIP assessments, the Department has worked closely with Capita to ensure that there are sufficient disability assessors in place. On the other aspects of this, it is also important that, when people are assessed, it is done in a timely, proper manner. That is something that the Department will want to take forward.

In conclusion, these measures are unique to Northern Ireland and demonstrate the determination of the Executive to protect the most vulnerable in our society. That puts us in a different position from the rest of the

United Kingdom. There will be further measures to mitigate welfare reform; those are being prepared and will be presented to the Executive in the autumn.

I thank Members for their interest in the regulations, even when they have opposed them. I hope that they will support them to enable mitigation payments to be made to those affected by the introduction of the personal independence payment, including those in receipt of carer's allowance and disability premiums. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Question put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 54; Noes 13.

AYES

Mr Agnew, Ms Archibald, Mr Bell, Mr Boylan, Ms Boyle, Ms P Bradley, Ms S Bradley, Mr K Buchanan, Mr T Buchanan, Ms Bunting, Mrs Cameron, Mr Clarke, Ms Dillon, Mr Douglas, Mr Dunne, Mr Easton, Mr Eastwood, Ms Fearon, Mr Frew, Mr Girvan, Mrs Hale, Mr Hamilton, Mr Hazzard, Mr Irwin, Mr Kearney, Mrs Little Pengelly, Ms Lockhart, Mr Logan, Mr Lynch, Mr Lyons, Mr McAleer, Mr F McCann, Ms J McCann, Mr McCartney, Mr McCausland, Mr McElduff, Mr McGrath, Miss McIlveen, Mr McMullan, Mr Maskey, Mr Middleton, Mr Milne, Lord Morrow, Mr Murphy, Mr Ó Muilleoir, Mr O'Dowd, Mrs O'Neill, Mr Robinson, Mr Ross, Ms Seeley, Mr Sheehan, Mr Stalford, Mr Storey, Mr Weir.

Tellers for the Ayes: Mr F McCann and Mr Robinson.

NOES

Mr Aiken, Mr Allen, Mr Allister, Mrs Barton, Mr Beggs, Mr Butler, Mr Chambers, Mrs Dobson, Mr Kennedy, Mr Nesbitt, Mrs Palmer, Mr Smith, Mr Swann.

Tellers for the Noes: Mr Aiken and Mr Allen.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved:

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Premiums) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Resolved:

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Premiums) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved. — [Mr Weir (The Minister of Education).]

Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Resolved:

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved. — [Mr Weir (The Minister of Education).]

Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I call on the Minister of Education, acting on behalf of the Minister for Communities, to move the motion.

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): I beg to move

That the draft Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

I seek the Assembly's approval for the Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016. The regulations are being brought in under articles 135 and 136(5) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 and will make provision for the introduction of discretionary support in Northern Ireland. The draft statutory rule was approved by the Committee for Communities on 16 June. The regulations have been made following the publication of the welfare reform working group proposals on how the Executive should help the most vulnerable as a consequence of the introduction of changes to the welfare system.

In the past, the greater element of discretionary support has been delivered through the social fund in the form of community care grants and crisis loans. The proposed repeal of the discretionary aspects of the social fund from 31 October 2016 will mean the removal of community care grants and crisis loans from the social fund, prompting the Department to develop a new provision for Northern Ireland. Although discretionary support is not a replacement for the social fund, the regulations will enable the Department to replace the discretionary elements of the social fund with a new discretionary support scheme. Discretionary support is unique to Northern Ireland and will seek to assist those on low incomes, either working or non-working people, when an extreme, exceptional or crisis situation arises, presenting a significant risk to the health, safety or well-being of either the person making the application or their immediate family. Entitlement to discretionary support will be assessed against defined eligibility criteria, and, if the criteria are met, an interest-free loan and/or a non-repayable grant may be awarded.

Discretionary support awards will be in the form of cash payments. The regulations permit payments in kind through either the direct provision of white goods or vouchers, but these are not currently planned. However, the provision of white goods will be considered approximately 12 months after discretionary support is introduced. To be entitled to discretionary support, a claimant and their partner must not be in receipt of an income, once permitted disregards have been taken into consideration, greater than the annual national living wage, which is currently £14,976 a year or £288 a week. All claimants, whether working or non-working, will be subject to an income threshold assessment. To qualify for discretionary support, a claimant must be ordinarily resident and present in Northern Ireland, and the current departmental residency tests will be applied. Those qualifying for a discretionary support loan must also, prior to that loan being awarded, be in a position to repay the loan within 52 weeks. That can be extended to 78 weeks in exceptional circumstances — for example, a larger washing machine being required in order to meet a medical need. The change to 52 weeks will encourage greater financial responsibility, reduce long-term debt

levels and assist with the recycling of discretionary support funding essential to the sustainability of the scheme. To qualify for a discretionary support loan, a claimant must not only be in a position to repay that loan but they and their partner —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): Excuse me. Will Members please remain seated during debates in the Chamber?

7.30 pm

Mr Weir: Perhaps I should start again to make sure that everybody has heard this. *[Laughter.]* To be fair, the Chair has been suitably rapt with the tension since we started.

To qualify for a discretionary support loan, a claimant must not only be in a position to repay that loan, they, and their partner, should not have an outstanding debt with the Department of over £1,000. However, should a claimant be disallowed discretionary support in the form of a loan because of an affordability or debt issue, they may be entitled to a one-off living expenses grant. Only one discretionary grant and three discretionary support loans will be awarded in any 12-month period, except in the event of a disaster resulting in the loss of possessions or property — I will quiz Members on this later.

To qualify for a discretionary support loan, the need for assistance must have arisen in Northern Ireland and be satisfied in Northern Ireland. Should a claimant be dissatisfied with the outcome of their application for discretionary support, there is provision for an internal review. Should the claimant, following that review, remain dissatisfied with the decision, there will be provision for an external independent review by the discretionary support commissioner's office. Discretionary support also seeks to assist those on low incomes to organise and maximise their limited incomes through ensuring access to appropriate information and advice.

The Assembly will be aware that the welfare supplementary payments regulations are being brought forward. We wish, within the discretionary support regulations, before they are made, to refer to the supplementary payment regulations, the Armed Forces independence payments and personal independence payments. These will be added to the schedule on disregards for income contained in the discretionary support regulations.

Mr Eastwood (The Chairperson of the Committee for Communities): I thank the Minister for the great detail in which he outlined the regulations.

When the Committee first considered the Department's proposal to make the regulations on 9 June 2016, it was content for the rule to be made. Subsequently, when the statutory rule was brought before the Committee on 16 June, the Committee was content, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, to recommend that it be affirmed by the Assembly. The Examiner reported on the SR on 24 June and did not identify any issues.

The Committee welcomes discretionary support, as recommended by the working group on welfare mitigations led by Professor Evason. The statutory rule introduces discretionary support provision to pay loans and grants to people in crisis, following the abolition of community care grants and crisis loans under article 76 of the Welfare

Reform Order 2015. The Committee notes that this is a temporary response aimed at softening the landing for the most vulnerable as a result of the reform of the welfare system here. Critical to the success of discretionary support will be access to specialist information and advice services.

Those accessing discretionary funds are likely to require support in finding a more sustainable financial footing. The Committee for Communities will seek assurances from the Department that a robust framework of independent advice, as recommended in Professor Evason's report, is in place as the welfare reform programme goes forward.

On behalf of the Committee, I recommend that the regulations be approved by the Assembly.

Mr Allen: The Ulster Unionist Party fully supports the discretionary support mitigation package. It has an annual budget of £16 million over the next four years to provide repayable interest-free loans and non-repayable grants, with eligibility criteria specific to each. They are aimed at providing assistance to help to alleviate exceptional and extreme crisis situations and to ensure that those facing the most extreme hardship as a result of adjustment to the social security system are supported in their efforts towards self-dependency, where access to discretionary support would help to avoid or reduce major risk or life-threatening circumstances.

Mr Bell: I do not want to reiterate what has been said, so I will keep my remarks brief. We focus, with this new provision, on the overall objective of the current social fund: providing financial assistance directly to claimants who find themselves in urgent need for a variety of reasons, including crisis and emergency. It has already been outlined how people can become subject to the income threshold assessment and how the available income can be repaid. Most critical is that the awards will be targeted on the basis that the individual's circumstances satisfy the eligibility conditions and criteria. The regulations have my support.

Mr F McCann: Like the last Member to speak, I will not rehash everything. I just want to make a couple of comments. Along with some of the other stuff that we have passed today, the discretionary fund is probably one of the most crucial elements in the whole package. It deals with the most vulnerable and offers a safety net for them a number of times throughout the year. It is welcome. It is also welcome that it includes for the first time low earners, offering them the opportunity, at different times in their life, to tap into this fund. I make the point that this is unique to the North and does not operate in any other region. I thank the working group for the work it did on this.

Mr Weir: This has obviously had a slightly smoother introduction than the previous regulations. On behalf of the Minister for Communities, I thank the Committee for Communities for the very positive way in which it has dealt with these regulations. There has been a consensus arising out of Professor Evason's report on the issue. I welcome the fact that the Members who have contributed to the debate from around the Chamber have been unanimously in favour of the regulations.

It is important to realise, as Fra McCann said, that discretionary support is quite often for the most vulnerable people. When ploughing through the detail required in any social security regulations — there can be myriad rules on who qualifies in what circumstances — we need to

remember, and this is why discretionary support is very helpful, that we are dealing with individuals who are quite often vulnerable and in very difficult circumstances. I welcome the support for these regulations from across the Chamber.

These regulations enable the Department to implement the discretionary support scheme, meaning that low-income families, provided they meet the discretionary support criteria, can be considered for assistance in a crisis situation. As indicated, it is a support system unique to Northern Ireland, and it demonstrates the commitment of this Assembly and our determination to protect the most vulnerable in our society. Our efforts to do that put us ahead of anywhere else in the United Kingdom. I thank Members for their interest in these regulations, and I hope that there will be support across the Chamber for them. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the draft Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I call Mr Peter Weir, the Minister of Education, acting on behalf of the Minister for Communities, to move the motion.

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I beg to move

That the draft Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

These draft regulations are made under powers conferred by draft regulations laid before the Assembly under article 72(3) of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 for approval. The draft statutory rule has been approved by the Committee for Communities.

There is a requirement to make an amendment to regulations 2 and 9 of the regulations as a result of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 and the Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 to allow disclosure of information by the landlord register to certain bodies, including authorised officers from the Department for Communities for the purposes of the administration of welfare supplementary payments paid in respect of the application of the benefit cap and/or the administration of the housing element of universal credit.

The reason for the amendment to the regulations is to streamline the payments process of the administration of the welfare supplementary payments paid in respect of the application of the benefit cap and the housing element of universal credit.

The benefit cap will restrict the total amount of benefits paid to a household to within designated limits. Mitigation support will be provided to families who are receiving more than £26,000 per year, providing they have been continuously in receipt of any combination of the welfare benefits that contribute towards the calculation of the cap, from 31 May 2016 until the point at which they are impacted by the cap.

In all cases, mitigation payments and the housing element of universal credit, when introduced, will be paid four weekly in arrears to the same recipient as the existing housing benefit award. That reflects the existing payment frequency of the vast majority of housing benefit payments made to private landlords.

There will be a requirement for a private landlord and the property to be registered with the landlord register before mitigation payments in relation to the benefit cap or the housing element of universal credit is paid directly to a landlord. If a landlord or property is not registered with the scheme, the payment will be paid directly to the claimant. If a landlord is not registered, the Department for Communities staff administering mitigation payments and universal credit will be required to notify the council to take enforcement action against the landlord for non-compliance with the law. That will also help to ensure that money paid in relation to housing costs will be protected.

The amendment to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 will allow authorised officers within the Department for Communities to have access to the landlord registration scheme information

to confirm that the landlord is registered with the scheme before payments can be made directly to the landlord. Without the change, the Department for Communities staff would have the same access to the system as the public, which would make the administration process very cumbersome, as access to landlord information is very limited in this circumstance.

The amendment to the regulations will also ensure that access to the landlord registration scheme information by authorised officers from the Department for Communities will be controlled by the landlord registrar to ensure that there are no breaches of data protection.

Mr Eastwood (The Chairperson of the Committee for Communities): The Committee for Communities first considered the Department's proposal on 16 June 2016 to make the Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and was content for the rule to be made.

The Committee noted that there is a requirement to amend the 2014 regulation as a result of the Welfare Reform Order 2015 and the Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations 2016. That is simply to allow the landlord registrar to disclose information to authorised officers from the Department for Communities for administrative purposes relating to welfare supplementary payments.

When the statutory rule was subsequently brought before the Committee on 23 June, the Committee was content, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, to recommend that it be affirmed by the Assembly. Members were, however, advised at the meeting that there had been issues with the drafting of the regulations and were provided with an amended version at the beginning of the meeting. Those were the regulations the Committee considered and agreed upon, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules. However, the regulations the Committee considered were subsequently withdrawn by the Department, again due to drafting issues. Those were replaced by the regulations before the House today.

Unfortunately, that means that the Committee has not actually considered these particular regulations, albeit that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has considered them and has not identified any issues and that we are assured by officials that the policy intent has not changed. The Minister will be aware that the Committee is likely to consider hundreds of statutory rules over the mandate and that adherence to proper procedure on subordinate legislation is essential. He can maybe pass that on to Minister Givan.

Perhaps the Minister can give his assurances, and those of Minister Givan, that, as the different elements of former Departments become embedded into a new cohesive Department, this will be given due attention. In addition, maybe the Minister can again assure the House that the policy intent has not changed, so Members can have confidence in the regulations before them today.

Mr F McCann: I do not want to rehash what has been said. I just want to make one point. There was a debate on landlord registration here last week, and we emphasised the need to go for full registration. This statutory rule points out that the only landlords who will receive the payments will be those on the register. I ask the Department to keep an eye on that, because there are substantial amounts of people in landlords' houses who are not on the register.

We need to keep our eye on this having an impact outside what was intended, and people being evicted from houses because they do not have the money.

7.45 pm

Mr Weir: I thank Members for their focused and succinct contributions. Obviously I appreciate that the Committee has not had a chance to look at the detail of this because of the circumstances, and I am sure that that will be rectified. However, I am assured by officials that the policy intent has not shifted from the previous position.

The regulations will enable authorised officers within the Department for Communities to have access to the landlord registration scheme information to confirm that a landlord is registered with the scheme before mitigation payments in the application of the benefit cap and the housing element of universal credit can be made directly to the landlord. It will streamline the administration process and allow staff administering the payments to notify local councils to take enforcement action against landlords who have not registered with the scheme. It will also ensure that public money paid out in respect of housing costs is being protected.

I thank Members for their interest in these regulations. I hope that they will support them to help smooth the administration process for the mitigation payments to be made to vulnerable people affected by the benefit cap and when universal credit is implemented in full. It will ensure that private landlords who have not registered with the landlord registration scheme will comply with the law and register. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the draft Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Draft Renewables Obligation Closure (No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): Members will be aware that this item was added to the Order Paper after last week's Business Committee meeting and that a revised Order Paper was issued. I hope that, as a courtesy to the House, the Minister will give a full explanation for the late tabling of this legislation.

Mr Hamilton (The Minister for the Economy): I beg to move

That the draft Renewables Obligation Closure (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

This statutory rule is being made under powers contained in the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, which prescribes that this order must be laid in draft for approval by affirmative resolution of the Assembly. The Northern Ireland renewables obligation (NIRO) has been the main support mechanism for incentivising renewable electricity generation in Northern Ireland since 2005. The NIRO has been instrumental in increasing renewable deployment in Northern Ireland from just 3% renewable electricity consumption in 2005 to just over 25% today. This significantly exceeded the previous Executive's ambitious Programme for Government target of having one fifth of our electricity generated from renewable sources by 2015. This is a tremendous achievement for a region of our size and, with the amount of renewable electricity in the pipeline, it is anticipated that renewable electricity consumption could rise to as much as 30% by 2020. I take this opportunity to commend the renewables industry and electricity infrastructure providers on helping us to reach this impressive figure.

I now move on to the business that is before us. In March of last year, the former Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment issued a consultation on the proposed closure of the NIRO. This resulted in closure of the NIRO to non-wind technologies in autumn 2015. On 30 September 2015, a further consultation was issued on closure for onshore wind projects of all sizes from 1 April 2016. This followed similar announcements in Great Britain. Responses to the consultation raised a number of valid arguments that there are differences between the large- and small-scale wind industries and that the two should not be treated in the same manner. In acknowledging these differences, and in order to provide legislative certainty, the NIRO closed to large-scale onshore wind on 1 April 2016.

A further supplementary consultation on NIRO closure to small-scale onshore wind was issued on 24 March and closed on 9 May.

The consultation proposed three options for closure: 30 June 2016, 30 September 2016 or 31 March 2017. In addition to and in line with the provisions for large-scale onshore wind, the consultation proposed exceptions to closure in the form of grace periods for projects that could meet certain specific criteria.

All the closure options were set against the backdrop of the Department of Energy and Climate Change taking powers in the Energy Act to make regulations restricting the tradeability of Northern Ireland renewables obligation certificates (NIROCs). Ultimately, that means that GB suppliers could not use NIROCs to meet their renewables

obligation. Subsequently, the market for such non-redeemable NIROCs would be limited to Northern Ireland.

Whilst the exact impact of that is hard, if not impossible, to predict with any certainty, it could destabilise the entire NIROC market. The most likely impact is a reduction in the value of NIROCs and hence the viability of renewables projects, both new and existing and wind and non-wind. In considering the options for closure, I have to be mindful of that threat; indeed, such is the magnitude of that potential threat to the renewable electricity sector in Northern Ireland that I felt it necessary to bring forward this legislation at short notice to be debated before the summer recess. I am grateful to the Speaker and the House for allowing me to bring it forward today at short notice.

Some 126 responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including members of the public, independent generators, developers, trade associations, energy suppliers and non-governmental organisations. I thank everyone who took the time to respond. Over 93% of those who indicated a preference chose closure on 30 June 2016, 1% chose 30 September 2016 and 6% chose 31 March next year. A number of responses were critical of subsidies for onshore wind in general.

In light of the overwhelming support to close as soon as possible and in order to reduce the risk of DECC enacting the backstop power, I have decided that the NIRO should close to new small-scale onshore wind-generating stations on 30 June 2016, in line with the minded position in the consultation proposals. That means that projects that can demonstrate that they have an accepted grid connection offer, relevant planning permission and evidence of land rights as of 30 September 2015 will be able to accredit their stations up to 31 March 2017. In some cases, if projects can meet further grace period eligibility criteria, they can seek accreditation up until 31 March 2019.

I listened to stakeholder concerns about the impact on investor confidence. Therefore, the legislation includes an investment-freezing grace period for projects that can demonstrate that they have been unable to secure financial investment in the period prior to the legislation being in place.

The proposed closure order will provide the legislative certainty that small-scale onshore wind developers require and will reduce the potential for DECC to enact the backstop power. That will hopefully enable those projects to proceed to deployment, further increasing the amount of renewable electricity generation in Northern Ireland.

Mr Murphy (The Chairperson of the Committee for the Economy): The Committee was first briefed on the closure of the NIRO to small-scale onshore wind at its meeting on 8 June. We would have expected to see an SL1 the following week so that the Committee could fulfil its proper scrutiny function. However, it was not until the evening of 21 June that the Committee received the SL1 and the statutory rule, with the request that the Committee consider and approve both at its meeting the following day.

The Committee agreed but did so with some degree of protest and annoyance that our ability to properly scrutinise matters was not facilitated for us on this occasion. We were aware of the timescales involved in the issue, and we made it clear to the Department's officials that that was not an acceptable way of doing business and that we, as a new Committee, did not consider it

a precedent for how we would deal with departmental matters. We understood the timescales involved and the issues in relation to the non-closure of the NIRO by 30 June in terms of the Department of Energy and Climate Change in London and the penalties that it might apply.

We were also aware that, as the Minister outlined, the vast majority of consultants were agreeable to and accepted the early closure date. For those reasons, the Committee did deal with the rule, albeit in haste, after it was forced on it.

On behalf of the Committee for the Economy, I support the motion to approve the statutory rule.

Mr Aiken: I, too, support the motion and echo the words of the Chairman of the Committee. I also commend the renewable energy industry for the great work that it has been doing over the past 10 to 15 years to get to where it has got to at the moment, particularly as it moved forward to help support Northern industry.

I echo the concerns that we have about the delay in bringing the SL and SR to the Committee. Concerns were expressed by industry, particularly from the likes of the Ulster Farmers' Union, directly to the Committee and to various MLAs. In future, we need to work together more closely and much quicker to make sure that those issues do not arise again.

The final point that I will make is about the critical importance of the energy sector moving forward. We have energy market reform coming up, and one of the things that we need to be able to do, particularly in these turbulent and unsettling times, is to ensure the security, reliability and price of the electricity supply to the consumer in Northern Ireland. I urge the Minister to make sure that the Department works very closely with the Committee early to make sure that we are fully aware of the issues as they come forward.

Mr Dunne: I, too, welcome the opportunity to speak. On the Enterprise Committee in the previous mandate, an extensive amount of work was carried out on this matter and on the renewables sector as a whole, as you well know, Mr Deputy Speaker.

There is no doubt that the renewables sector in Northern Ireland has progressed over the past decade, from a mere 3% renewable energy consumption in 2005 to over 25% renewable energy consumption today. The renewables sector in Northern Ireland requires certainty on the way forward, and I believe that this closure today provides it with that much-needed level of certainty and clarity. Following the change of policy on renewables by the Conservative Government, and with DECC's stance on renewables, the Department for the Economy has been left with very few options. If the Executive were to extend the date of closure, we would be putting at risk the socialisation of the cost of existing renewable projects in Northern Ireland. It would also increase the risk of DECC enacting the backstop power, which would have severe consequences for our renewables sector, including its ability to trade surplus Northern Ireland ROCs in the GB market. That would be a significant loss to the sector, as a significant surplus is traded regularly outside of Northern Ireland. Considerable consultation, involving formal and informal meetings with the former Enterprise Committee and the Department has taken place, and the vast majority of those consulted now see merit in the closure. I therefore support the closure of the NIRO.

Ms S Bradley: The Minister has given us quite a concise backdrop to the events. It is not my intention to repeat that or the contributions made by others, but, as a new Member and as a member of the Committee for the Economy, I am concerned at the process used in bringing the order forward.

This is the timeline. The consultation closed on 9 May. Mr Simon Hamilton was elevated to the position of Minister for the Economy on 25 May, and I am sure that, in his initial brief, it would have been brought to his attention that the Energy Bill was granted Royal Assent on 12 May. The Minister described that as a serious threat, and I agree. Understandably, stakeholders in Northern Ireland, nervous of the consequence of the powers being exercised, were eager to see that this matter was managed, and managed early. I have spoken to some of those stakeholders. Option 1, which has met with the Minister's approval, was described by one stakeholder as being the "best of a bad lot".

8.00 pm

Given that backdrop, I fully understand the Minister's eagerness to bring forward a draft order ahead of summer recess. What does not sit comfortably with me is the process used to do it. It would be remiss of me not to make the House aware of my dissatisfaction, which I expressed in Committee. The matter should have been conducted in a much more transparent and democratic way. Four weeks after taking up office, the Minister sent officials to the Committee to do what I can only describe as wafting in front of us an SL1 and SR as an additional item to an already full agenda. In fact, the email requesting that the additional agenda item of the SL1 and SR be included was described by Department officials as a highly unusual request at very short notice. That was explained away, given the urgent need to give stakeholders certainty, which is a point that I do not disagree with. Having said that, I made my dissatisfaction known to the Committee. It was to my disappointment that the Chair of the Committee and others did not take up my offer of calling an extra meeting where we could discuss the matter further; he was content to sit with his partners in government.

I cannot and will not let the moment pass without expressing my concern. Whilst I welcome the stability offered to stakeholders in bringing this to the House, it should be clearly placed on record that that is not a way to do business. The Committee should not be reduced to rubber-stamping, with a nod and a wink, such important legislation.

Mr Hamilton: I thank everybody who contributed to the debate this evening. I particularly thank the Chair and Committee for their support. I accept the point made by the Chair and other contributors to the short debate this evening around the time given to the Committee to scrutinise the legislation. As the Chair and Mr Dunne pointed out, the previous ETI Committee had lots of familiarity with the issue. Much of that knowledge then transferred to the new Economy Committee.

I do not accept the point made by Ms Bradley that the process, imperfect as it was, which I accept, is, in some way, anti-democratic. The Member had an opportunity in Committee to express her view in a democratic fashion; indeed, she has also had that opportunity this evening, so I do not accept that criticism. However, I accept the points that have been made around the process leading to us being here this evening. I thank the Committee for

nonetheless favourably considering the legislation. I put my hands up and accept responsibility for the delay that has taken place. Given the seriousness of the issue, which, again, was a point made by many Members, including those who criticised the delay in bringing this forward, I did what I thought was appropriate: I took the time, as a new Minister, to look at the legislation carefully and consider all the options that had been consulted on. I assure the House and, importantly, the Chair and Committee that this is not a way in which I intend to do business with the Committee in the future. It is not some sort of precedent that I want to set. It was an exceptional way of doing business in what were pressing circumstances, which is a point that has been made.

The proposed order will provide the legislative certainty that small-scale onshore wind developers require and will limit the risk of the Department of Energy and Climate Change using its backstop power, which I commented on earlier. Looking to the future beyond NIRO, I want to turn my attention to a new policy approach to renewable energy in the context of a refocused strategic energy framework. I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the draft Renewables Obligation Closure (No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Adjourned at 8.04 pm.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Tuesday 28 June 2016

The Assembly met at 10.30 am (Mr Speaker in the Chair).

Members observed two minutes' silence.

Assembly Business

Mr Nesbitt: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Order Paper makes provision for a ministerial statement on a rural roads initiative from the Minister for Infrastructure. Will you confirm that the House should be the first to know about this statement and that the Minister is wrong and disrespectful to the House to have trumpeted it in the media earlier today?

Mr Speaker: I will return to that matter as we progress through today's agenda.

Mr Ford: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. At Question Time yesterday, Mr Wells tabled a question relating to the Ballynahinch bypass. Just before Ms Armstrong spoke, you warned her that it was a constituency issue, and she correctly pointed out that it was an issue that affected Strangford at least as much as South Down. On a subsequent question of mine relating to rail services in South Antrim and Lagan Valley, Mr Durkan asked a question that was completely outwith that constituency, and yet the Minister answered it. Will you give some thought to providing guidance, perhaps before we resume in September, to ensure that, when you make rulings like that, they are enforced in a way that stops other Members trumpeting specific constituency issues?

Mr Speaker: I have noted your comments, Mr Ford.

Public Petition: Killard House School

Mr Speaker: Ms Kellie Armstrong has sought leave to present a public petition in accordance with Standing Order 22. The Member will have up to three minutes to speak.

Ms Armstrong: It is a privilege to present this petition with over 1,500 signatures calling for the Minister of Education to install a sixth form for children with medium learning difficulties (MLD) at Killard House School in Donaghadee. I present the petition on behalf of the young people who are students at Killard House School and their parents, and those future students who very much want to go to a school where they will have provision right through to the age of 19.

I pay tribute to head girl, Erin, and head boy, Joseph, and their parents, and the very many parents in attendance in the Public Gallery, who fight every day for the best possible outcomes for children with learning difficulties. I pay tribute to the passion and patient determination that all have shown throughout this process.

Killard House School is not supported to provide post-16 provision. At the age of 15 or 16, vulnerable children have no choice but to leave their protective school environment at far too young an age. The result is that some are less likely to flourish and are placed under the unnecessary stress of having to deal with the adult world when their peers who do not have a disability can enjoy two more years in a protective and nurturing school environment while completing their A levels.

MLD sixth form is proven to work. The Education Authority already supports post-16 MLD provision at Beechlawn School. There, children are provided with appropriate classes and courses suited to meet their needs, including travel training, skills for employment and life skills. The sixth form is full and achieving real difference in students' lives. Results show that when Beechlawn students leave, they are more able and prepared for life after school.

On 15 April, the Education Authority met the Killard board of governors and head teachers and discussed the possibility of a temporary trial and then permanent sixth form. The Education Authority knows that there are enough students to fill a sixth form and that there would be no capital cost as Killard has classroom space to accommodate them. Since April, parents have been frustrated by the lack of progress. The Education Authority cannot give any assurances because the Minister has yet to complete the draft area plan for special schools. Parents know that the plan is only one step in a very long bureaucratic process. This petition challenges all that red tape. If the Education Authority is prepared to trial a

temporary sixth form anyway, why will it take over a year to implement? Will the Minister meet and explain this to the parents, please?

Parents remind the Minister of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and, in particular, article 2, which deals with non-discrimination, and article 3, which deals with the best interests of the child. Erin, Joseph and all the signatories feel strongly that the Education Authority is failing to meet its statutory section 75 obligations under the Good Friday Agreement. They ask the Minister for an urgent review and to ensure that appropriate 16-plus provision is made available as soon as possible at Killard House School.

Ms Armstrong moved forward and laid the petition on the Table.

Mr Speaker: I will present a copy of the petition to the Minister and the Committee.

Ministerial Statements

Rural Roads Initiative

Mr Speaker: I have received notice from the Minister for Infrastructure that he wishes to make a statement on the rural roads initiative. I am aware that there has been a lot of coverage of his statement in the press this morning. I am sure that he was keen to highlight the planned investment. I know that the Minister is only recently in post, but I would like to gently remind him of the requirement of Standing Order 18A(3) not to give a statement to the media before it has been made available to Members. I hope that, in future, he and other Ministers will remember to observe this courtesy to the House.

Mr Hazzard (The Minister for Infrastructure): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will certainly bear that in mind. I hope that broadcasting institutions will also bear in mind the importance of embargoes. Perhaps we could all get together in future on these sorts of issues.

As a Minister who represents the rural constituency of South Down, I am only too aware of the issues being raised about the maintenance of our rural roads network: maintenance issues gleaned from talking and listening to people and communities on the ground; the frustrations and annoyances of rural communities having to tolerate the inconvenience, and even the potential dangers, of the poor condition of many rural roads; the number of potholes, the time taken to repair them and the resultant damage to vehicles; and the general inconvenience caused.

People and communities rely on the rural roads network to do business, go to work, go to school and socialise. Rural roads are the connections that enable people to live their lives and help to reduce isolation. Many rural communities are isolated enough without having to endure the additional difficulties imposed by inadequate road conditions. People living in rural areas are just as important to me and my Executive colleagues as those who live in cities and larger towns. Over this mandate, they will see action that reflects this assurance.

Today, I am taking action to address the concerns of rural communities. I am announcing a rural roads initiative to address maintenance backlogs. Over recent years, resource funding pressures required the former Department for Regional Development to reduce significantly its routine road maintenance activities. Resources, by necessity, were concentrated on urban and rural roads with heavier traffic. This meant that more roads did not receive the same level of maintenance as in previous years.

On 14 June, the Finance Minister announced the outcome of June monitoring. As a result of the capital allocation to my Department, I am pleased to be able to announce to the House today that the £10 million rural roads initiative will be launched. The rural roads initiative will target sections of the network in greatest need of repair, with the £10 million funding targeted at the areas of greatest need right across the four Transport NI divisions. The £10 million will deliver up to 1,000 small-scale resurfacing schemes on short lengths of rural roads with high numbers of potholes. The schemes will start immediately so that the benefits will be realised as early as possible. Improving these roads will make a real difference to the lives of those living in rural communities. I have asked my officials to

identify the sections in greatest need and to start work as soon as possible.

Rural constituencies right across the North will soon be able to see the benefits. The initiative will not, of course, solve all the problems on our roads, but I believe that it is a very positive measure to address a clear need.

In addition to resurfacing, the funding will allow for some road drainage enhancements on rural roads and a reasonable level of pre-surface dressing patching in advance of next year's surface dressing programme.

I hope that the House will welcome this initiative. I want to be a listening Minister, and I want to be prepared to take action where it is needed. I have listened to the concerns about the condition of rural roads, and, today, I am taking action.

Mrs Palmer: I thank the Minister for his statement. Whilst I welcome the announcement of the £10 million being spent on rural roads, it is only a drop in a pothole. That amount alone would need to be spent in my constituency to cover the rural roads. We need a coordinated approach to investment in our roads infrastructure and not the current piecemeal approach. Will the Minister outline his assessment of the impact of a lack of access to European regional infrastructure funds on his budget? Where does he expect to get money to supplement his budget if he cannot access European funding? What will be the impact on Northern Ireland's infrastructure as access to European regional infrastructure funds is curtailed?

In the statement, you say that £10 million on rural roads. Well, really that covers —

Mr Speaker: Can I ask —

Mrs Palmer: Minister, that covers some 7·5 — I am just finishing —

Mr Speaker: We are not here for statements; it is questions on the statement.

Mrs Palmer: I am just questioning now. Is 7·5 kilometres across Northern Ireland the extent of what the budget refers to for potholes?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for her list of questions. I will start by saying that the £5 million that I announced for road maintenance as part of the June monitoring round a couple of weeks ago will deal with the majority of potholes. The investment that we are announcing is more strategic, and the experts have told us to have a more stitch-in-time-saves-nine approach to it. As you said, £10 million is only a start. I would love to be announcing £100 million or £200 million, and I am sure that the Health Minister would rather have £50 billion than £5 billion, but we are dealing with reality. I think that this is a good start. It is something that I hope we can build on, going forward.

Finally, in relation to the impact of the British referendum on the so-called Brexit, the initiative deals with rural roads and, to a large extent, our comprehensive roads network. To a large extent, such roads would not be reliant on European money, so the money to deal with them is strictly from our own budget.

Mr Humphrey (The Chairperson of the Committee for Infrastructure): I thank the Minister for the announcement. Any announcement on improvement to infrastructure in Northern Ireland is to be welcomed. Is

this additional money to the £5 million that he announced yesterday, which was to enhance road maintenance service? Are there any particular areas in Northern Ireland that he plans to target with the £10 million investment?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Chair for his question. It is £10 million in addition to the £5 million that was previously allocated to deal with road maintenance. The £10 million will be spread across the North and targeted at the areas of greatest need. Depending on the work that needs to be done and the high density of rural roads in some parts compared to others, where there is greatest need, resources will be skewed.

Mr McAleer: I very much welcome the Minister's announcement this morning. He has proved that he is listening, and it follows on from an Adjournment debate that we had on this very subject a number of weeks ago. Whilst many people will welcome the announcement, they will want to know how soon the money will be released and how quickly they will see differences on the ground in rural areas.

Mr Hazzard: I hope that they will see differences as soon as possible. We have given the instruction to start looking at the work immediately. The summer months present the best opportunity to get value for money when it comes to resurfacing projects.

I hope that, as some have said, people will see the tar men out on the roads starting to get into it. I said during the Adjournment debate on West Tyrone that places such as Aghyaran and Edendarriff in our rural communities are as important to me as Derry and Belfast, and I hope that today goes some way to illustrating that that is the case.

10.45 am

Mr McNulty: What proportion of the funding will be available to Newry and Armagh?

Mr Hazzard: Funding will not be broken down into constituencies, as you would expect. Southern division, which covers a lot of that area, will receive a substantial amount of the £10 million, as will the western division. They have a high density of rural roads. I expect that the Newry and Armagh constituency, like my constituency of South Down and those in the west of the Province, which have such a high density of rural roads, will receive a substantial amount of this money.

Ms Armstrong: I am a new breed of politician, so I will start off slightly differently. Thank you: a £10 million investment in rural roads is exactly what I asked you to do in my second question at the Infrastructure Committee. Credit where credit is due. It is a start. Thank you very much.

In line with the Transport Committee in the House of Commons, we know that it costs more to patch over patches. With that in mind, first, when will your Department instigate the strategic plan to deal with the ongoing issue of maintenance of rural and urban roads to ensure that we can maintain efficiencies as well as repair our roads on an ongoing basis? Secondly, if or when you are able to, can you provide us with a list of the areas where the £10 million —

Mr Speaker: Ms Armstrong, I have been very liberal with other Members, but I ask you to come to a question that is relevant to the Minister's statement.

Ms Armstrong: When will the strategic plan be drawn up, and can we have a list of areas where the £10 million will be spent?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for her questions and her kind remarks at the start. After speaking to divisional managers this morning, I have no doubt that they will come under an onslaught of requests from Members about their areas. I make a plea to let them get out and get the work done and for us not to have the onslaught so quickly. That will become apparent in the weeks ahead, through the recess and into September. I will be more than happy to engage with the Committee again if that is the case.

I agree entirely about the need for more strategic investment in our rural roads and in our roads in general. We were in Rotterdam this week looking at various ways in which Europe can play a role. This is topical given the recent referendum, but we need to find innovative and more strategic ways to invest in our rural roads. Simply spending money on pothole repair is not good in the long term. It is not a good way in which to spend our money. That is why I hope that the likes of this scheme can be more strategic and be more than simply throwing a bit of tar into the odd pothole.

Mr Easton: I welcome the statement from the Minister. Although £10 million is going to the rural network, can he give a guarantee that the urban network will not suffer as a result of the funding going there?

Mr Hazzard: I am happy to give a guarantee to the extent that there is the need to address an imbalance. For so long, our heavier-traffic roads have got priority, so there has been a need to do this, and I think that there will be an ongoing need. These are additional funds, which are not taking away from the level of spend that we will be carrying out anyway. As I say, the high-priority cases are very often heavier-traffic roads in urban areas and our busier rural roads.

Mr Lynch: Gabhaim buíochas leis an Aire as a ráiteas. I thank the Minister for his statement. I brought up with him 10 minutes after he took up post that one of the biggest issues in rural areas is the state of rural roads, and I am glad that he has acted quickly on that. Will he liaise with his divisional officers and engineers on how the money will be spent?

Mr Hazzard: Go raibh maith agat for the question. I will indeed. Our divisional managers and teams are the experts when it comes to this. I want to give them the flexibility and room to be able to spend the money as they see fit. They are the guys on the ground who know where that money is needed, and I am happy to give them that level of autonomy when it comes to that sort of money. In the months ahead, I certainly think that local communities will see a benefit, and that is a positive in the round.

Mr Dunne: I welcome the statement from the Minister and his initiative on roads maintenance in relation to weed spraying and the cutting of grass. Those are very important issues for my constituents in North Down. From working with Transport NI, I understand that there is a real problem in getting contractors, who have been stood down over recent years, ramped up and available to carry out that work. Will it be a challenge to complete the work within this financial year?

Mr Hazzard: No. There is an insatiable appetite for these sort of works throughout the North, and I do not think that it will present any sort of challenge in that way. We are more

than happy to look at the contractor issue if it arises, but I do not believe that it will be a problem.

Ms Lockhart: I thank the Minister for his announcement and welcome it. For someone who represents a rural constituency, it is most welcome to hear this announcement. I want to ask about the connectivity that the Minister's Department will have regarding the roads that were damaged by floods, particularly in the Bannfoot area in Upper Bann, where a number of roads were badly damaged by flooding. Has the Minister given any thought to the link-up with DAERA on that point?

Mr Hazzard: The June monitoring round allowed us to secure a number of resources to deal with some of the roads that had been damaged by flooding. I know that particular works are already under way in Fermanagh, and that may be the case in point that you have raised. If there are roads in need — and I think this should be stressed — it will be the areas that are in greatest need that will receive the money. I am more than happy to meet the Member to discuss that in further detail.

Mr Lyons: I welcome the Minister's statement. I was pleased to hear that:

"Rural constituencies right across the North will soon be able to see the benefits."

I suppose that it would be too much to ask that when the Minister referred to "the North" he was talking about the northern division in particular. That would have been much more pleasing. Will he elaborate on how the criteria for who and which projects will be eligible for the funding will be set out?

Mr Hazzard: I am more than happy to do that. Allocations will be made using a range of weighted indicators that are based on the number of defects, the number of public liability claims and the carriageway area, together with the road condition from various surveys. I go back to the fact that our divisional managers know their areas very well. They are the guys who will take the lead on it and will know where that investment is needed in local areas.

Mr Dickson: Thank you for your statement, Minister. Following on from my colleague, I would certainly welcome any investment that would be made in rural roads in east Antrim, but I am also concerned about urban roads. Will the Minister explain to us what plans he has to invest in the resurfacing of urban roads, many of which, in housing developments, are in exactly the same state as rural roads?

Mr Hazzard: I thank the Member for his question. As I said earlier, I am not suggesting that this will be the only roads maintenance that will take place. There is £54 million set aside for structural maintenance, and that will continue in all other areas.

Mr Speaker: That concludes questions to the Minister on his statement.

Mr Nesbitt: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. In light of the Minister's reference to media embargos and the clear hint that an embargo was broken, it would only be fair to moderate my criticism that the House was not the first to hear of the statement accordingly if the breach was beyond the Minister's control.

Mr Speaker: I have noted your comments, Mr Nesbitt.

GCSE Qualification Market and Grading

Mr Speaker: I remind the Minister of the requirement under Standing Order 18 for statements to be made available to Members as early as possible and at least 30 minutes before their delivery.

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that admonishment. I thought that the statement had been made available. Was it not? It was supposed to have been.

Mr Speaker: The statement is available now, but it was not available 30 minutes before it was to be delivered.

Mr Weir: OK. The earlier indicative timings had this being slightly later.

I wish to make an announcement on the GCSE qualification market and associated grades awarded in Northern Ireland. GCSEs form a core aspect of post-primary education in Northern Ireland. Not only are they the qualifications to be taken, but they constitute a standard to which the great majority of our learners aspire at the end of compulsory education. We are very successful in Northern Ireland, with a higher percentage of pupils here consistently achieving five GCSEs, or more, including English and maths, than their counterparts in England and Wales. Obviously, we tend to have better qualifications, albeit of a slightly different nature, than Scotland as well.

It is essential that our young people, schools, parents and employers have confidence in the GCSEs available here. GCSEs must be understood and recognised wherever they are taken, and they must support the attainment and progression of our learners. For those reasons, I have reviewed the existing policies in relation to GCSEs, in line with my desire for a child-centred education system.

Schools need to have access to qualifications designed here in Northern Ireland that meet the needs of our learners and economy. That being the case, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) will continue to offer GCSEs with distinctive characteristics that are valued by schools here. We have a statutory curriculum of which we can be proud, and it is important that there is a GCSE offer that reflects the qualities of that curriculum, with its recognition of skills development and employability in the 21st century. It is equally important that teachers and school leaders are free to exercise their professional discretion in choosing exam specifications that can help their pupils to enjoy learning and to achieve and which are relevant to the needs of our economy and society.

Our qualifications system has worked well for the pupils of Northern Ireland down the years, but, in light of the changes in England, concerns have arisen, namely around the comparability and portability of our local GCSE qualifications and the continuation of the open market in qualifications for schools in Northern Ireland. The overriding concern about the former is that no pupil in Northern Ireland should run the risk of being disadvantaged. In particular, that relates to two aspects: the top end of qualifications, which particularly impact on the issue of places on high-demand, high-qualification degree courses; and the mid-range qualifications that could have an impact on future employment in other parts of the United Kingdom. While the numbers potentially

impacted by those problems are likely to be low, they are real concerns that need to be addressed.

Similarly, on probably the bigger issue of the impact of the qualifications market in Northern Ireland, was the announcement of the withdrawal from the Northern Ireland GCSE market of exam boards Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) and, latterly, Pearson. That restricts choice for schools and pupils. It also leaves gaps in the provision of some subjects that would have to be filled very quickly by the local development of new courses, which would be at a cost to the public purse.

While others may have been distracted by side issues, it is those core issues of comparability, portability and the open market that I have concentrated on and sought outcomes to resolve. On comparability and portability, it is necessary to give some clarity on grading. The new grading system in England is to be anchored to the alphabetical grades at two points: the bottom of grade 4 will be anchored to the bottom of grade C, and the bottom of grade 7 will be anchored to the bottom of grade A. Those shall provide the necessary points of reference.

I propose that the alphabetical grading of CCEA's GCSEs will remain consistent with the alphabetical grading in the past, with two exceptions. First, in order to ensure that our highest achievers can demonstrate comparable excellence with their contemporaries in England, CCEA will realign the A* to reflect the level of attainment at grade 9 in the nine to one GCSEs. That will not only restore the distinction of the A* as a mark of outstanding achievement but will restore the value of the grade A as a high-level achievement within the reach of our most able learners.

Secondly, in England, it has been decided that grade 5 shall be the benchmark performance measure for attainment at Key Stage 4. That grade is higher than grade C, which marks the boundary of the level-2 qualification in all GCSEs. That achievement is a core element of the Programme for Government (PFG) framework. Linking in at level-2 qualification as a bottom point is also an internationally recognised comparison. In order not to disadvantage our young people because of the changes at grade 5, CCEA will, additionally, be asked to identify a new reference point on the grading scale to equate to grade 5. This new grade, C*, will provide additional information on the level of attainment.

11.00 am

On the issue of the examination market, this includes choosing alternative specifications to those offered by CCEA in certain subjects as well as having access to a range of specifications that CCEA does not offer. Rather than restrict schools in their choice, they should have a wider range of GCSEs to choose from, including those in England under the recent reforms, which range from grade 9 to grade 1. I have therefore decided to lift the current restriction on the accreditation of those GCSEs. There are a small number of curriculum-based exceptions to the reopening of the market and they reflect continuity with the statutory curriculum in Northern Ireland and the views of key stakeholders, including educationalists and the business community. Specifically, it shall remain the case that the assessment of speaking and listening, on which the House may sometimes fall short on assessment, must be included and contribute towards the overall grade

in the award of GCSE English Language. Also, consistent with the policy at A level, the assessment of practical skills must be included and contribute towards the overall grade in the award of GCSE sciences.

By reopening the market in this way, our learners will be able to access GCSE courses leading to alphabetical and numerical grades. Depending on the decisions of schools, some young people will leave school with a record of attainment that consists of a mixture of letters and numbers. The practice is little different from what happens now with the mixture of qualifications that school-leavers can get at level 2 with GCSEs, BTEC, level-2 certificates and diplomas, which are expressed in different ways. I am pleased to inform Members that, in light of my decision, AQA, OCR and Pearson exam bodies have confirmed to the Department in writing that they will make their GCSE specifications available here again with immediate effect. They have, in effect, reversed their decision.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that this revision of policy preserves the best in our existing qualifications system while opening up the opportunity for our young people to access a wider range of subject specifications. It addresses the challenges of comparability and portability to the overall benefit of our learners and the economy.

Mrs Barton: Minister, I thank you for your statement and welcome the reopening of the market choice for teachers and pupils from the other examining boards. I think that this is very welcome here in our schools. However, in relation to comparability and portability, will the addition of a further grade, C*, not add further confusion to the grades? Would it not have been simpler to have adopted the English numerical system for everybody?

Mr Weir: I think that the Member raised at the Committee that the key issues for individuals are comparability and portability, and she is right. Members have to realise that it is not simply a case of shifting to the numerical grade 9 to grade 1 system. The English changes that were made went well beyond simply grade 9 to grade 1 and created a new system that involves a removal of modularisation. It removed practical classes, and it moved the shift away from skills base in terms of examination results. If you are going to change to the numerical system, a number of years' worth of work will be required. Indeed, even in England, they are phasing the implementation of this in over a three-year period, so it is not something that could be done even if it were desirable. I think that some aspects of the changes in England would not be to the advantage of some of our pupils here.

If you simply shift over to grades 9 to 1, you are still left with the position of people, particularly when it comes to the job market, trying to compare different qualifications at different levels. For example, it would mean that, in the case of somebody who had graduated with grades 9 to 1 and was competing with somebody who had qualified under the old alphabetical system, an employer would be making judgements between letters and numbers. Whatever you do, there will be a level of disjoint. The important thing is the alignment of the C* grade with grade 5, which is what will be recognised across the water as being the benchmark. You then create direct comparability and portability. The case is similar for the A* grade, which will, in particular, impact on high-level results. That is the change that needs to be made, and that is what will

bring things into line. I think that, while there is no perfect solution, this is the best solution that can be offered.

Mr McElduff (The Chairperson of the Committee for Education): I thank the Minister for his statement to the House and for meeting me and the Clerk of the Committee earlier to give me a heads-up on this matter, and for taking receipt of two letters that I handed to him from Irish-medium schools regarding the withdrawal of nurture unit funding.

One of the ways in which our education system ensures equality is through our qualifications system. Our GCSEs are rightly recognised as being of very good quality. So, in just setting the context for my main question, I say that the Minister has taken an approach different from the previous Minister. Perhaps he could explain why. Does the Minister think that the qualifications evolution in England has finished its journey or does he believe that we will have to make further changes to our system in order to maintain GCSE comparability and portability? What are the educational arguments, and how is this pupil-centred?

Mr Weir: I thank the Member for his comments. I know that this is not directly related to the statement, but I assure him that all schools will be treated on an equal basis moving forward. While there are legal issues in relation to the former issue, it is not a case of money being withdrawn. Just to clarify, money was sought that was not there, then money was not given to the Department on that basis, so it was not a case of money that was agreed and then cut.

The Member talks about the evolution of the system. As a good DUP man, I would not be the biggest fan of evolution. Taking the issue seriously, why was there a need for a degree of change? Broadly speaking, the overall qualifications system within Northern Ireland has worked well, so I was not looking for revolution. Keeping the bulk of the system is the right way of doing it.

I was trying to address specific concerns that relate to potential acceptance into universities and acceptance in the wider context of the job market, but also the real pressure that came from schools. They said that they would have to change their specifications and develop new exam courses, so it is about giving that level of choice to people. This is a practical solution to be able to provide that choice while retaining the many good aspects of our curriculum and qualifications system in Northern Ireland.

Mr Dunne: I thank the Minister for his statement. Can the Minister further explain how this proposal improves portability and comparability of qualifications in Northern Ireland?

Mr Weir: One of the biggest issues for schools is the open market, but for individual pupils, parents and teachers quite often comparability and portability will be key. Sometimes, this may be more a perception than a frequent reality but there will be a concern that if there is not that comparability and portability, an individual pupil will be adversely affected in entry to the jobs market or in qualification.

The two key changes, plus the affirmation of another situation, will ensure that comparability and portability. First of all, the recalibrated A+ will mean that there is parity with grade 9, which may well mean that in some cases where there is a final decision to be taken at university on a high-specification course that requires

high qualifications, that person can be guaranteed not to be disadvantaged. Similarly, national employers may well look in years to come at the issue of a grade 5 as being the minimum qualification required to obtain a job. The development of the C* allows that direct comparability.

On the issue of portability and comparability, it is also important to note what has been retained. By anchoring the bottom of the C to the grade 4 as the minimum point for level 2 qualification, that is internationally recognised and means that from an international perspective, and indeed a national perspective, pupils in Northern Ireland will not be disadvantaged on that front either.

Mr McGrath: I welcome the announcement from the Minister this morning. Were schools thoroughly consulted regarding these changes, given that one sector — the IME — was outside this morning and felt thoroughly disappointed about not being consulted about changes that impacted it?

Mr Weir: With respect, the IME issue is a separate issue in terms of funding. As I indicated, there has maybe been a little bit of misinformation in relation to that, because it was not a question of money being cut. It was the fact that money had not been provided externally to the Department in connection with that, so the money was never there in the first place.

Communication is always important. Steps will be taken to ensure that schools are notified. The Member will realise that, in trying to sort out this problem, we have had considerable feedback on earlier decisions from schools, many of which want it sorted. I have been trying to give certainty on the issue, and the reason why it has happened as quickly as it has is that I wanted to give schools a level of certainty before the end of the school term. I think that, from that point of view, schools, generally speaking, will be happy with the decision. Clearly, we will inform schools on that basis to ensure that they are brought up to speed. Do not forget that this is ultimately about the position of schools and giving them the flexibility of choice. No one is suggesting that schools have to take the AQA, OCR or Pearson route, although a number of schools use them at present; they represent about a quarter of the market. Schools will make individual choices; it is about giving them flexibility. There is no imposition on schools in that sense — quite the reverse.

Mr Dickson: I thank the Minister for his statement. The mixing of numbers and letters is undoubtedly confusing for students and teachers. Will he assure the House that, after the changes he has made today, employers and further education establishments will have a thorough understanding of the value of the numbers and letters?

Mr Weir: It is important that there is proper communication with people. Do not forget that, had we simply moved to a 9-to-1 system, there would also have been confusion — different confusion, but confusion nonetheless. The Department has produced a grid — I cannot lay my hands on it — showing everything clearly. It might be described as idiot-proof; I was just about able to grasp it, so it passed the test on that basis.

The key element, particularly for employment, is minimum grades. If we have a situation where, nationally, a grade 5, instead of being the cut-off point in terms of level 2 is regarded as the minimum requirement for a job, aligning a new C* with that will mean that there is no disadvantage

and that it is clearly understood by employers over there. The same can apply here, and if, in one year's time or two years' time, employers in other parts of the United Kingdom treat a grade 5 as the minimum qualification for employment, it may well be that quite a few employers in Northern Ireland simply adopt a position. Therefore, we are keeping people in step with developments from the point of view of their employability both inside and outside Northern Ireland.

Ms Lockhart: I thank the Minister for his statement. It is certainly encouraging to hear the handle that he has on the issue. Will he further explain what actions he will take to communicate this to schools and teachers?

Mr Weir: It is important that the message gets out. I suspect that it is reasonably well known, but, to be certain, my school — sorry — my Department is writing to all schools today about the decision on grading — there was maybe a slight Freudian slip there — and its impact on availability so that schools are completely informed.

Consultation was mentioned. As for communication, the first to be notified of my final decision — I am sure that the Speaker would admonish me otherwise — has been the House — indeed the Chair — because it is important to give Members priority. I could, at the end of last week, have written to schools to let them know what was happening, but it is important that the first to learn about this is the Chamber. However, that will be done today, and schools will, therefore, know what the position is before the end of term.

Ms Seeley: I thank the Minister for his statement and the opportunity to question him this morning. I am sure that he does not need me to tell him that grading GCSEs alphabetically or numerically does not change how a pupil performs, so I question the educational argument behind his decision. However, given his comment on and commitment to child-centred education, will he give assurances that, as well as taking action to improve GCSE attainment, he will do all he can to extend full-time special school and preschool provision to as many children as possible, including to children whose parents want to send them to Fleming Fulton School?

11.15 am

Mr Speaker: I remind the Member that the question should be on the Minister's statement. It is for the Minister to decide whether he wishes to answer.

Mr Weir: I commend the Member for levering in that other subject. This is a bit tangential, but, on a broader level, in the same way as we have taken a child-centred approach to GCSEs, I am keen to support a child-centred approach to education as a whole. I want maximum availability of provision for pupils of whatever age across the board. The very major constraint that all of us face, in the Executive as a whole and in education, is the issue of resources. I simply say that, on the extension of resources, any persuasion that she is able to bring to bear on the honourable Member for South Belfast to provide more money to the Department of Education would be greatly appreciated.

Mr Douglas: I thank the Minister for his statement. Will he outline the impact on year 11 and year 12 pupils?

Mr Weir: As I said, there are no implications for pupils currently in year 12. They are due to receive their grades over the summer. Irrespective of the awarding organisation, they will be graded on the basis of letters. Pupils finishing year 11 have completed their first year of GCSE courses, and, for those studying for English board exams, the two subjects affected are English and maths. My understanding is that a minimal number of pupils will be involved. The position taken by the English boards is that they are phasing this in over three years. An English board offering history, for instance, for 2017, will offer a letter; for maths or English, it will be a number. They will then switch most of their subjects to numerical grading and complete that process in 2019. I understand that very few pupils in Northern Ireland do English through one of the English boards, and a relatively limited number do the maths course through English boards, so there will be very little impact on year 11 pupils and none on the current year 12.

Ms J McCann: I thank the Minister. Given the importance of investment in a child's early years for personal and social development, and the fact that that impacts on their attainment at GCSE, will the Minister explain why he has withdrawn funding from two Irish-medium primary schools when he could have funded them from his departmental allocation?

Mr Speaker: Can I —

Mr Weir: With respect, I have tried to deal with that issue already. The statement is on GCSE qualifications. I appreciate the point that the Member has made, but I can answer only those questions that relate to the statement.

Mr Lyons: I welcome the Minister's statement. Will he inform the House whether the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) has offered any opinion on the changes?

Mr Weir: I mentioned that only the Assembly has been directly informed of the detail of the final decision. Obviously, we took soundings to make sure that we would not run into difficulties with Ofqual or other examining bodies. Ofqual has confirmed that it has no particular issues with the proposals and is relaxed about them. CCEA is happy to implement the proposals. The awarding bodies in England have indicated that, on the basis of these proposals, they will remain in, or come back to, the Northern Ireland market. All the regulatory and qualification bodies are content with what is there.

Executive Committee Business

Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

State Pension (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Mr Speaker: The four motions are to approve statutory rules relating to pension regulations. The Business Committee has agreed to a single debate, during which the Minister and Members should address all four motions. I will ask the Clerk to read the first motion and call on the Minister to move it. The debate on all four motions will then begin. When all who wish to speak have done so, I will put the Question on the first motion. The second motion will then be read into the record, and I will call the Minister to move it. The Question will then be put on that motion. After the Question is put on the second motion, the third motion will be read into the record, and I will call the Minister to move it. The Question will then be put on the motion. After the Question is put on the third motion, the fourth motion will be read into the record, and I will call the Minister to move it. The Question will then be put on the motion. If that is clear, we shall proceed.

Mr Givan (The Minister for Communities): I beg to move

That the Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

As the title indicates, these amendments are essentially technical in nature, rather than implementing substantive policy measures. The Pensions Act 2015 introduced a new state pension for people who reached state pension age after 5 April 2016. People who reached state pension age before 6 April 2016 continue to receive their state pension under the old state pension rules. Therefore, a person who reached pension age before 6 April 2016 and who is widowed after the introduction of the new scheme will still be able to qualify for a category B pension based on the National Insurance contributions that their late spouse or civil partner had made up until 5 April 2016, when the old scheme closed. For such a person, a survivor's category B pension can consist of both inherited additional state pension and basic pension. Primarily, the amendments relate to the revaluation of the inheritable additional pension. For example, the order ensures that the inheritable additional state pension reflects earnings revaluation in the period before the spouse or civil partner reaches pension age and uprating in line with price inflation in the interval between the spouse or civil partner reaching pension age and their death. This simply replicates the rules that were in place under the old system.

The remaining provisions are mainly consequential amendments that extend various existing arrangements to the new state pension. A person's starting amount under the new state pension scheme is the higher of

what they earned under the old system and what they would be entitled to under the new scheme. Where a person's starting amount is higher than the amount of the new state pension, they will be entitled to an additional amount known as a protected payment. Article 2 of the order ensures that, where a person is awarded National Insurance credits after April 2016 in respect of a period of parental or caring responsibility falling before that date, those credits can be included in the calculation of the person's starting amount.

Article 4 of the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 allows an exception to the general rule that occupational pension schemes must treat men and women equally. The exception relates to what is commonly known as a bridging pension. This arrangement typically means that, where the scheme member retires before state pension age, the tax regime allows their occupational pension to be paid at a higher rate initially and then reduced when their state pension becomes payable. The exception allows a different amount of occupational pension to be paid to a man who has not reached state pension age but would have done so had he been a woman. This is permissible only to the extent that the payment of the different amount is as a result of the difference in male and female state pension ages. Article 3 of the order adds the new state pension to the list of exceptions to the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of gender. It is necessary to include the new state pension in this exception rule as state pension ages for men and women are not due to equalise until November 2018.

As it is only necessary to award National Insurance credits where a person's National Insurance contribution record is deficient, HMRC is currently able to make decisions on entitlement to National Insurance credits on behalf of the Department. Article 4 of the order makes provision to allow this practice to continue for the purposes of entitlement to the new state pension.

I hope that I have been able to clarify the content of this statutory rule for Members. I invite the House to support the motion and endorse the order.

Ms Gildernew (The Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for Communities): I thank the Minister for bringing these motions to the House today. The order and regulations were made as a consequence of the Pensions Act (NI) 2015 and, as the Minister said, are mainly technical and consequential amendments.

I inform the House that the order and regulations relating to state pensions were considered by the former Committee for Social Development. For the record, the Committee had no objections to the rules. The Occupational Pension Schemes Regulations were considered by the Committee for Communities, and it also had no objections. Furthermore, the Assembly's Examiner of Statutory Rules scrutinised the statutory rules and did not require them to be drawn to the Committee's attention. The order and regulations are already in operation, from April 2016, and today we are being asked to approve them. The Minister provided the detail of the regulations, so I will speak very briefly on each motion.

On the Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (NI) 2016, the Pensions Act 2015 introduced a new state pension for people reaching state pension age on or after 6 April 2016.

People who reached state pension age before 6 April 2016 will continue to receive their state pension under the old state pension. The order makes non-contentious, mainly technical, consequential amendments to extend various existing arrangements to the new state pension. The order will make a number of amendments linked to the old state pension system, primarily relating to the revaluation of the inheritable additional pension. The remaining provisions made by the order are mainly consequential amendments that extend various existing arrangements to the new state pension; for example, the calculation of the starting amount, the equal treatment rule and the award of National Insurance credits.

I will move on to the State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016. The proposals set out a second tranche of regulations, which are necessary to give effect to Part 1 of the Pensions Act. They amend the State Pension Regulations (NI) 2015 to ensure that all key provisions relating to the structure of the new scheme are contained in one set of regulations. The regulations make provision for the calculation of increments following a period of deferral of state pension where there has been a change in the rate of the new state pension other than uprating; inheritance of graduated retirement benefit by survivors whose deceased spouse or civil partner was in the pre-2016 state pension scheme; and entitlement to the new state pension for people resident overseas. As is the case in the current scheme, people living in certain countries — non-EEA states with which Britain does not have a relevant reciprocal agreement — will be precluded from receiving uprating increases.

On the State Pension (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (NI) 2016, in his autumn statement, the British Chancellor announced that the full rate of the new state pension will be £155·65 a week. Very generous: you are coming near it yourself, a Cheann Comhairle, so I am sure that you are worried. *[Laughter.]* The regulations accordingly amend the 2015 regulations to set the full rate of the new state pension at £155·65 per week.

The Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016 amend the Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) Regulations (NI) 1997 on the governance provisions for multi-employer schemes to ensure that they apply to the relevant schemes. They also make other technical amendments to ensure that the governance provisions work as intended.

On behalf of the Committee for Communities, I recommend that the order and regulations be approved by the Assembly.

Mr Bell: I welcome the fact that the Minister brought these forward in his competent presentation. They are technical and consequential amendments, so my short speech on them will probably be as interesting as most technical and consequential matters.

(Madam Principal Deputy Speaker [Ms Ruane] in the Chair)

The important thing is the principle on the nature of protected payments, which Minister Givan set out. An interesting point that can be picked up throughout is the non-discrimination on the grounds of gender. The fact that these have been examined, in part, by the previous

Committee for Social Development and, as the Deputy Chair elucidated, by our Communities Committee has support from all sides of the House.

Mr Givan: I thank the Deputy Chair of the Committee, Ms Gildernew, for speaking on behalf of the Committee and Mr Bell for his contribution. As no further substantive issues have been raised, I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

11.30 am

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to the next motion, which has already been debated.

Mr Givan: The Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 introduced a new state pension for all those reaching state pension age on or after 6 April 2016. The detailed provisions of the new state pension scheme are outlined in secondary legislation. These regulations insert additional provisions into the State Pension Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The regulations before us today deal with three main issues: the calculation of increments where a person has deferred the new state pension; transitional arrangements —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Sorry; all you were required to do at this point was to move the motion.

Resolved:

That the State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Resolved:

That the State Pension (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Resolved:

That the Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Committee Business

Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Business Committee has agreed to allow up to one hour and 30 minutes for this debate. The proposer will have 10 minutes to propose the motion and 10 minutes to wind up. All other Members will have five minutes.

Mr Boylan (The Chairperson of the Committee on Standards and Privileges): I beg to move

That this Assembly (a) affirms its commitment to high ethical standards and to the Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members agreed by the Assembly on Tuesday 23 June 2015; (b) agrees that, pursuant to Standing Order 69, amended by the Assembly on 14 March 2016, rules 4 and 5 of the Code of Conduct are amended to read as follows:

“4. You shall register in the Assembly’s Register of Members’ Interests details of all registrable interests. A registrable interest means any interest specified in chapter 1 of the Guide to the Rules. [The categories of registrable interest are set out in schedule 1.]

5. You shall declare, whether in Assembly proceedings or in any approach to a Minister, public representative, public body or public official, any relevant interest which might reasonably be thought to influence your approach to the matter under consideration. A relevant interest means an interest to which chapter 2 of the Guide to the Rules applies, and may include a registrable interest.

and; (c) notes that it will be necessary for the Committee on Standards and Privileges to update the Guide to the Rules to take account of these and other minor or consequential amendments.”.

Ba mhaith liom labhairt ar son an rún seo. I speak in favour of this motion. I welcome the opportunity to open the debate on this motion from the Standards and Privileges Committee. The purposes of the motion are threefold: to affirm the Assembly’s commitment to high ethical standards, to the code of conduct and to the guide to the rules relating to the conduct of Members; to seek Assembly approval to amendments to rules 4 and 5 of the code of conduct; and to note the need for minor and consequential amendments to the guide to the rules.

In terms of the first part of the motion, in June 2015 the previous Standards and Privileges Committee reported to the Assembly on the outcome of its major review of the code of conduct and guide to the rules. Drawing on international best practice, this resulted in significant additions and improvements. I shall outline those in a moment, as it is important that all Members familiarise themselves with the rules of conduct, irrespective of how experienced they are in the workings of this place.

First, however, we should consider why it is important to highlight the Assembly’s commitment to high ethical standards at this early stage in the new mandate. For that purpose, I will draw on the words of President John F Kennedy. In 1961, when delivering a special message to the US Congress on conflict-of-interest legislation and

the problems of ethics in government, President Kennedy argued that:

“No responsibility of government is more fundamental than the responsibility of maintaining the highest standards of ethical behavior by those who conduct the public business.”

He went on to point out that:

“the basis of effective government is public confidence, and that confidence is endangered when ethical standards falter or appear to falter.”

In terms of public confidence, perhaps we should also reflect on the findings of a 2014 survey on public attitudes towards conduct in public life, which was carried out in Britain by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

That painted a fairly negative picture in comparison with a prior survey two years earlier. It found that, for example, more respondents rated the standards of conduct of people in public life as low than rated them as high; more respondents thought that the standards of conduct of public office holders had got worse than had improved; and most respondents were not confident that the authorities are committed to upholding standards in public life or that wrongdoing would be uncovered or punished by the authorities.

While I am not aware of any recent comparable surveys examining public confidence locally, I have no grounds for assuming that the picture here would be more positive. Clearly, that highlights the importance that the Assembly needs to place on high ethical standards, with a view to boosting public confidence in the political system and institutions of government here.

I believe that the work of the previous Standards and Privileges Committee in improving the code and guide is an important step forward in that regard. In addition, the new Committee recently agreed to undertake scoping work on a range of topics for inquiry, including issues identified in the previous Committee's legacy report and potential reforms recommended in the recent annual report of the Commissioner for Standards. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on those issues today, as that would pre-empt decisions of the Committee, suffice it to say that, once the necessary scoping work is completed, the Committee will be in a position to make informed decisions on which topics to pursue early in the next session. Such work will serve to further bolster the standards regime in the Assembly.

Turning now to the new code and guide that were introduced for the new mandate, let me say that the new code is better structured, clearer and more accessible than the previous code. It includes 11 aspirational principles of conduct and 21 enforceable rules of conduct. In particular, it should be noted that there are several new rules and that some of the previous rules have been recast for clarity and enforceability. The new rules include rule 6, which states that Members shall not:

“accept any gift, benefit or hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence your actions as a Member.”

Rule 12 prohibits Members from disclosing confidential or protectively marked information unless authorised to do so, while rule 13 states that Members shall not:

“act in any way which improperly interferes ... with the performance by the Assembly of its functions”.

Rule 14 prohibits a Member from using their position to improperly advantage themselves or another person or disadvantage someone else, and rule 15 states that Members:

“shall not subject anyone to unreasonable and excessive personal attack.”

Rule 19 requires that Members:

“take reasonable care to ensure that your staff, when acting on your behalf, uphold these rules of conduct.”

and rule 21 prohibits a Member from urging another Member to contravene any rule of conduct. Of course, a breach of any of the 21 rules may result in an investigation by the commissioner, and breaches of the rules on registering and declaring interests and advocacy could constitute a statutory offence.

There are some key changes to the requirements for registering interests. While I do not have time to go into detail on all of those, I highlight in particular that Members must now adhere to a 28-day deadline for registering interests and providing notification of changes. Moreover, Members must now register any gift, benefit, hospitality or visit received by any third party that is provided because of their membership of the Assembly or their political activities. On the wider requirement to declare relevant interests when they relate to the proceedings of the Assembly, chapter 2 of the new guide makes clearer the types of interests that are declarable.

I shall now turn briefly to the more technical aspects of the motion. The second part of the motion seeks Assembly approval to amend rules 4 and 5 of the code of conduct, which relate to the registration and declaration of interests respectively. Those amendments are needed to ensure alignment with the definitions of terms used in Standing Order 69 as amended by the Assembly on 14 March 2016. There was insufficient time to do that before the end of the last mandate, but it is important that the amendments are made now to remove any risk of confusion or misinterpretation of the rules by Members.

The amendments to rules 4 and 5 will require consequential amendments to the guide to the rules. Other minor and consequential amendments were required to the guide as a result of changes in monetary thresholds following the recent determination of the independent financial review panel to increase the salary of MLAs, and because of some provisions needing to be clarified, as identified during the recent Members' interest registration process, such as the registration requirements relating to rental income from land and property, including second or other homes.

At its recent meeting, the Standards and Privileges Committee agreed a number of minor and consequential amendments to the guide that address those issues. As part of its deliberations, the Committee has also identified the potential need for further amendments, including to provide definitions of terms such as “third party” and

“political activities”. Subject to the motion being agreed today, the Committee will circulate copies of the revised code of conduct and guide to the rules to all MLAs for information.

I look forward to hearing the contributions from other Members to the debate.

Mr Lynch: The Chair has dealt with most of the technical points. I do not wish to make any more comments on those; I just want to make a couple of general points. A code is intended to provide a framework and reference point for us when discharging our duties and responsibilities as MLAs. It outlines the minimal ethical standards of behaviour expected of us as public representatives. The code is also to create public trust and confidence in these institutions. That can be only a good thing.

I want to touch more on the additional Assembly principles of conduct. The first one, I think, is number 8. As Sinn Féin spokesperson on equality and human rights, I welcome that addition. It is progressive in its outlook. We all, as Members of the Assembly, should promote equality of opportunity. We should not discriminate against any person. We should treat people with respect, regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or political opinion. We should all robustly uphold that principle and show leadership to and set an example for wider society at all times.

Principle 10 is around the issue of respect. Members should show respect and consideration for others at all times. One would think that that stands to sense and would not have to be written down in a code of conduct. Unfortunately, however, it has to be, given our journey to the Assembly. Respect and consideration has not always been shown at all times in the past in the House. However, I hope that things can and will change in this mandate.

Finally, principle 11 states that Members should work responsibly with other Members of the Assembly for the benefit of the whole community. In the main, Members work responsibly with others across the political divide. That is particularly evident in the Committees on which we sit. That goes for all the Assembly staff. We could not function without their assistance. They should be treated with the same respect.

Mrs Little Pengelly: In my relatively short political life thus far, I have been struck by the genuine compassion and the desire to help people and improve Northern Ireland from Members right across all parties and across the Floor. I honestly believe that most people get involved in politics and do this job because they want to make a genuine difference. I believe that they work hard at that. They help many people. However, we also have to acknowledge that there is an issue with perception out there. Therefore, it is welcome here today that we have these improvements being brought forward in relation to the guide and code for Members to try to rebuild some of that trust and build confidence with the public about the work that the Members of the House carry out.

11.45 am

I do not want to regurgitate what has already been said by the Chairperson of the Committee. I want to talk briefly to two of the amendments that we discussed at the meeting last week. Many of the amendments to the code are relatively minor or consequential. There is a minor

amendment to paragraph 31 where the words “or for your political activities” are being included. We discussed this at the meeting on Wednesday, and we understand why the phrase is there and believe it is necessary. We welcome a number of the amendments to the guide. The purpose behind them is to further clarify for Members and for those who may adjudicate on complaints or other issues what the intention is.

The Committee was happy to accept the proposed amendment, but there was some discussion around whether the phrase should be further clarified. I want to put it on record that it was my view that it should be considered further. Perhaps further clarity is required on whether the intention is that the “political activities” referenced in the code and in the guide are to be those connected to the work of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the work of Members as representatives of the Northern Ireland Assembly, as opposed to something wider than that. I am conscious, when I say that, that many charities now have a political role, from cancer charities and other health charities through to Greenpeace or even the National Trust — most will have a political lobbying role. Therefore, reference simply to registering fundraising “for your political activities” could go well beyond that if, for example, Members are involved in fundraising for charities. I want to put it on record that, at some stage, there should be further consideration of the intention of that amendment and whether we need to clarify it further. Is it the intention that Members have to register if they fundraise over a certain amount for charities as opposed to just for political activities connected to the Northern Ireland Assembly?

I also want to reference and put on record a point about paragraph 45 of the code. This is around the registration of visits and hospitality and makes reference to “any third party”. Therefore, it is about registering an interest by you and any third party. There has been an effort to clarify this by putting in a subclause, but the subclause is not exhaustive. It references four categories, but it is not finite. The concern is that, for example, Members could attend international conferences where hospitality is provided to a huge number of third parties attending, possibly from many countries. It could run into hundreds, if not thousands, of people, and I do not think it is practical or realistic that Members could register all the hospitality granted to third parties in those circumstances. I raise the issue because I do not believe that this is the intention, and I want to put on record that, in my view, there should be further consideration or further clarity on that clause, perhaps to specify that you are to register any visits or hospitality as a Member of the House or for “any connected third party”, as opposed to “any third party”, as is currently contained in the code. The Committee was content to accept the wording at this stage because we believe that the intention is indicated in the subclause, but the drafting could be tightened up.

Those are the only two issues that I wanted to speak on. As I said, the Chairperson has very adequately outlined many of the other amendments, both for clarity and for consequential —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member bring her remarks to a close?

Mrs Little Pengelly: Thank you.

Mr Beattie: I thank the Member for moving the motion. It is clear and self-explanatory to anyone who reads it. I have lived my whole adult working life by a set of values and standards, and I hold them dear. I now live my life, in private and in public, with a code of conduct and a set of standards and privileges. Those standards set out how I am supposed to behave, and that is really important. The privileges that are given to me are given so that I can go about the job that I do to represent the people of my constituency. It is important that we all understand where those standards — selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership — really lie. Yes, they are all self-regulating, but there must be something here that holds Members to account if they fall below those standards.

One of the standards we have is respect for others. If you had been in the Chamber yesterday afternoon listening to the EU debate, you would have thought that that was not in the code of conduct, given that some Members were getting on like petulant children. I was quite embarrassed by that, and I would say that it was close to bringing the Assembly into disrepute. I say this to Members: be mindful of your behaviour. How will people looking at us from the outside trust us if we get on like that? I would come down heavy on the standards expected of everybody in the Assembly. If I say, “Come down heavy on the standards”, I also say, “Come down light on the privileges”. We do not need privileges other than those set for us to be able to perform our role in the Assembly and represent the people. The public opinion and perception of us in here are pretty low. I put a marker down now and say this: I will press — this was mentioned earlier, and it is not for debate — for all the commissioner’s recommendations to be brought to the House and accepted. They are important.

The motion states:

“this Assembly ... affirms its commitment to high ethical standards”.

That is down to individuals. It is important that individuals do not just read the words but action them. It is also important that the Assembly holds Members to account in an open and transparent manner if they slip outside that.

Mr McPhillips: I welcome the opportunity to take part in the debate on the motion, which seeks to affirm the Assembly’s support for the Members’ code of conduct and proposes amendments to rules 4 and 5 of the code. As a member of the Committee on Standards and Privileges, I support today’s motion.

I will make some general comments on the code of conduct before specifically addressing the amendments. The SDLP believes that the House and its Members should always strive to operate within an established level of conduct that befits elected representatives. A code of conduct should not be a loose guide defining how Members should conduct their business in public life but should be a mechanism for adherence to an established set of principles. In the last mandate, the Chamber and the Committee made massive strides towards providing clarity in creating a set of rules and standards. The code now contains 11 aspirational principles of conduct and 21 enforceable rules, supplemented by a guide to explain how to comply with the code. We now have greater clarity, with more robust definitions.

The proposed aim of today’s amendments is to tighten the gaps in the code of conduct rules. It is anticipated that the amendments will remove the risk of confusion or misinterpretation of the rules by Members. I do not intend to give an exhaustive analysis of all the amendments to the rules as most of them are technical. However, I will highlight one key area. The amendments provide further guidance on dealing with lobbyists, as set out in appendix 1 of the rules. It provides a robust definition of what a lobby organisation is. It provides that Members, in dealing with lobbyists, must adhere to the code of conduct guide and declare any interest that arises out of meetings with lobbyists. The guide, as amended, now clearly states that Members must not receive any payment, benefit or gift from lobbyists. Those are progressive steps in ensuring that Members adhere to high standards when acting outside the Chamber, and the amendments to the rules go some way towards addressing concerns raised in the last mandate.

The SDLP supports the motion and the amendments. However, we still believe that there is considerable work to be undertaken to ensure that there is a robust mechanism to hold to account Ministers who may be operating ultra vires to the rules or the Pledge of Office. When a complaint is lodged against a Member, there is proper investigation by the commissioner. There is due process and a determination made on whether to censure, following consideration of the evidence. However, no such mechanism exists for Ministers, which may serve only to undermine the institution. That issue needs to be addressed in the future.

We look forward to the Committee’s forward work programme and the issue of using the petition of concern process to block motions of censure. That totally undermines the independence and effectiveness of the system of protecting the standards and privileges of the House. We have seen it used in the past, especially by the biggest party in the House, and I am sure that we will see it again. It is a blatant abuse of the petition of concern mechanism, and I hope that the issue will be addressed during the mandate.

I would like to commend the work of the Committee staff in the creation of these amendments and for all the support that they have given to the Committee and its members. Finally, I concur with Mr Beattie’s sentiments about how Members act in the House.

Ms Bradshaw: I do not intend to speak for long, but I am pleased to see the realignment of the code of conduct and corresponding changes to the guide and rules coming before the House.

Clearly, it is helpful to affirm the importance of ethical standards in the Assembly at a time when public confidence in politicians remains lower than we would wish it to be. Anything that adds clarity to the rules, not just for Members but for the general public, is useful, and that is what the changes to rules 4 and 5 of the code of conduct and consequential revisions to the guide do.

There is one particular issue that I would like to raise. Members may know that, from my time on Belfast City Council, I have a long-standing interest in ensuring the highest standards with regard to the register of interests. Standing Order 69 now provides an exemplar, which, I believe, all elected representatives and public bodies should seek to match. It is clear that the register of interests has

to be published and updated and that it must include the interests of new Members within 28 days of their election.

All this is fine until we get to the sanctions section, as my colleague from the Committee mentioned. It remains the case that sanctions, even against a Member who has clearly failed to comply with the rules, can be blocked by a party or combination of parties large enough to sign a petition of concern. This is ludicrous, as it means, in effect, that Members from larger parties do not have to adhere to the rules at all, provided that their colleagues are prepared to sign a piece of paper in their defence. This kind of nonsense leads only to public dissatisfaction with ethical standards. I suggest to Members that, if they want the public to take us seriously, sanctions must be applied equally to all Members. The commissioner's recent annual report states:

"This means the petition of concern should not be used to stop sanctions against a Member clearly in breach of ethical standards."

I, therefore, ask all party leaders to make a statement confirming that they will not use the petition of concern in such a way and to make clear to the public that any Member found in breach of standards will be sanctioned appropriately.

Mr Boylan: As we have heard, in order to maintain and enhance public confidence in this democratically elected institution, it is essential that we ensure that the standards regime for Assembly Members is robust and seen to be robust. The view of renowned political theorist and author Bernard Crick is perhaps applicable in this context. He argued:

"politics is ethics done in public".

Also, an important report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, titled 'Standards Matter', pointed out:

"public life does not take place in a vacuum",

and that the behaviour of public office holders "provides a model" for the populations from which they are elected.

As such, there is an onus on each of us as elected Members of the Assembly to be conscious of our ethical responsibilities and to be prepared to act as ethical leaders. Indeed, this is reflected in the leadership principle in the code of conduct. It is also worth noting the conclusion from the 'Standards Matter' report:

"Society can expect better outcomes when decisions are made fairly and on merit and not influenced by personal or private interests. Organisations in every sector benefit from greater legitimacy when the public has confidence in their integrity."

Indeed, on this latter point, the report also concluded that the wider economy benefits from that confidence.

12.00 noon

Clearly there is an important linkage between public confidence in the political system and elected representatives complying with high ethical standards. I think that it is also apparent both from the debate and recent discussions in the Committee on Standards and Privileges that there can be complexity around Members' ethical responsibilities. I think that we all therefore need to remain mindful of the need to continue to develop

our knowledge and awareness of the responsibilities. Moreover, the rules that apply here are similar to, and have been informed by, the rules that are in place in other applicable legislatures around the world.

As I pointed out earlier, the improvements that were made to the code and guide by the previous Committee should assist in explaining the rules. Further work by the new Committee will aim to build on this. Also, while the focus today is on changes to registering and declaring interests, I anticipate that awareness and training sessions for all MLAs on the wider range of standards issues will be arranged in due course. That was the expectation of the previous Committee. The new Committee has agreed to include this amongst the potential topics for its forward work programme.

I will turn now to Members' comments. I want to thank them for their comments. I will start with my colleague Seán Lynch. He spoke on two key elements: respect and good working relationships on the principles. That is key. We have just started off in the Committee. We have had two meetings, and they have been very positive. There have been good contributions from all Members. I look forward to a good working relationship.

To be fair to Emma Pengelly, she raised the two points of third parties and political activities. We will definitely look at those points as part of our work programme. Those two issues need further clarification. I look forward to working on that when we come back in September and, hopefully, bringing something forward.

Doug Beattie also mentioned respect and holding people to account. I agree with that. Mr McPhillips and Paula Bradshaw mentioned the petition of concern. Members will know that we discussed this in Committee last week and the previous week and that we will go away and do a bit of scoping work on it. We will take a look at it and, as a Committee, come back better informed and with an informed opinion. Hopefully, whatever the Committee decides, we will put forward. I just have to remind Members that, in relation to the Commission and the Committee's work, the ministerial pledge is outside the remit. I respect Mr Beattie's comments about some of the conversations that took place in debates in this Chamber yesterday. It is obviously down to the Speaker to deal with whatever goes on in this Chamber. It will not go unnoticed in debates and conversations that we will have in Committee.

I will turn briefly to further explain the need for amendments to rules 4 and 5. As I pointed out, they are consequential to Standing Order 69, as amended on 14 March 2016, and will ensure alignment of the definition of terms. This includes the terms "relevant interest", "registrable interest" and "financial interest" as apply in the amended Standing Order 69.

The amendments will remove the risk of any confusion. For example, in light of the amended Standing Order 69(7), which defines "relevant interest" as meaning:

"an interest to which Chapter 2 of the Guide to the Rules applies",

rule 4 as previously drafted could be misinterpreted to mean that all the types of declarable interests covered in chapter 2 are registrable. Also, rule 5 could be misinterpreted to mean that only the interests covered in chapter 2 are declarable, whereas the amended Standing Order 69(5) provides that financial interests specified

in categories 1 to 7 of the guide are also declarable. To further clarify this, the Committee has agreed amendments to chapter 2 of the guide to make clear that financial interests specified in categories 1 to 7 are also declarable.

The reasons for the amendments and their technical nature further serve to highlight the complexity of the subject matter.

Finally, arising from our discussion at the Committee's last meeting, I think that it is important to remind Members that the ongoing requirement to declare interests is broader than that for registering interests. The new guide makes clearer the types of interests that are declarable when they relate to matters being considered in Assembly proceedings. They include financial interests that you have registered already; past financial interests, which mean normally those held within the past 12 months; indirect financial interests, such as those benefiting a third party; expected future interests; financial interests of a sort that do not require registration; and any non-financial interests.

To conclude, I hope that today's debate has served to highlight the importance of the standards regime for Assembly Members. I expect that the Committee will continue to lead on the further improvement and refinement of the code and guide. The provision of awareness-raising opportunities for Members and their staff will also be important, and I encourage Members to take those up when we bring them forward. Pending that, I point out to Members, especially new Members, that the Clerk of Standards is available to provide ongoing advice to Members on registering and declaring interests, especially on the rules on advocacy.

Before I finish, I commend the work of the previous Chair, Alastair Ross. I also commend Paul Gill and his staff for the work that they did with the previous Committee and the new Committee staff who are helping us this time. I ask Members to support the motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That this Assembly (a) affirms its commitment to high ethical standards and to the Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members agreed by the Assembly on Tuesday 23 June 2015; (b) agrees that, pursuant to Standing Order 69, amended by the Assembly on 14 March 2016, rules 4 and 5 of the Code of Conduct are amended to read as follows:

"4. You shall register in the Assembly's Register of Members' Interests details of all registrable interests. A registrable interest means any interest specified in chapter 1 of the Guide to the Rules. [The categories of registrable interest are set out in schedule 1.]

5. You shall declare, whether in Assembly proceedings or in any approach to a Minister, public representative, public body or public official, any relevant interest which might reasonably be thought to influence your approach to the matter under consideration. A relevant interest means an interest to which chapter 2 of the Guide to the Rules applies, and may include a registrable interest.

and; (c) notes that it will be necessary for the Committee on Standards and Privileges to update the Guide to the Rules to take account of these and other minor or consequential amendments."

Opposition Business

Mental Health Champion

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Business Committee has agreed to allow up to one hour and 30 minutes for the debate. The proposer of the motion will have 10 minutes in which to propose and 10 minutes in which to make a winding-up speech. One amendment has been selected and published on the Marshalled List. The proposer of the amendment will have 10 minutes in which to propose and five minutes in which to make a winding-up speech. All other Members who are called to speak will have five minutes.

Mr Butler: I beg to move

That this Assembly notes that more than one in four of the population is affected by poor mental health and well-being; further notes the significant social and economic implications that this is having on society; expresses deep concern that, per capita, we have one of the worst records of poor mental health and well-being in the world; accepts that our shocking rates have been impacted directly by 30 years of violence and that the issue is now intergenerational; and calls on the Minister of Health to appoint a mental health champion, to be funded from charitable and philanthropic contributions, to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and well-being.

As the Ulster Unionist Party spokesperson on mental health, I welcome the opportunity to bring the motion on mental health to the Chamber. A mental health champion is something that the Assembly and Executive could practically deliver. Having a mental health champion would have measurable targets, and, importantly, it would be more than warm words of comfort. It could deliver tangible benefits for people suffering from poor mental health.

The Chamber has heard many times the shameful statistics that detail the level of poor mental health endured by the people of Northern Ireland. However, it would be remiss of me not to reiterate those figures, not least for the purpose of painting a picture of the real levels of suffering and to recall the hard life issues that are faced day in, day out by those who are affected.

With 28.5% of Northern Ireland's population currently diagnosed with mental health issues, we are faced with levels that are comparable with the world's worst affected areas. With no pride, I say that we hold the title of having worse levels of mental health than any other part of the UK — by some 25%, in fact. That is just not good enough.

It is reported that one in four adults in this country can expect to suffer with a mental health issue in the course of a calendar year, and it has long been acknowledged that levels of intergenerational problems here are disproportionate to those in other developed western countries. The legacy of the Troubles weighs heavily on the side of cause, with societal effect being transferred from one generation to the next. I grew up in the turbulent years of terrorism, and, for as long as I can remember, Northern Ireland has not enjoyed favourable economic parity with the rest of the UK. Higher than average levels of unemployment, a semi-rural population and fragmented care services leave our community ill-equipped in the face of this problem. I have little doubt that some — in fact,

many — of us in the Chamber will have felt the cold hand of mental health. The fact that 28·5% of the population are currently suffering suggests that more than 30 of us elected Members of the Assembly could be part of that statistic. It is beyond argument that every one of us will have been through it or have been affected by someone close to us who is not well.

I have listened intently to the words of sufferers lately, and the reality for those at the sharp end is day-on-day feelings of depression and anxiety and a lack of self-worth and well-being. They are living lives where substance abuse is a viable coping strategy, where eating disorders abound, where self-harm and mutilation is a norm and, sadly, where, for some, suicide is the only way to escape their suffering. Yet another shameful statistic for this country is the totally unacceptable level of suicide — not that there is an acceptable level. Now is the time to address this, and now is the time for action.

The scale of the problem has been reinforced to me since I took the party role of spokesperson. I have had direct contact with many sufferers in recent weeks, and I am determined that I and the Assembly will take the measures to improve our care system. Just last week, I attended the funeral of a friend who decided that suicide was his last option, and, on speaking to the pastor who officiated at that service, I was saddened to hear that he is carrying out funerals on a weekly basis for those who commit suicide. This is a scourge, and sadly we have hot spots in this country that are regularly visited by the cold hand of death, which is far from victimless. Families are left to pick up the pieces and to try to make sense of what has happened to their loved ones and why more could not have been done.

Mr Beattie: I thank the Member for giving way. Notwithstanding all the facts and figures that you have given, will you agree with me that one of the groups that is badly affected is the armed forces veterans community? Due to the security situation, many of them have to suffer in silence, abandoned by Westminster and neglected by the Executive. Does he agree with me that we should fight to have a veterans and reserves mental health programme set up in Northern Ireland, as they have in England, funded by Westminster?

Mr Butler: I welcome the Member's contribution and, indeed, concur with those thoughts.

No one will dispute the financial burden of the failure to address this grand-scale problem. The costs to Northern Ireland are estimated to be in the region of £3 billion annually, with only 10% of that being actual spend on healthcare. The remainder is made up of sickness absence, non-employment and low productivity. Therefore, it would be right to assume that if we can directly improve the mental health and well-being of the population, we will directly improve the economic balance that currently sees people here suffer living standards that are consistently 75% to 80% lower than those of the people of Great Britain. I would like to pay tribute to the many health staff and professionals, volunteers, community workers and charities that play such a valuable role in providing the high-quality services in our system.

Mr Smith: I thank the Member for giving way again; what he said has stimulated me to ask a question. Does the Member agree that it is unacceptable, with Northern Ireland having the highest rate of suicide on these islands

— tragically, 268 in 2014, which is the last year of statistics — and, uniquely, at a higher level than 30 years ago, that mental health counsellors working in the community sector are, due to cuts in funding, having their hourly rates reduced to a level that makes it difficult for them to continue to offer this valuable service?

12.15 pm

Mr Butler: I thank the Member for his contribution. I concur with his thoughts and will touch on that point. It was a timely intervention, as we must also listen to health professionals when they tell us that they are at breaking point, that they are unable to meet demand and that they are themselves at risk.

I have read with real interest the previous debates on the issue and the many contributions by Members from most if not all of the parties represented here today. To that end, I am hopeful that the motion will pass unaltered, as the amendment before us would significantly weaken it. To be honest, I was surprised and disappointed at what is clearly waning support from the Minister's party. In many of the debates that I have heard and read on the topic, I found little variance between the parties' positions.

Last week, acting as the Health Committee's representative, I had the pleasure of attending the final Together For You conference on mental health and well-being. The focus of the conference was to reflect on the performance and results of the three-year Big Lottery Fund project that forged close working relationships between the project lead Action Mental Health, Aware, CAUSE, CRUSE, MindWise, Nexus, PraxisCare, Relate NI and the Rainbow Project. The innovative — I always have problems with that word — actions taken and the cumulative effect of the cross-charity and care function collaboration delivered results that were greater than had been anticipated. Surely, that can be a model that we can seek to learn and grow from.

The Minister of Health stated:

"Championing mental health is one of my main priorities. Anyone can be affected by mental illness, and I am determined that the Health and Social Care system provides top-class, recovery-focused care. The outcome of the Together For You Project demonstrates that the voluntary and community sector also has a crucial role in providing mental health and wellbeing services".

She also said that she looked forward to working with them in her time in office. I welcome that statement, Minister.

Before the 2016 Assembly elections, the Ulster Unionist Party delivered a policy paper on mental health and well-being identifying areas that had to be addressed. The first, which is supported by a number of our charities and areas of research, was the appointment of a mental health champion, a champion who is credible and trustworthy, is not affiliated with any party or grouping, is totally independent and is an impartial professional with the track record and drive to radically alter the mental health and well-being of our people and communities. There can be no more fitting and appropriate statement of intent for the Assembly than to create that environment and positively promote the appointment of a charitably and philanthropically funded mental health champion. I urge

the Chamber to issue no further statements of interest and intent on the matter but to support the motion.

Ms Seeley: I beg to move the following amendment:

Leave out all after “directly” and insert

“by decades of conflict, and more recently by austerity and the resulting increased levels of unemployment and homelessness and that the issue is now intergenerational; and calls on the Minister of Health to explore the role and remit of a mental health champion to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and well-being.”

I begin by welcoming the motion and by commending my UUP colleagues for tabling it. It is heartening to note the cross-party consensus on the importance of mental health. That was strengthened further by confirmation from our new Health Minister Michelle O'Neill that mental health is one of her key priorities. I am confident that she will be ambitious, not tokenist, and will push mental health up the agenda and champion it throughout her term, including during the Programme for Government discussions.

I also commend the work of the many charities that offer support and aim to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Cycle Against Suicide came to Drumcree College in Portadown twice this year to spread their message that it is OK not to be OK and to encourage people, particularly young people, to speak openly and to ask for help. I also commend the work of groups such as the Children's Law Centre, Action Mental Health, Niamh, the Public Health Agency, Lifeline and, more specifically, PIPS Upper Bann, which works tirelessly in my constituency to help those who need support, be it individuals with mental ill health or families suffering loss as a result of suicide.

Our amendment seeks merely to strengthen the motion. We believe that it is crucial to note the devastating impact of austerity on mental health across the North. There are growing concerns about fuel poverty, rising personal debt and growing reliance on loan sharks and payday lenders. There is grave concern surrounding the lack of affordable housing, the shortage of well-paid full-time jobs and the impact of welfare changes that appear to disproportionately affect disabled people and other vulnerable groups. There is no doubt that unemployment and homelessness place a huge strain on many of our constituents. If we work to provide services for them only when they suffer ill health, whilst ignoring the root causes and making no effort to tackle them, we fail in our role.

I am not convinced that it is in the gift of the Health Minister to dictate where the funding from charitable or philanthropic resources should go. Our amendment therefore allows the Minister the space to explore the full range of options. In addition and given the cross-cutting nature of mental health, it is necessary for the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education to be involved in any discussions around appointing a mental health champion. To be successful, a mental health champion must work in partnership across Departments. Take, for example, the implementation of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016. It provides huge potential to address child and adolescent mental health triggers, while the implementation of the youth justice review recommendations, led by the Department of Justice, must address the alarming rates of child and adolescent mental

health need among children who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

The appointment of a cross-departmental mental health champion would be a significant step, but it is certainly not the only action required. We urgently need to audit the implementation of the Bamford review to identify how far we have come and determine what has not yet been implemented. Fifty-four recommendations came out of the review of child and adolescent mental health services in Bamford. Almost 11 years on, only 26 have been met. In addition, those living in rural areas are adversely impacted — forced to travel long distances to get help, when they are brave enough to ask for it. That does not fulfil the commitment made following the Bamford review to treat people in their community, close to friends and family.

A point that will, undoubtedly, be well rehearsed during today's debate is that we in the North have higher rates of mental ill health than any part of Britain or Ireland. Our rates are 20% to 25% higher. It is the largest cause of disability in the North. One in four people is affected, as Robbie Butler mentioned. Someone you know is currently suffering mental ill health. Our young people are significantly affected by the cross-generational mental health needs of a society emerging from conflict. The areas with the highest rates of mental health need are those most impacted by the conflict, which are also areas of high socio-economic deprivation.

The prevalence of mental ill health among vulnerable groups of children is disproportionately high. Those groups include disabled children, those living in poverty, children in conflict with the law, care-experience children, children with care responsibilities and those in need of safe accommodation, yet the new framework for mental health incapacity excludes under-16s. That was never recommended by Bamford. That was recently noted with concern by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, it was recognised by the Chief Medical Officer as far back as 1999 that approximately 20% of children and young people in the North would suffer significant mental health problems before their eighteenth birthday. Official statistics are out of date, but recent peer research carried out by the Children's Law Centre's youth group suggests that that figure is now closer to 27%.

There is no forensic inpatient paediatric psychiatric provision in the North, and there are limited inpatient adolescent facilities. Children with complex mental health needs are often moved out of this jurisdiction to access specialist child and adolescent mental health services. We continue to admit and treat our children on adult psychiatric wards. That is not in their best interests and must cease immediately. Furthermore, it is estimated that 10% of children between five and 15 years old have a significant mental health issue and that there has been an increase of 70%, in the last 25 years, in the number of teenagers with depression and anxiety.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child earlier voiced its concern that the number of child suicides has been steadily increasing in the North in the past 10 years. In addition, a recent report detailed how one in five of our student population have self-harmed due to feelings of loneliness and anxiety. It is therefore imperative that, as well as addressing gaps in provision and appointing individuals to roles, we tackle the many root causes

of mental health issues, including unemployment and homelessness. That has to be a priority for us all.

Eight years ago, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that additional resources and improved capacities be employed to meet the needs of children with mental health problems, with particular attention to those at greater risk, including children deprived of parental care, children affected by conflict and those living in poverty and in conflict with the law. It said it again this month. It is time that we acted for our most vulnerable.

Ms P Bradley (The Chairperson of the Committee for Health):

I also start by commending the proposers of the debate, and I welcome the opportunity to speak on this issue. I noted without any great surprise that one in four people in Northern Ireland is living with mental ill health, given what we have been through in Northern Ireland in the past decades. I was born in 1969 and am slightly older than you, Mr Butler, but, like you, I was a child of the Troubles and grew up during that time. We all know what effect that had on many of us and in many of our homes around this country. Indeed, as you said earlier, I do not believe that there is anyone in this House who has not been touched, either directly or indirectly, by mental ill health. We know the effect that that has on our families and on our own employment, and we know about alcoholism, homelessness and, of course, suicide.

It is with that in mind that I want to direct some of my attention towards the issue of PTSD. Many Members will already know that, once upon a time in a previous life, I wore a uniform and was proud to do so. I was proud to wear that cap badge on my head. I worked with so many people over those years who, not only through the Troubles but through other things that they had seen by just doing their normal daily job, ended up with severe PTSD and severe mental health issues. I remember many occasions where there were road traffic accidents or of going to a house fire where a young family had been burnt to death or of attending a sudden death. That affected so many of the men and women who I worked with, and, as a result, they suffered from PTSD.

From my personal circumstances and those of my family and those around me, I know what it is like to hear a song on the radio, to have a smell and to hear a sound. I know what it is like to have a date imprinted in my head that I will never forget, and I know that, when I smell that smell, hear that sound or hear that little snip of a song, that can bring me back to a day that I never want to remember again. I think that we need to recognise in this country that there is a great need for help for PTSD. I thank Mr Beattie for his intervention earlier, because I am proud to say that I am the mother of a serving soldier. We are seeing a whole new generation of young men and women, coming back from theatres of war, who are in such a dreadful state and need so much help and support, yet we are failing them on those levels.

More than that, we have another generation of young people who, as Ms Seeley said earlier, are suffering from poor mental health. In the last mandate, we had various witness sessions, and one that strikes my mind was in the Committee for Social Development rather than in the Health Committee. It was from a group of young people who had been made homeless, and their homelessness was a result of whatever had happened in their family

life that left them with mental health problems. There is something that we need to be doing. I believe in the motion, and I think that it is excellent. I think that all of us in our party manifestos talked about wanting to see mental health champions.

12.30 pm

I agree with the amendment put down by Sinn Féin, but I do not want to divide on the issue. It is such an emotive and serious issue that we should not divide on it, but a little more work and scoping is needed to get it exactly right, and I believe that those who tabled the amendment want it exactly right as well. As the Chair and as a Health Committee, we will not let the issue slip off the agenda or let the Minister drop the ball. I think that she and Committee members know that.

I am happy to support the motion as amended, with the caveat that we as a Health Committee continue to keep this in mind as one of our priorities. We know that it is one of the Minister's priorities, and I believe that it is also a priority for the Committee. With that in mind, I again commend those who tabled the motion and the amendment, and I support the motion as amended.

Mr Durkan: I welcome the opportunity to speak on the motion. I commend the UUP not just for the motion but for their continued desire and efforts to raise the profile of mental health and increase the urgency with which we deal with this difficult, complex and emotive issue that debilitates individuals, families and whole communities.

I welcome the amendment tabled by Sinn Féin. Like Ms Bradley, I do not think that this is an issue on which we should divide. The motion and the amendment have many merits. The amendment does not propose that any mental health champion should, for example, be funded from charitable contributions. While I see some logic in what the UUP is proposing for the funding model to ensure the independence of the role, existing overworked and effective organisations in the sector might balk at the idea of the position being funded from their already overstretched budgets, a lot of which comprise European funding, but that is an argument for yesterday and maybe other days in the future. Those organisations do not want to lose out in financing a post that they will have to work closely with. No doubt, they welcome the motion and the initiative behind it.

There are other mechanisms, I am sure, for funding a mental health champion in an arm's-length way, which can ensure its independence and autonomy. We should not have to look too far for those. I welcome that fact that the amendment recognises the impact of austerity on mental health. Some of us made that point repeatedly as we opposed the draconian Welfare Reform Bill and the effect that it will undoubtedly have on some of our most vulnerable people.

That said, we believe that the amendment is maybe not strong enough. We believe that the Minister should appoint, rather than "explore the role and remit" of, a mental health champion, although I take on board what Ms Bradley says in that we will not let the issue slip away and will keep it on the agenda.

Regardless of how a mental health champion is funded, that person will have their work cut out. Here in the North, as Members said, we have higher levels of mental ill health

than any other region on these islands. Others have told us that it is estimated that one in four adults here will suffer from a mental health problem at some stage, which equates to some eight people in the Chamber at the moment.

We often hear about and, indeed, talk about in here how mental health is every bit as important as physical health and how mental ill health can be every bit as painful and debilitating as physical illness, but this has never been recognised in budgetary terms. The meagre share of our budget dedicated to mental health is shameful. I noted in the Minister's statement last week that she would be a champion for mental health, which I very much welcome. We must all be champions for mental health.

I hope that the Minister will be the fairy godmother-type figure who finally resources this Cinderella service and enables it to get to the ball.

The appointment of a mental health champion would be a great start. The champion would work with us and the Minister to ensure that sufficient funds were made available to improve mental health services as set out in the Bamford review and that funding was ring-fenced against any future budget cuts.

An early action should be another regional review of mental health services to examine the extent to which services are fragmented — and they are fragmented, especially in rural areas. It is also imperative that we develop better partnership working and collaboration. Not least, the champion should be able to look across and work across other Departments, particularly the Department of Education, as Ms Seeley said.

Much has been made of the direct and indirect costs associated with mental illness, and they are immense. However, any comparison of estimates and costs with those in the Republic of Ireland, for example, shows just how bad the situation is here. Yet, shocking as those figures are, they do not touch on the real human cost. People have their life put on hold or even lose their life as they await diagnosis and treatment.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I ask the Member to bring his remarks to a close.

Mr Durkan: Families are at their wits' end, trying to get and to give the best care that they can.

Ms Bradshaw: I support the motion. A champion for mental health was an Alliance Party manifesto commitment, and we are keen to get cross-community support to deliver one. It is hard to measure these things precisely, but there seems little doubt that Northern Ireland experiences the poorest mental health in the UK. We must see this as an opportunity to tackle the issue and deliver improvements that could be referenced globally.

I would like to take the opportunity to outline some of the Alliance Party's commitments on mental health that, I am sure, other parties will support, because this is an absolutely non-partisan issue. First, we want to see the implementation of the Bamford review and the personality disorder strategy. It is possible that, by raising awareness, the motion will increase the pressure for that. Like others, we wish mental health made central to the public health system and to public health promotion, and we welcome the programmes already ongoing to make that a reality.

Secondly, we have to be aware not just of the real challenges faced by people who experience poor mental health and those close to them but of their rights. It is vital that the Mental Capacity Act, a significant achievement of the last Executive, is fully and swiftly implemented. In particular, we need to increase awareness of issues that arise in the youth justice system.

Thirdly, it is essential that we do not focus solely on the Troubles and the legacy of conflict, although we need to be aware that there are issues still needing to be addressed. That is why the Alliance manifesto proposed a mental trauma service, alongside work on what is frequently termed "dealing with the past". We must remember that, for many, dealing with the past is, in fact, very much dealing with the present.

Finally, an area of particular emphasis: we should reflect that what is referred to as "mental health" is not just a Department of Health issue. Although this is not universal, mental health issues often arise as a result of social isolation and marginalisation. Poor educational attainment, unemployment, poor physical health, personal debt and a raft of other factors can seriously impact on mental well-being. Of course, these have to be tackled at source, thus preventing, as far as we can, poor mental health in the first place.

We see no point in dividing the House on the principle of the motion, as it is so important, and I commend the Member for tabling it. However, I will raise some queries, as others have done today. Clearly, the reference to finance from charitable or philanthropic sources is a fair attempt not to impose a budgetary burden. However, mental well-being is an area where we absolutely should impose a budgetary burden. Funding could, for example, be freed up in the reform, through the expert panel, of existing services and programmes in the health service. That could be used more effectively to invest in comprehensive mental health services and prevention, including but not limited to a champion, a position backed by the Association for Mental Health.

We respectfully ask whether the only role of the champion should be to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health. As I mentioned, problems have a range of sources that, if tackled, would stop people suffering a decline in mental health to begin with. In our view, there should be a fully independent champion whose role would be to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and to raise awareness of the issues that impact on mental well-being and on how people can look after themselves mentally as well as physically. That is important not least because so many of those suffering poor mental health suffer in silence, and we must deal with the stigma of that. We also need to recognise that, if we have a champion, people will feel that there is somebody backing their corner. It would also be important for such a champion to interconnect services, for example, in Youth Service provision, housing and skills development, in a way that ensures that as few people as possible are impacted by high levels of stress and anxiety.

There is also a case for the champion to be the first point of access and signpost people to key services. Perhaps we should look to set up a working group, as other charities have advocated. In other words, though I do not remotely wish to suggest that every case of poor mental health can be prevented —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: I ask the Member to bring her remarks to a close.

Ms Bradshaw: — we think that there is a significant role for the champion in dealing with this.

Mr Middleton: I thank the Member for tabling the motion. It is timely and something that the whole House can get behind. I concur with the sentiments expressed by all the Members so far, particularly those of my colleague Paula, the Chair of the Health Committee. As mentioned, each and every one of us in the Chamber will, at some stage, have had experience of poor mental health, whether personally, through family members or, indeed, through constituents in our offices. Many of the issues brought to us as elected Members lead to poor mental health whether it be, as mentioned in the motion, financial stress, unemployment or homelessness. For that reason, I support the motion.

Of course, as has been mentioned, the 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland has also had a direct impact on our mental health. The victims are civilians and, of course, members of our security forces. Research published in March 2015 that was commissioned by the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors estimated that 213,000 adults had mental health difficulties that appeared to be directly related to the Troubles and that, potentially, 60% of those individuals had not received treatment. That, of course, is a worrying figure, and it needs to be addressed. The previous Health Minister initiated work on a new world-leading mental trauma service for Northern Ireland. Prior to leaving office, he allocated an additional £175,000 for early set-up costs. I would welcome the Minister's outlining her commitment to that service. She mentioned at a conference last week that she would take forward and champion mental health, and I look forward to that and to working with her in Committee.

As outlined by the Health Minister in Committee last week, spending on mental health by our trusts has increased by 17% since 2004-05. Under previous Ministers, mental health spending increased to £250 million per year, a rise of £50 million since the Bamford review. There has also been a positive switch in where that investment goes. Some 57% of mental health expenditure is now in the community, compared with just 46% a decade ago. That is a welcome shift in where the money goes. We know that there are many organisations and charities that do excellent work in our communities, and they need to continue to receive the necessary support and resources. I pay tribute to each and every one of them. Day and daily, they provide care, and they are champions of mental health. That needs to be recognised as well.

I have outlined some of the work that has been done, and indeed there is still much more to be done. Too many in our population suffer in silence and go untreated. We need a mental health champion to take forward, protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and well-being. It should be a champion who focuses not only on the Department of Health but across Departments, as was previously mentioned, and across the education and other sectors. I agree that this needs to be scoped out to ascertain the role and remit of a mental health champion. We need to ensure that any new positions or offices give value for money and will, ultimately, have a positive impact and enable better mental health.

The Department should implement the Mental Capacity Act and ensure that sufficient resources are allocated.

12.45 pm

Individually, we all have a role to play in tackling the stigma around poor mental health. I will continue to support innovative campaigns such as Change Your Mind and focus on destigmatising poor mental health. The House should not divide on the issue. We should support the motion and the amendment.

Ms Gildernew: I am delighted to be able to speak to the motion. I welcome the fact that it was tabled, and I support our amendment. As someone who has been affected by poor mental health and diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, I can assure Members that it is not just combatants who suffer and that many of us were seriously affected by the conflict. The amendment is a very important one.

I want to make a point about charitable and philanthropic — I think that we are all having difficulty saying that word — contributions. Like many others in the House, I have worked with groups and organisations that are doing sterling work. I want to mention Niamh and PIPS in particular. It is hugely important that a mental health champion be properly funded through mainstream funding and that we are not robbing Peter to pay Paul.

I do not want to repeat things that other Members have said, but there are a few areas that I would like to draw the House's attention to. My colleague Catherine Seeley talked about the impact on children and young people. It is hugely important that we get that right. I am very proud of the fact that the Western Trust was the first trust to bring forward an infant mental health strategy, and that has now been adopted by the Department. There is a recognition there that, for a number of reasons, even babies can suffer from poor mental health. It is important that we recognise that poor mental health can affect all of us at one stage or another. I am also very familiar with the hugely important child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Catherine made a point about counselling in schools. Although that is absolutely crucial, I often feel very sorry for young people who have left school and do not have that support. They may have suffered a bereavement or a family breakdown and do not have the same access to counselling services. I want to see counselling made available to all in their own area or community and ensure that people have access to it.

I want to speak too about the difficulties for carers and how their mental health can be impacted on by some of the problems that they face daily. I am speaking at an ADHD event in the Long Gallery later today. I know that young people who do not have a diagnosis of ADHD, autism or other conditions can have a massive impact on the mental health of their parents and carers. It is important that all those strands of health policy be interwoven to ensure that we get the best treatment for all our people. Bamford has not been fully implemented. It is a big ask of our new Minister — I wish her well in her post — but mental health has to be up there as a priority.

It is often very hard for people in rural areas not just to access services but to accept that there is an issue. I will continue to say to people that they need to seek help from their GP in the first instance, but it is sometimes very

hard to get big, stoic farmers to recognise that they are having problems with their mental health. I want to see the Minister talking to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister for Infrastructure. Social isolation was mentioned earlier. Loneliness is a massive problem in isolated rural communities. The Minister has been very supportive of rural transport in the past. I hope that she will continue to be and can talk to the Infrastructure Minister about extending schemes and ensuring that people have the opportunity to get out and about, not just to health appointments but to visit friends or to go to the hairdresser, because loneliness can impact so badly on your mental health.

A lot of women are diagnosed with poor mental health during pregnancy, and we need to support women in particular. They often share the brunt of the caring responsibilities, and — this is in our amendment — it is women who suffer the worst effects of austerity and who are often trying to raise children in poverty, so —

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member bring her remarks to a close?

Ms Gildernew: — it is important that we recognise that. I also ask the Minister to be cognisant of the needs of our prison population and the high issues of mental health within it.

Mrs Little Pengelly: Like so many others in the House, I commend the Member for bringing forward this motion. It is very welcoming that we have such a level of consensus and agreement around these issues. Over the last decade, both in my work as a special adviser in the Office of the First Minister and in my new role as a public representative, I have been hugely humbled to have the opportunity to speak to many people who have either experienced, or are still experiencing, mental health challenges. I think in particular of the many victims and survivors whose incredibly harrowing experiences have had such an impact on their mental health, from low mood and isolation through to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and the more extreme challenges they face.

I am very aware through having spoken to many young people and many young people's organisations that have raised the issue of mental health. This seems to be an increasing problem and represents a challenge for young people. There is a service through schools, but we routinely hear that the need is increasing and cannot be met by what is there at the moment — we need to address that. I am very aware that, particularly with our young people, it can manifest itself in very self-destructive behaviours such as self-harm and suicide, as well as alcohol and drug abuse, all of which give rise to lifelong challenges for our young people, including in employment and their life outcomes around education and health.

I have also spoken to many young mothers — I welcome the fact that that has been referenced — on issues of postnatal depression and perinatal healthcare, and the acute needs that they present. There has been much speculation and discussion on the causes of the increased high levels of mental health challenges in Northern Ireland. Regardless of that analysis and discussion, we need to acknowledge that it is a problem and take action. That is why I welcome the motion for a champion, but I am also very aware that there are many fantastic champions for mental health out there, such as the victims and survivors groups that have done such an incredible job through the

decades of raising awareness of mental health. I am also conscious of the mental health charities, some of which I have met, and I am aware of the various fundraising campaigns, which include MindWise, Aware, Niamh and a great many others that have been mentioned today. There are also individuals like Lindsay Robinson, who is the wife of East Belfast MP Gavin Robinson. She has done a huge amount of work to raise awareness of perinatal care and postnatal depression through the use of social media and other platforms. There are incredible champions out there, but anything that raises awareness of these issues must be welcomed, so I welcome today's motion.

I want to echo the words of Gary Middleton on welcoming not just the concept of a champion but action to address this, and that is why I warmly welcomed the announcement of a mental health service for Northern Ireland by the then Health Minister, Simon Hamilton, with the aim of having a world-leading centre of excellence for mental health, based on the previous reviews and an acknowledgment that more must be done to address the issues. The origin of the idea is very interesting in that it came about through discussions with victims and survivors initially, with the universities coming forward with ideas about a mental health service for them. When we discussed this in the negotiations around Fresh Start, working very closely with the Health Department, it became very clear that actually, on mental health issues, the need was much, much wider than just victims and survivors. It is desperately needed. We want to reduce waiting lists. We need to have that early intervention to prevent people falling into more complex needs, and, when people have complex needs, we need to work with them to prevent self-harm and suicide at every stage and opportunity that we can.

I welcome the comments that have been made, particularly on the security forces and others.

During the Troubles, there was a range of issues. I think, as an example, of the many women who sat at home, waiting for their husbands in the security forces to come home and dreading and fearing that they would not. I have spoken to many wives who did not sleep until their husbands were back safe in the early hours of the morning.

I have spoken to many people, not only those who are impacted by mental health but also to their families.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: Will the Member bring her remarks to a close?

Mrs Little Pengelly: All of us have spoken to families that have said, "What could I have done better? What more could I have done? Why was I not enough?". Mental health has an impact that is much wider.

Madam Principal Deputy Speaker: The Member's time is up.

Mr Nesbitt: I welcome the tone of the debate and the breadth and depth of knowledge that has been demonstrated by Members. There is no doubt in my mind that awareness of this issue is on the up in this Chamber, in Westminster, in Dublin, and through society and all its facets.

The last meeting that I had before I came down to the Chamber was with representatives of Business in the Community, who wanted to brief me on three aspects of their work programme, one of which was addressing poor mental health in the workplace. Let us move towards a

commitment to joined-up government that works outside silos and in a horizontal way. This is the big test, because mental health pervades every issue that we face as a society, from dealing with the past to having many people trapped on benefits who do not want to be dependent on welfare, through to rebalancing the economy by making more people economically active. I pay tribute to people like Lindsay Robinson.

We have some great champions, and it would be remiss of me to not mention my wife, Lynda Bryans, who, since her episode of poor mental health some 22 years ago, has campaigned tirelessly on the issue. In tackling the stigma by saying, "I have had an episode", she has opened the door and given permission to others to say, "If Lynda had poor mental health, it is OK for me to admit I have poor mental health and seek to address it". I also acknowledge the frankness with which Michelle Gildernew addressed her issues. I have no doubt that that has also opened the door to many people in her community, and that is to be encouraged and commended.

I want to say a few words on the independence of the champion and the idea of funding them through charitable and philanthropic donations, because there is some confusion. First, the call does not come blindly. I have spoken to most of the large mental health charities and have formed the very clear impression that they are more than willing to help to fund the post, either in cash or in kind. So, if there is any confusion about that, we will have to look at it. As I said, I was in no doubt that it was not an issue for the majority of the large mental health charities.

(Mr Speaker [Mr Newton] in the Chair)

Why did I want it that way? The answer goes back to my experience as a champion for the victims and survivors of the Troubles, as a commissioner in the Commission for Victims and Survivors. We were supposed to be champions and were supposed to be independent. However, I found that we were paid for by the Executive, and we were bound by about three dozen policies and protocols, headed by a management statement and a financial memorandum. When we were in dispute with the Executive, a senior civil servant said to us, "Please remember, you are only independent in terms of the advice that you offer to the Minister. Do remember, the Minister is only obliged to listen; they are not obliged to take your advice". So, the idea is to have a mental health champion who is entirely — entirely — independent of the Government. They should not be bound in by a reliance on finance or by any of the three dozen policies and protocols that would bind in a commissioner, whether for victims, older people, younger people or whatever.

I have difficulty with the amendment, because it commits only to "explore". If the Minister will assure us that this will be a time-bound and timely exploration, I will not divide the House on the issue. I do not want to divide the House, as it would send entirely the wrong message to the people whom we are trying to assure we are working for. If the Minister can give that assurance —

1.00 pm

Ms Seeley: I thank the Member for giving way. Does he agree that the amendment seeks simply to allow the Minister complete scope to explore a full range of options, rather than being prescriptive and therefore limiting her in

being able to carry out some sort of scrutiny role following the outcome of the debate?

Mr Speaker: The Member has an extra minute.

Mr Nesbitt: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Minister may wish, and may need, that time to explore. I will say to the Member only that I have explored this over the last three-and-a-bit years, and I am content and convinced that the way to go is to appoint a truly independent mental health champion. I think that is reflected in the views of the mental health charities, the voluntary sector, the practitioners and, indeed, those who suffer from poor mental health and have an opinion on the issue.

As I say, I am not going to divide the House on this. I am just going to repeat that my concern is that the amendment commits only to exploring; it does not commit to any outcome. The outcome I want is a mental health champion, and I say that because it is one of 15 points in our mental health paper that we published earlier this year and that Mr Butler referred to when opening the debate.

I am going to leave it at that because, as I say, I like the tone, the agreement, the depth of knowledge and the commitment that are being demonstrated in the debate, and I would like it to finish with unanimity amongst the parties present today.

Mr Attwood: As with everybody else, I welcome the debate and thank the proposer for tabling the motion. I recognise what people said, in that, whether it is individual politicians, the families of politicians, other people and the organisations in particular, the debate shows how you can shape in a better image this issue to make progress going forward. Of course, the measure of all this — at least, one measure — and, indeed, of all the debates we have had since the election is whether the unanimous view of the House on a manufacturing strategy, a childcare strategy, broadband or, like today, mental health, becomes part and parcel of policy and the Programme for Government going forward. If not, we are a mere debating chamber. But if these matters that are unanimously agreed by the House are then reflected in the actions of Ministers and in the final Programme for Government, that is one measure of making progress.

Ms Emma Little Pengelly referred to great champions, and she was, of course, right about that. One of the great champions we have at the moment for advocating on behalf of victims and survivors and in supporting victims and survivors who have mental health issues is Survivors and Victims of Institutional Abuse (SAVIA). Yet it learned last week that the paltry sum of £10,000 it receives every year to run a small resource is being reduced to £8,000. Here we have notional moneys going to an organisation that helps people, including those who have been abused in homes in the past and those who have mental health problems, and that advocates for their needs. Yet when it comes to their immediate needs, that organisation has a derisory budget cut of £2,000. The point I am making is that, if we are going to have hard outcomes in supporting people with mental health difficulties and the organisations, including SAVIA, that support them, we have to get real about the funding needs of those organisations.

I do not intend to rehearse the scale of the issues — that was outlined by Mr Butler, Mr Durkan and others — save to make two immediate points. The first is that, as everybody knows, the number of people on disability-type benefits

in the North is one in 10, whereas in Britain it is one in 20. That is a point that Ms Bradshaw, I think, touched upon.

Those people are going to have enhanced needs over the next period of time, not simply because of what is happening with welfare reductions but because of the decision that was made in respect of Europe. It is very likely that, sooner or later, people on welfare in the North will experience a real-time benefit cut because there will be no rate of inflation increases for benefits over the next four years. Arising from last week's decision, people are saying that the rate of inflation is going to be 2% in the next year. People already on reduced benefits are going to have further real-time reductions because there is going to be no benefit uprating. That will reflect on their lives through mental health and other pressures.

My second point is that, as everybody knows, the scale of mental trauma arising from the legacy of conflict is immense. The VSS says that new victims are coming forward, as we speak, in relation to all that. If we are going to deal with the issue of mental health, we have to deal with the issue of legacy. We have to go back to that issue as soon as we can. In doing that, I put down this marker: let us not have a partial deal. Let us not have an outcome done by the few in politics rather than by the many. If that is the outcome — I fear that it might be —

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to conclude his remarks.

Mr Attwood: — we will not respond to the needs of victims and survivors as we should.

I welcome the fact that the House is not going to divide. I ask the Minister, in her response, to add certainty to her commitments in relation to this very important issue.

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Health): I welcome the opportunity to participate in today's debate. It addresses one of my priorities. Like others have done, I welcome the tone of the debate. I think that we all understand the challenges and recognise the real face of this. I think that we all understand that we need to chart a way forward where we address the imbalance in how we focus in the Department on mental health and make sure that we address the fact that it needs to be given more attention. We have come a long way, but we certainly have a further way to go.

Many Members referred to the fact that there is no shortage of evidence about the prevalence of mental illness right across the North. We have the challenges of the intergenerational legacy of the conflict, which Members picked up on; the ageing population; deprivation; unemployment; and stress at work. All those things lead to very difficult and challenging times for individuals. We all know only too well about how much suicide continues to tear families apart.

Mental illness can affect anyone in any circumstance. It is estimated that one in four adults in the North will suffer from a mental health problem at some stage in their life. The Public Health Agency's Making Life Better strategy, which was published in 2014, established that the North has a 25% higher overall prevalence of mental illness when compared with England.

In terms of the economic cost of mental illness, people with mental health problems are at a greater risk of unemployment, job insecurity, absenteeism and lower salaries. The HSC Board carried out some research in

2014 to try to quantify the cost of mental illness here. It found that it costs the local economy an estimated £3.5 billion per annum. That figure includes direct and indirect healthcare costs, and indirect costs such as the loss of output because of the inability to work and the need for the payment of benefits etc. The research also found that around 45% of people who claim illness-related, out-of-work benefits do so because of mental ill health. That is the biggest single group of claimants. Conversely, the report estimates that, within two years of recovery following successful treatment for mental ill health, the employment rate for those with moderate or severe mental health problems is increased by 11.4% and 4.3% for those with mild mental health problems. It is vital from not only a health perspective but an economic perspective that people with mental health problems can access the right treatment at the right time. There is significant evidence of the effectiveness of psychological therapies on creating the right conditions for people to resume or regain employment. The HSC Board found that, for every £1 invested in psychological therapy services, there is a saving of £1.75 to the public sector. It is clear that we need to continue to carry out investment in that area.

Mental health also has implications for policy on housing, education and criminal justice. It is the ultimate cross-cutting issue. I am, therefore, very pleased that improving mental health features very prominently throughout the draft Programme for Government framework, which is out for consultation. That will be a significant policy driver for improvements in mental health services during the life of this Assembly.

Members referred to Bamford and the modernisation of health services. There is a recognition that, in the past 10 years, there has been significant reform and modernisation of mental health services here, propelled by the Bamford review. The vision was that people with a mental illness should be treated in the community, close to their family and friends, unless there is a clinical reason for not doing so. Accordingly, the focus of mental health service development in the last number of years has been on early intervention, home treatment services and the development of psychological therapy services.

Since Bamford reported in 2008, investment in mental health services has increased by nearly £50 million a year to around £250 million a year. The balance of funding has shifted. At the time of the Bamford review, we were spending 60% of the mental health budget on hospital services and 40% on community services. His vision was to reverse those figures, and now we spend nearly 60% on community services. We can see some major key developments in mental health services, but, as I said, I believe that we have to transform the health service to allow us to put more weight and focus on the services that we deliver for people who find themselves feeling mentally ill.

We have seen improvements, including a regional mental health care pathway, You in Mind, which was launched in October 2014. It commits the HSC to deliver care that is more personalised and improves the experience of people with mental health problems by adopting a more evidence-based and recovery-oriented approach. In line with Bamford, mental health services have moved towards a recovery-based ethos. The principle of recovery is based on people with mental illness regaining control of their life and learning to manage their health so that they can have

hope for the future and participate in their community. Staff have been trained in recovery-based practice, and recovery colleges have been established in each trust. Peer support workers are also now employed in each trust. As part of the Bamford evaluation, we have heard some very positive stories from people who are now in recovery and are getting on with their life, but we need to see much more of that.

There have been big steps forward in the development of psychological therapy services, with investment now exceeding £10 million a year. A range of services is now provided, including psychology, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy and trauma therapy. The HSC Board estimates that between 75,000 and 80,000 sessions are provided annually. The HSC Board is into the third year of a five-year plan to establish primary care talking therapy hubs across each trust area. The hubs focus on providing a range of psychological therapies for people experiencing common mental health problems. They are developed around general practice and will improve access to earlier support and care.

In accordance with the Bamford review, children's mental health services are mainly delivered through community-based teams. We also now have a 33-bed children and adolescent mental health inpatient unit at Beechcroft, which opened in 2010. In July 2012, the Department published a stepped care service model for child and adolescent mental health services. That promotes a more consistent, person-centred approach to mental health service delivery for children and young people. Improvements include an increased focus on early intervention, better multidisciplinary working and collaboration with the community and voluntary, education and youth justice sectors. The HSC Board and trusts have worked hard to implement the service model across the North. Primary mental health teams are now established in all trusts, as well as crisis response and home treatment teams. Investment in CAMHS has increased from £9.5 million in 2007 to around £20 million now.

There has been a major programme of resettling people who were long-term patients in psychiatric hospitals into community-based settings, with the aim of affording them a better quality of life and integration into the community. In 2007, there were 472 long-stay patients in psychiatric hospitals here. Of those 472 patients, 18 long-stay patients now remain in mental health hospitals, with plans to resettle 10 this year.

Specialist community-based eating disorder services have been established in all trusts, and practitioners are building their expertise in that complex area. An exercise is ongoing to scope the need for a specialist eating disorder unit here, and I am expecting a final report by the end of this year.

As for future mental health priorities, the Bamford review set in motion some of the most significant changes that have ever been seen in mental health services here. Those changes have transformed how we deliver care for people with a mental illness and have significantly improved the achievable outcomes. An evaluation of Bamford actions is well under way, and I am expecting a draft report over the summer. While I expect the evaluation will demonstrate that good progress is being made in the reform of mental health and learning disability services, it will also provide us with a more sophisticated

understanding of the needs and the gaps. The emerging themes include the need to further embed and promote psychological therapies and the concept of recovery; to provide more practical support to carers; to improve access to services in times of mental health crisis; to improve the experience of patients admitted to acute mental health facilities; and to increase the involvement of the voluntary and community sector.

1.15 pm

The evaluation will also form the basis for confirming the priorities for mental health service development in this Assembly mandate. Possibilities already identified include the establishment of a comprehensive mental trauma service, the further development of eating disorder services and the need for specialist perinatal mental health services — all those issues were, I know, referred to by Members during the debate. Officials are also looking at more overarching concepts, such as funding, oversight and delivery structures, as well as parity of esteem with physical health, which is one of our key challenges.

While our mental health services have come a long way since Bamford, it is clear that we have much more to do. I am committed to their further reform, which will require funding. As an Executive, we face the challenge of deciding how we spend a limited budget. The forthcoming comprehensive spending review presents an opportunity to identify and prioritise bids for the investment required in mental health. In doing so, I do not underestimate the challenges that exist right across Health and Social Care.

Over the last four or five weeks, I have made comments in the House about the transformation of the health and social care system and how we deliver services. We have a real opportunity to transform how we deliver services that will allow us to focus on, place additional priority on and invest more in addressing health inequalities. All these things are linked to poor outcomes, particularly in mental health. I hope to achieve political consensus on how we transform the health service. Doing that will allow us to tackle seriously all the issues that Members have referred to in the debate.

I turn now to the call for me to appoint a mental health champion. The proposal for the appointment of a champion is a popular suggestion in the mental health sector generally. It has been mooted by a number of third-sector mental health organisations. In principle, a mental health champion is a positive suggestion. They could be an authoritative and independent voice for people with mental health issues and for reform. They could lobby the Executive and, where necessary, criticise the system. They could advocate for mental health and be a public face and a media spokesperson.

A number of potential issues with the proposal that I appoint a mental health champion need to be carefully considered. Could, for example, a champion appointed by me be truly independent and be seen to be independent? What selection criteria would I use, and would those criteria need the endorsement of the voluntary and community sector? How would I ensure that proper governance and accountability arrangements were in place?

Options for the development of a formalised approach for the involvement of mental health service users and carers in the improvement and development of mental health policy

and services will be considered in our Bamford evaluation report. The appointment of a mental health champion is certainly one of a number of options to be considered, alongside, for example, the possible further development of mental health service user forums, which appear to work very effectively in a number of trusts. The Health and Social Care Board is also developing options for a co-production mental health infrastructure that will consider the active involvement of people with lived experience of mental ill health in the delivery, development and design of mental health services. Proposals are at an early stage and will require detailed development and costing.

An alternative to a champion appointed by the Minister might be that relevant mental health voluntary and community organisations would come together to appoint a champion who would then be truly independent and authoritative. Last week, I had the privilege of addressing the final conference of the Together for You project, which was an excellent example of the voluntary and community sector working in partnership. For me, it was a practical example of how to do things differently. A lot of the charity and voluntary groups had never worked together before, but they really came together. I know that the Member who moved the motion was at the same event. It was clear that there was a willingness in the sector to work together and be more collaborative in how we support people. We need to look at all of those things. I certainly do not have a closed mind to the idea of a champion, but we need to give the proposal a bit more attention and to factor in the fact that we will have the evaluation of the review.

I have made it clear during my tenure that one of my main priorities will be to champion mental health. In that sense, I am honoured to be the Executive's mental health champion. I am open to considering the benefits of the appointment of an independent mental health champion who would defend the rights and interests of people with mental health problems and educate, raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. There is a need, however, to explore all the options for fulfilling the role, taking into consideration the existing good practice across the HSC. All of that, as I said, will be considered in line with the Bamford evaluation report. I will receive a draft of that over the summer. Thereafter, my priorities for the future development of mental health services will be to address the gaps in service with the full involvement of mental health service users and carers.

I thank Members for the tone of the debate. I want to work with them to improve the picture and the services that we provide for people who have mental health problems. We can do an awful lot more. Collectively we have a great opportunity for the transformation of the health and social care system, and the fact that we now have a Programme for Government that is very outcomes-focused means that we can make things better for those who have mental illness.

Mr Sheehan: Like everyone else, I welcome the opportunity to speak in the debate and to make the winding-up speech on the Sinn Féin amendment. I want to commend and congratulate those who tabled the motion for bringing it to the Assembly.

The statistics around mental health problems here have been rehearsed today. We have the highest rates of mental ill health on these islands and the highest rates of suicide. The statistics around suicide, in particular, are alarming and horrendous. I know of one recent incident in a public

place when a young girl tried to take her own life. She was rescued by other young people. The result of that was that counsellors had to go into two schools to counsel up to 20 young people who had witnessed what had happened. I know that Robbie Butler mentioned suicide and being at the funeral of a friend. It is not just the person who takes their own life who is affected; it has a negative impact on society in general. We hear of a sort of domino effect of other young people taking their own life, leaving their families distraught and devastated. It is a big problem in our society.

There is no doubt that there has been underprovision of mental health services. I welcome the fact that that has been changing, particularly since the Bamford review, and that there has been a rebalancing of service provision, with more going into community provision and less into the hospitals and inpatient provision. A lot more is still to be done. I welcome the Minister saying that she will be a mental health champion and that there will be more improvements to the provision of services.

We all know that mental health problems can arise for a variety of reasons, some preventable and some less so. Mental ill health, as we know, affects every stratum in society, including young people — I have just talked about them — and women. I am not sure who it was who talked about postnatal depression — sorry, it was Emma Little — and there are those affected by rural loneliness and isolation and those who have been affected by the conflict. We know that, in the past, a lot of stigma has been attached to mental ill health. I welcome the contributions made today and previously by people who have been affected by mental ill health. Paula Bradley spoke eloquently about post-traumatic stress disorder and how it affects people she knows. Mike's wife, Lynda Bryans, has spoken publicly about her struggles with mental health problems, and my colleague Michelle Gildernew has done the same. It is important that we get rid of the stigma that is attached to mental ill health. The way to do that is to have people speaking out and showing others that they can come and speak to people and that they should come forward if they need help.

I suppose that the only issue of contention today — I do not want to overstate it — is how a mental health champion would be funded. As has been said by practically everyone who has spoken, I hope that we do not divide on the issue.

There are issues around having a mental health champion funded by outside bodies, charities and so on. How would that work? Who would make the appointment? What would be the job description? There would also be accountability and governance issues involved. As I said, I do not want to overstate those issues. It is important that we get an outcome from today's debate and not one a year or two down the road.

Mr Speaker: I ask the Member to conclude his remarks.

Mr Sheehan: Hopefully, the result of the debate is that, in the near future, we will have a mental health champion.

Mrs Dobson: I am pleased to make the winding-up speech on the motion and pleased that it has been such a constructive debate on an issue that affects far too many of our constituents. Indeed, as was referred to earlier, the Office for National Statistics estimates, as is stated in the wording of our motion, that one in four adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any one

year. Alongside our health service, so many charities and voluntary organisations battle multiple challenges every single day, and Members referred to that earlier. They do life-saving and life-changing work. The intention of the motion is to bind the services provided in Northern Ireland and move them to the next level. As my colleague Robbie Butler said at the outset, that should be a level at which a champion can become the voice of mental health services in Northern Ireland.

I want to acknowledge briefly all those who spoke during the debate. We heard many emotional stories. All of them tug at our heartstrings, and all of them, in different ways, prove why we need a new approach to dealing with poor mental health in Northern Ireland.

At a constituency level, I know the link that poor mental health has to suicide levels. Back in 2009, my home town of Banbridge was labelled the suicide hotspot, and I know how the town has tried to come to terms with the tragic waste of young lives in the years since. I commend all those whose tireless work has saved many lives since, including charities, which are making a real difference on the ground. They include MindWise, Yellow Ribbon, Praxis and Action Mental Health, but so many others also do a magnificent job.

To those who have a real passion and commitment to fight poor mental health, a mental health champion would make the most difference. Those who, every day, help people, young and old alike, throughout our communities with the treatment and therapy to recover and manage their illness. Those who treat the side effects on other areas of life, including on their family and friends. Those who deal with the financial implications of poor mental health, and those who help people to know how to cope in a crisis. The list is not exhaustive, but, most of all, a mental health champion would be for those who suffer a daily battle not with a physical illness but with an illness inside their head and a seemingly endless battle within themselves, which, sadly, for too many, leads to greater harm, both physical and mental. It is a relentless spiral of depression that affects not only individuals but their friends, family and wider community.

The stigma that so many people have spoken about during their contributions today is also a major challenge, which, although being tackled, still remains in our communities. We can clearly link the long shadow cast by Northern Ireland's conflict and the fact that we have one of the worst records of poor mental health and well-being in the world. That is why it behoves us to move towards treating mental health on a par with physical health. Indeed, the establishment of cross-governmental mental health champions in each community was recommendation 12 of the independent Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England's report published earlier this year.

Increasingly, we also hear how fewer initiatives should come from Departments and how more should come directly from medical professionals. I understand that this is a key priority for Professor Bengoa in his current process of making recommendations. That being the case, the Department of Health and its officials should have nothing to fear and everything to gain from the benefits of a mental health champion.

1.30 pm

I will now make some brief comments regarding the contributions during the debate. My colleague Robbie Butler, in moving the motion, referred to those alarming rates of poor mental health, as did other Members. He pointed out that, in this Chamber, the cold hand of poor mental health would affect around 30 of us. That is a frightening statistic. Robbie went on to point out that now is the time to enforce this. It is time for action. He said that this is a scourge and that families are left to pick up the pieces. He paid tribute to all who provide high-quality roles in the system, but said that the system is at breaking point.

Catherine Seeley spoke on the amendment. She started by saying that it is important to encourage young people to speak out on mental health issues. She said that the amendment would strengthen the motion. Perhaps she would consider it better that this be impartial and independent from government funding. She went on to refer to statistics and children's mental health services, where children are being treated in adult wards.

Paula Bradley, the Chair of the Health Committee, spoke of growing up during the Troubles, and we established that she is older than Robbie Butler. She went on to talk about severe PTSD and mental health issues that she has witnessed at first hand. She said that we need to get help for the young men and women coming back from war and agreed with the intervention by my colleague Doug Beattie that we need to get real support for those with PTSD. I cannot agree more with that. She supports the motion and the amendment, but stressed that we need to get it right and that this should be a priority for the Health Committee. Indeed, it is important that it is.

Mark Durkan spoke of a difficult, complex and innovative issue. He spoke of independence and autonomy in mental health, and, again, I cannot agree more with his comments. He spoke of the importance of a mental health champion.

Paula Bradshaw said that, for many, dealing with the past is about dealing with it now, in the present. She said that issues need to be tackled at source and that a champion should interconnect between services. She referred to a working group being set up on this issue.

Others made very emotional contributions. Michelle Gildernew spoke passionately about being a sufferer herself and about the loneliness and isolation. She referred to mental health during pregnancy.

In relation to the amendment, I feel that there is a difference between calling on the Minister to appoint, as our motion does, and exploring the role and the remit, as the amendment states. The Minister said that she is a mental health champion at the Executive, and it is good to know that she is already fighting that cause. That is important if we are going to explore this, and I am pleased that we are all in agreement. I think that six months is a reasonable time. We cannot miss the opportunity and let it run indefinitely. I am asking for a personal commitment from the Minister today that we adhere to this time frame because, in the meantime, too many people are dying, so it is important that it is time-bound.

In conclusion, I thank all those who contributed to the debate, including my party leader, who has made mental health and well-being a priority issue for those of us

on these Benches, and I commend our mental health spokesperson Robbie's continued work on this important issue. I also commend the Assembly's research service on the comprehensive information pack provided to us all ahead of the motion. In closing, I will quote from our mental health policy document, which we released in March this year:

"There is no stronger, clearer signal to transmit to the thousands who suffer poor mental health and well-being that the devolved government is finally serious about tackling the issue."

Question, That the amendment be made, put and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, accordingly agreed to.

Resolved:

That this Assembly notes that more than one in four of the population is affected by poor mental health and well-being; further notes the significant social and economic implications that this is having on society; expresses deep concern that, per capita, we have one of the worst records of poor mental health and well-being in the world; accepts that our shocking rates have been impacted directly by decades of conflict, and more recently by austerity and the resulting increased levels of unemployment and homelessness and that the issue is now intergenerational; and calls on the Minister of Health to explore the role and remit of a mental health champion to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and well-being.

Mr Speaker: The next item of business on the Order Paper is Question Time. I propose, therefore, by leave of the Assembly, to suspend the sitting until 2.00 pm.

The sitting was suspended at 1.35 pm.

The sitting resumed at 2.00 pm.

(Mr Deputy Speaker [Mr Kennedy] in the Chair)

Oral Answers to Questions

Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Going for Growth

1. **Mr Kearney** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, following the recent publication of the progress report, for her assessment of the implementation of the Going for Growth strategy. (AQO 148/16-21)

Miss McIlveen (The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs): Our agrifood industry is a key driver for the Northern Ireland economy, with the farming and food processing industries generating turnover in 2014 of around £5 billion. Agrifood will continue to be one of our most strategically important sectors going forward. I will be working closely with my ministerial colleagues to deliver an economic environment in which the agrifood industry continues to flourish and grow.

Delivering on the actions contained in the 'Northern Ireland Executive Response to the Agri-Food Strategy Board's Going for Growth' is a key priority for both DAERA and the Department for the Economy. Good progress has been made so far by government, in partnership with the Agri-Food Strategy Board, to implement key actions including the opening of new export markets; the launch of the farm business improvement scheme, with business development groups and farm family key skills; the development of a land management strategy; work to develop a commercially focused marketing body; the opening of a new Agri-Food Quest Competence Centre to drive forward research and development in the sector; the opening of the sustainable use of poultry litter scheme; the implementation of the Food Fortress scheme, which is a world-leading feed assurance programme; and the development of a feed advisory register.

I work closely with the Economy Minister to drive forward further progress on our key priorities to deliver growth for the sector. This includes the support our Departments provide to agrifood companies in looking for new export markets and progressing the development of the agrifood marketing body.

Following last week's vote taken by the people of the United Kingdom to leave the EU, the attentions of the Northern Ireland Executive will turn to supporting both farmers and processors in the future. I have already given a commitment to the industry that I will take a lead in these discussions.

Mr Kearney: Guím gach rath ort, a Aire, i do Aireacht úr. Thank you Minister, and I wish you every best wish in your new post in the time ahead. Does the Minister agree with me that the supply chain forum is an important body? Will she indicate a progress report in relation to its work? How many meetings have taken place in recent times?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his good wishes. The supply chain forum is one of the actions being taken forward by the Agri-Food Strategy Board coming out of the 'Going for Growth' report. Hosted by the Agri-Food Strategy Board, the forum has met twice, bringing together over 75 representatives to each event from across the supply chain. They include primary producers, growers, processors, retailers, bankers and representatives of government, and they have engaged in open and frank discussions on issues affecting the sector, including market volatility, contracts, land management, communication and collaboration across the supply chain.

The price that farmers receive for their produce and other payments at any point in the agrifood supply chain are a commercial matter and are outside the remit of my Department. Nevertheless, I am supportive of actions that will tackle unfair practices in the supply chain and provide a fair return for all those involved. The supply chain forum offers a useful environment for bringing together representatives from across the supply chain to discuss common challenges, and it offers opportunities for the agrifood sector. It also builds and strengthens relationships. I look forward to discussing the way ahead with regard to the supply chain forum with the Agri-Food Strategy Board, and we would be keen to hear from them what other steps they are taking to strengthen the agrifood supply chain.

Mr McKee: I would also like to congratulate the Minister on her new post, and, as spokesperson for the Ulster Unionist Party, I hope to work with her in the near future. Will she detail when the next stage of the farm business improvement scheme will be announced, and will she give a commitment that her announcement will include a detailed list of eligible items?

Miss McIlveen: The farm business improvement scheme is a key action for my Department. The scheme will be delivered through the rural development programme. The scheme consists of a number of measures, including knowledge transfer, cooperation, innovation and capital investment, as the Member will know. It is being rolled out in a phased way. The knowledge transfer schemes have opened. The business development groups and the farm family key skills programme aim to assist farmers in developing their thinking and business plans and to make the right decisions about developing their business.

Roll-out of the next stage of the capital scheme will include grant support linked to the needs in the farmers' business plans, at 40% of eligible costs. The proposed scheme will be designed to deliver the benefits of improved sustainability and productivity for farm businesses. I would like that to be much further on than it is. Obviously, it is a programme that has been worked on for some time. I am hopeful that we will make an announcement on it in the near future.

Mr Irwin: The Minister will be aware that farmers across a number of sectors have experienced serious problems relating to the incomes that they have received for their produce. What can the Minister do in the here and now to help those farmers?

Miss McIlveen: I am concerned about the challenging market conditions that face our agrifood sectors and the particular difficulties in the dairy and pig sectors. I will want to look closely at what action my Department can take to

help farmers cope with market volatility. I am keen to press DEFRA and the EU on meaningful action to help address the needs of the local industry in the near future. We will also continue to make the most of measures to build resilience, efficiency and competitiveness through the rural development programme. My officials have been in regular and close contact with representatives of the main banks that operate in Northern Ireland — indeed, I am meeting those representatives next week — to discuss support for the farming sector. As I mentioned in a previous response, the price that farmers receive for their produce and that others pay at any point in the agrifood supply chain is a matter that is outside my Department, but we are working to ensure that farmers get the best price for their produce.

Diesel Spill: Larne Coastline

2. **Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the severity of the recent diesel spill detected in the sea off Larne. (AQO 149/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The release of some 40,000 litres of red diesel into the Irish Sea from the Caterpillar factory at Larne was a high-severity incident. Statutory samples were lifted on Saturday 11 June with a view to prosecution, and thus I am limited in what I can say. Diesel is a light oil, so, when it reached the sea, it spread rapidly. With the warmer temperatures, much of it evaporated in the first few days after the spill. The remainder of the oil has been broken down by natural dispersion and biodegradation, and very little evidence of the spill can now be observed.

I can confirm that the circumstances that led to the release are being fully investigated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Caterpillar NI will be required to put in place safeguards to ensure that this sort of incident cannot happen in the future. The incident was reported to the water pollution hotline by the Port of Larne at 8.55 am on Saturday 11 June. Officials from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and marine and fisheries division worked closely together and provided regular updates to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, the Food Standards Agency and the Public Health Agency to allow them to assess the consequences of the incident for their areas of responsibility.

Mr Beggs: I am aware that most of the diesel had not evaporated and that those sailing on the lough or living near it were aware of the stench of it at the time.

I want to ask the Minister about information flow. What is she doing to ensure that there is clarity around who is ultimately responsible for such an investigation? Should people contact the Environment Agency, as the Minister mentioned, or the Maritime and Coastguard Agency? On many occasions, people simply contact the local council, because they are not aware of whom they should contact.

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Obviously, incidents such as this are quite distressing, and it is important that they are reported as quickly as possible after first sight. There is a hotline which should be used; in the event that people are not able to use it, they should contact their local council.

Mr Lyons: The Minister will be aware that there are very sensitive sites near the spill. Can she outline whether they were impacted?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. A number of sites have been identified, and there has been ongoing work on water quality. Samples were taken at Browns Bay, Ballygalley, Carnlough and Sandy Bay on 22 June, and these are now being tested for the presence of diesel.

Mr McMullan: I thank the Minister for her answers so far. Can she tell me what role her Department is playing to ensure that other companies, in addition to Caterpillar, have adequate risk assessments and protocols in place to ensure that this does not happen again? My information is that quite a lot of the drainage from Caterpillar and other sources in the area runs into the sea.

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. From January this year, all non-exempt oil storage facilities in Northern Ireland must comply with the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. It is a matter for companies that store oil to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the regulations, which are designed primarily through the provision of appropriate secondary containment to minimise the risk of oil spillages occurring.

As one of a number of associated pollution prevention initiatives working within existing resources, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has a risk-based programme of oil storage regulations visits to a limited number of premises each year, to ensure that those premises inspected are compliant with the regulations. They are also working alongside other UK environmental regulators. NIEA widely promotes oil-related pollution prevention guidance, including issues around storage, waste disposal and the use of oil separators. NIEA contributes to this and actively promotes the Oil Care campaign.

Mr Dickson: Minister, thank you for your answers thus far, and for the written answer that you have already provided me with on this incident. Do you not agree with me that incidents like this highlight the need for an independent environmental protection agency in Northern Ireland — all the more so now that we are likely to leave the European Union? What guarantee can you give that you will provide the same protection that the EU provides on environmental matters?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Obviously, good environmental governance encompasses a great deal more than the creation of an independent agency. While I understand that, in the past, a number of stakeholders believed that an independent agency would raise the standard of environmental protection in Northern Ireland, I do not believe that there is compelling evidence to support that view. I am happy to listen to the views of stakeholders on this, but it is not sufficient to say that because other jurisdictions have one, we should too. Policy needs to be evidence-based, and it is important that we focus on outcomes rather than structures. NIEA has already recognised that there are areas in which improvements can be made. Some of those improvements are already being made and can be seen, so, at this stage, I am not in a position to look at that outside of having further conversations.

Farmers: DAERA/DFE Support

3. **Mr Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how her Department will work with the Department for the Economy to support farmers to add more value to their primary products. (AQO 150/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The agrifood sector is of major importance to our economy. It contributes over £1.1 billion in added value and is responsible for 8% of all private sector employment. DAERA is an economic Department, and there are natural synergies with the Department for the Economy. It is essential that we work together to support the long-term future and profitability of the agrifood industry.

2.15 pm

Adding value to our primary products begins with identifying and securing new markets and the development of new products to meet the needs of those marketplaces. DAERA is working closely with the Department for the Economy and Invest NI to support this right along the supply chain, particularly in the areas of exports and innovation.

Examples of joint working include the ongoing work to identify and facilitate access to key strategic export markets, the use of Invest NI innovation vouchers at College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) facilities, and collaboration on the Year of Food and Drink 2016. My Department is also providing support through the rural development programme to increase the competitiveness of the agrifood sector.

I see significant opportunities for even closer working between my Department and the Department for the Economy on the agrifood industry, and I have instructed my officials to explore areas where a more strategic, joined-up approach could deliver more effective support to the sector.

Mr Smith: I thank the Minister for her answer. The Minister will be well aware of last Saturday's very successful Comber earlies food festival, which I was pleased to initiate when I was on Ards Borough Council. How can her Department further support enterprising producers like the Comber early growers to develop brand awareness and retain more control over their product?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. I am very familiar with the Comber earlies project, and I congratulate all those involved and all the organisers as well as the potato growers in the area. I had the privilege of attending, during the open farm weekend, the Orr farm, which is very much a leader in the production of the Comber early.

There are a number of initiatives that can be taken forward to support groups, and I am very keen to look at the marketing board, which Minister Hamilton and I are trying to progress in conjunction with the industry. That was identified as being fundamental to the long-term sustainability of the industry, and strategic market forces are required to maintain and develop, particularly around exports. So, as I said, I will be working with the Agri-Food Strategy Board on that and on other matters with the Economy Minister.

Ms S Bradley: Can the Minister give an up-to-date synopsis of any conversations that she has had with Executive colleagues or others on safeguarding and developing export markets for the agrifood sector?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for her question. That is very important, and it has been reflected throughout the answers to my questions. I see this Department as being very much an economic driver and working alongside

the Department for the Economy. I have had a number of conversations with my colleague and the industry in relation to that.

Mr Dunne: Following last Friday's positive result on Brexit, what discussions has the Minister had with the agriculture sector on doing business in the future?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Yesterday, I met members of the industry to discuss the outworkings of the result last Friday; it was a very useful meeting, and it is something that I intend to continue to do. That was alongside, as I mentioned, the Department for the Economy, with Simon Hamilton also in attendance. Represented there were the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association, the Agri-Food Strategy Board, Dairy UK, the Ulster Farmers' Union, the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association, and the Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association.

Mr Ford: In her initial answer, the Minister referred to looking at the strategic opportunities for work between her Department and the Department for the Economy to grow opportunities for processing produce. Whilst that is a welcome statement, is it not a bit disappointing that, three years after the fanfare around Going for Growth, so little appears to have happened?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. I think that it was a question, although it was maybe more of a criticism. Obviously, a number of targets were set on that. In my response to the first question, which I gave to Mr Kearney, I said that a number of key actions were to be implemented. Good progress has been made, despite the Member's view, on opening new export markets, the launch of the farm business improvement scheme and the development of the land management strategy, which is working along. We are developing a commercially focused marketing body, which we should be looking at reasonably quickly, and there is the opening of the Agri-Food Quest competence centre. A number of things can be seen as successful. Obviously, this work is continuing, and we will be looking to work very closely with the sector to progress it.

Rural Development Programme: Payments

4. **Mr Maskey** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she plans to make staged payments of the rural development programme to farmers in 2016. (AQO 151/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I understand that your question relates to the LEADER element of the rural development programme. I can advise that my Department does not directly fund farmers under the LEADER initiative. However, farmers, as owners of a diversified business, or their rural business can apply to their local action group for LEADER grants. All successful applicants can avail themselves of staged payments by, first, agreeing this approach with their local action group when their letter of offer is being drafted and, secondly, by submitting payment claims at various stages through their project to be reimbursed for the grant element of money they invested.

Mr Maskey: Given the circumstances that we now find ourselves in, is the Minister in any position to confirm whether the rural development programme will run to 2020? Will there be any shortfall in funding made available if there is a reduction from London?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Obviously, these are very early days in any negotiated exit so, at this stage, my Department is moving on with the programme.

Mr T Buchanan: Can the Minister update the House on when a capital grant scheme will open for the industry to help those who wish to grow their own business?

Miss McIlveen: I refer the Member to a response that I gave to another Member for a previous question. I am disappointed that we have not been in a position to move this on more quickly. Again, I inherited this legacy, so my officials will be looking to bring something forward very quickly. The full details of the capital investment element are subject to the outcome of a business case approval process. Once that process has been completed, it is planned to start a preparation stage for the scheme to provide information to potential applicants in advance of the scheme opening to allow farmers time to prepare.

Subject to the business case approval, the farm business improvement scheme capital investment scheme will be managed as two tiers, and we are working through that. Certain items will be ineligible for support as stipulated by the RDP regulation. That includes like-for-like replacement or maintenance; consumables such as feed, fuel or sprays; investments relating to non-agricultural animals; and items to meet existing statutory requirements, such as minimum slurry storage. I reiterate that I am disappointed that the scheme did not open earlier, but I look to it being opened in the near future.

Single Farm Payments 2015

5. **Mr Girvan** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how many farmers have not received their 2015 single farm payment. (AQO 152/16-21)

10. **Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how many farmers are yet to receive their 2015 single farm payment. (AQO 157/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Mr Speaker, with your consent, I will answer questions 5 and 10 together.

So far, 23,753 farm businesses have been paid their 2015 direct payments. That is worth £234.5 million and represents 99.4% of applicants identified as eligible for the scheme. That leaves 88 eligible farm businesses that have yet to receive their direct payments for the 2015 scheme year. There are a number of reasons why eligible applicants may not have been paid for 2015. Those include missing bank details, outstanding probate issues and disputes between business members. Those reasons are largely outside my Department's ability to resolve and will usually depend on customers providing the necessary information. Payment can be made in these cases only when the necessary information is provided.

Mr Girvan: I thank the Minister for her answer, and I take this opportunity to congratulate her on her post and wish her all the best. In relation to the active farmer assessment process and those awaiting a decision on that, are there many in that process? What work is being undertaken to speed up the decision-making along that line so that those deemed active farmers get their payments?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Applicants for the basic payment scheme must be able to demonstrate that they enjoy the decision-making powers, benefits and financial risks in relation to the agricultural activity on the land for which their entitlements are requested. In 2015, a total of 1,638 applications were assessed and found not to meet that requirement. Eight hundred and fifty five applications for a review of decision regarding active farmer have been received, 28 of which have been completed, with 827 outstanding. It is not possible at this stage to give a date when they will all be assessed. However, I have asked my Department to take action to ensure that applicants have certainty over the eligibility to claim from the basic payment scheme.

Mrs Dobson: I also thank the Minister for her answer. She will be aware that farmers who were subject to remote sensing in previous years suffered delays in their payments. That certainly came in for much criticism. How will the Minister ensure that those whose farms are included in the future are fully informed and that delays are avoided? Does she plan to review the targets?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for her question. It is my priority to get payments out in a timely fashion and to minimise issues with regards to payments so that they are expedited as quickly as possible. My Department works to ensure that all payments are made promptly, and it will continue to do so in the future. Obviously, there has been an increase in online applications this year. We are trying to make the processes as easy as possible.

Mr McNulty: I congratulate the Minister on her appointment. I wish you well in the months and years ahead in your new role. In light of the outcome of last week's EU referendum and the "Leave" campaign that your party supported — your party said that we would all be better off as an outcome of us leaving — what guarantees can you give to our farmers that their single farm payments will continue beyond the two-and-a-half-year period? How much reassurance and comfort can you give them that they will be better off as an outcome of leaving?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Obviously, the outworkings of the result last Friday are still being worked through. It was very clear, during the campaign and the Assembly campaign, that the majority of farmers were keen to leave the EU, primarily because of issues around red tape and bureaucracy. I notice that the Member is shaking his head, but that is certainly the evidence that we received on the doors and in the number of visits that I have made in my time in office.

Single farm payments will continue to be paid while there is negotiation to exit the EU. I and Executive colleagues will work very closely with DEFRA in the coming weeks and months to ensure that Northern Ireland gets the best deal.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): A quick supplementary from Mr Ian Milne.

Mr Milne: I thank the Minister for her answers. When does she expect farmers to receive their payments for 2015?

Miss McIlveen: I have asked my officials to work through the current processes as quickly as possible. I hope to be in a position in the near future to be able to give a further outline of the timescales for that.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): That ends the period for listed questions. We now move on to topical questions.

2.30 pm

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

T1. **Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, after congratulating her on her new role, for an update on progress with the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. (AQT 116/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will give Northern Ireland the opportunity to invest in all sectors of the fishing industry over the next number of years. We have secured £23.51 million, with £13.7 million available to support applications from fishermen, processors, aquaculture and community-led local development interests. Since coming into office, I have had a number of meetings with my officials about opening the applications for Northern Ireland, and I am fully aware of the need to open the programme as quickly as possible. I represent a constituency with a fishing village, and it is something that Portavogie will look forward to, along with Ardglass and Kilkeel. I have instructed my officials to prioritise the finalisation of the business case and the submission to the Department of Finance for approval.

Mr Eastwood: Is the Minister concerned, as we are, that this fund and many other funds might go to the wall given the fact that some people in her party and in other parties are rushing to drag us out of the European Union against our will?

Miss McIlveen: The Members has some concerns, and he will be aware that, at this stage, we are unclear on the negotiations for Brexit and how long they will take. In the meantime, I am quite clear that business will continue as usual in pushing forward with this scheme and others.

Farming: Island of Ireland

T2. **Ms Boyle** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what discussions, given the referendum result, she has had with her counterparts in the South about the future of the farming sector across the island of Ireland. (AQT 117/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I have not had any formal meetings with the Minister in the South, but I intend to do so on Monday on the periphery of the meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC). I am conscious of the concerns about the movement of animals and dairy products between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. I will seek to have that meeting and report back.

Ms Boyle: Minister, what plans do you have to meet the industry representatives?

Miss McIlveen: I met industry representatives on two occasions yesterday. I met them at the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) event, where they were launching their new advertising campaign for quality farm assurance. Later, they met me in Parliament Buildings, and we had a useful exchange. I hope that that will be the start of many conversations that we have, as we move forward through this process.

Armagh: The "Orchard County"

T3. **Mr McNulty** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what support she intends to give to our apple-growers to ensure that their businesses

remain viable and continue to contribute to the economy and tourism in Armagh, given that, in Armagh, people are proud of their orchards, it is the "Orchard County", with its orchards creating huge employment in the countryside, including the many innovative microbusinesses that are created off the back of them. (AQT 118/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I recently visited the Armagh show and, no doubt, in the coming months, will have the opportunity to visit again and have conversations with the apple-growers. I assure the Chamber today that I plan to assist all sectors of our farming and agri-food community. I will continue to do that through the challenging process that we are about to embark on. There is assistance in place through the farm business improvement scheme, and, hopefully, the capital element of that will be launched shortly. There are also opportunities through the Agri-Food Strategy Board and other programmes that it has been working through. There will continue to be assistance for those whom you represent.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Mr McNulty, are you content to move on?

Mr McNulty: Move on.

Environmental Protections: Brexit Impact

T4. **Mr Sheehan** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what impact leaving the EU will have on existing environmental protections. (AQT 119/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: It is still too early to have a clear picture of the implications of the Brexit vote for that. Existing legislation will remain and will continue to apply until there are conversations about Brexit. How that takes place will very much depend on the form of Brexit. If we remain part of the economic area, as in the Norway model, most of the environmental protections and legislation that we have in place will remain. It will be very dependent on the type of Brexit.

Mr Sheehan: Gabhaim buíochas leis an Aire as ucht a freagra. I thank the Minister for her answer. Does she think that the impact of leaving the EU will be that the Assembly has to develop its own legislation on the environment and climate change?

Miss McIlveen: That is very dependent on the outworkings of the negotiated exit. Officials in my Department are scoping in and around the issue of environmental protections. I want to give an assurance that it is certainly my aim to enhance our environment moving forward and to ensure that it is protected.

The Member also mentioned climate change. Legislation is in place in the form of the UK Climate Change Act 2008, which sets out the targets that we are working to meet. I will keep the need for local legislation in mind, along with other measures that will help to reduce greenhouse gases. Our continued progress on making reductions without, at this stage, a local climate change Act shows our commitment to tackling greenhouse gases.

Pork: China

T5. **Mr Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the sale of

pork to China, given that the provisional approval of China last year to allow pork imports was a major boost for local companies and pig farmers. (AQT 120/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My officials have been working closely with the pork sector. Remedial actions were required, and we now await an updated progress report from the Chinese.

Mr Smith: I thank the Minister for the update. It is obviously positive that pork products previously considered waste have become items for export, thus helping to increase the overall value of a carcass for local farmers. Unfortunately, there is now growing frustration amongst them and the processors about what they see as excessive delays since the initial announcement was made. Can the Minister detail the value of the products that the local industry throws away every week, until final agreement can be reached on this important opportunity?

Miss McIlveen: I do not have the detail, but I know that we are working alongside the industry to assist it through this. My intention is to meet the pork industry and the processors in the very near future to discuss the issues that the Member raises.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Mr George Robinson is not in his place.

Sixmilewater: South Antrim

T7. **Mr Aiken** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, after welcoming her to her post, for her assessment of the environmental importance of the Sixmilewater and its watershed to South Antrim and beyond. (AQT 122/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Obviously, all our waterways are important. There is a value there for the community and for tourism, and I see value in that particular waterway. Having previously chaired the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee, I had a close involvement with those who are involved with the waterways, and I was aware of their anxieties around pollution. The responsibility for the waterways and their environmental protection now lies with my Department.

Mr Aiken: Minister, this river can barely flow for a year without experiencing a significant pollution incident and all the devastating consequences that come from it. The ecological damage that these incidents can cause is immeasurable, and you have only to talk to groups such as the Six Mile Water Trust or our many angling clubs and our great local council to understand how these frequent spills are affecting the river and its wider ecosystem. How will she ensure that the ecological and environmental protection of this vital resource is protected going forward? Will she consider giving the river and its ecosystem an improved protected status?

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. It was quite lengthy, and there were a number of elements in it, which I will look at. I will give consideration to the comments that he has made. Pollution in rivers is something that I find quite abhorrent. I have had experience of it in my area, where there have been repeat offenders who need to be brought before the courts and prosecuted. I am willing to have a conversation with the Member in relation to special status for the river.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Mr Colin McGrath is not in his place. I call Mr Chris Lyttle.

Hunting with Dogs: NI Ban

T9. Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she would support a ban on hunting with dogs in Northern Ireland. (AQT 124/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I thank the Member for his question. Hunting is a matter which I have no power over. On a personal level, yes, I would support a ban.

Mr Lyttle: I thank the Minister for her response. It is my understanding that her Department has power in relation to this issue. Is she willing to set out more clearly to the House why it is impossible for her to introduce legislation to ban hunting with dogs in Northern Ireland?

Miss McIlveen: It is my understanding that I have no powers to regulate or ban hunting of foxes and other wild animals with dogs, but I am happy to have a conversation with the Member about it.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): As Mr McKay is not in his place, we have come to the end of topical questions. The Minister has done particularly well, and I congratulate her. I ask the House to take its ease until 2.45 pm.

Mr Butler: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I advise the Member that the House is at its ease and no points of order can be taken until after Question Time.

2.45 pm

Communities

Enabling Success

1. **Mrs Barton** asked the Minister for Communities whether he plans to implement the recommendations contained in the Enabling Success economic inactivity strategy published in April 2015. (AQO 162/16-21)

Mr Givan (The Minister for Communities): The previous Executive recognised the importance of reducing Northern Ireland's economic inactivity rate and launched the Enabling Success strategy in April 2015, which was targeted at those people who are unable to work due to sickness, disability or caring responsibilities. Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of people classed as being economically inactive due to sickness, disability or caring responsibilities than any other part of the United Kingdom.

People in those groups face a range of barriers to work, often resulting from health conditions, a lack of core skills or their personal circumstances. There are also structural barriers, such as access to affordable childcare and the current benefit trap. Enabling Success recognised that those groups required additional assistance from across government and beyond in order to overcome the barriers to employment that they face.

The draft Programme for Government carries that commitment forward by identifying a reduction in economic inactivity as a key indicator of progress towards a number of outcomes. The reduction will require not only the

efforts of my Department and those of my Executive colleagues but the involvement of organisations from across every sector in Northern Ireland. As a result, my Department is developing a Programme for Government delivery plan, which will draw on and build on the Enabling Success strategy. The delivery plan will be developed and delivered in collaboration with the Department of Health, the Department for the Economy and the Department of Education, as well as the Public Health Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and other important stakeholders. The focus of the delivery plan will be on bringing forward actions that will address the social and economic issues that need to be tackled to reduce economic inactivity.

Economic inactivity is a complex and challenging issue, but it is a challenge that I am determined to meet. I am committed to providing the opportunities and support that will give people much better choices to access work, stay in work and progress to a job that suits their particular needs.

Mrs Barton: Minister, I am pleased to hear that you are dedicated to tackling some of this economic inactivity. Will you make it a priority for your Department, however, and have you identified a budget for the implementation of your strategy?

Mr Givan: Let me assure the Member that this is a priority, not just for my Department but for the Executive. There is a work stream in the draft Programme for Government on that particular issue, because, as I outlined, it is not just for my Department but for the Executive as a whole and the key Departments to contribute to that. Due to resource implications, funding did not go to the strategy in the way in which I would have liked it to when it was in the Department for Employment and Learning. As we go forward with the Programme for Government, it is an area that I will want to see developed.

Ms Gildernew: Can the Minister give us examples of how the voluntary and community sector has been supported in helping people to find employment?

Mr Givan: I know anecdotally from my constituency about the work of the voluntary and community sector and the key role that social enterprise is playing. I can speak from first-hand experience, particularly of an organisation called the Resurgam Trust, which is involved in a range of social enterprises right at the heart of communities in which economic inactivity has been a real issue for many years. We are seeing the product from that and the benefits.

It is not just about getting people employment but about creating aspirations in communities. That can then have an impact on education outcomes and their attainment and have consequences that go beyond people just finding a job. There is work being done with the voluntary and community sector. It is a key component of what we will want to do to tackle economic inactivity. That is why the Executive have decided that there will be a social strategy that will align with the economic strategy. The two will need to dovetail so that we can really drill down into particularly hard-to-reach communities in order that people can get the benefits.

Ms Lockhart: Is the Minister encouraged that the economic inactivity rate is now at its lowest since 1995? Can he outline the significance of that?

Mr Givan: The Member makes a very valid point that we are at the lowest level since 1995. We are at a higher

level than the rest of the United Kingdom, but the direction of travel is moving the right way. There are indicators to do with the falling claimant count figures that economic recovery has been and is under way in Northern Ireland, but it is important to note that the economic inactivity rate includes students and that the fall in the overall economic inactivity rate over recent quarters is due in large part to a reduction in the number of students who have been classified as economically inactive. That is something that I do not think Members should be particularly concerned about. Students are classed as economically inactive, but they are of course gaining the essential skills that will enable them to contribute to Northern Ireland society and the economy in the years ahead. The Programme for Government recognises this by suggesting that our measure for reducing economic inactivity should exclude students. That will allow us to have a more accurate measurement of people who are economically inactive.

Welfare Reform: Advice Services

2. **Mr Lunn** asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the funding provision for advice services specific to welfare reform, as recommended by the welfare reform mitigations working group. (AQO 163/16-21)

3. **Mr Kearney** asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the progress made on providing the welfare advice support recommended by the welfare reform mitigations working group. (AQO 164/16-21)

14. **Ms S Bradley** asked the Minister for Communities whether he has any plans to set up additional advisory services during the transitional period of welfare reform. (AQO 175/16-21)

Mr Givan: Mr Speaker, I have asked that the three questions around advice services specific to welfare reform are grouped together, with your permission, and that an additional minute, should it be required, be granted.

The welfare reform mitigations working group recommended that additional independent advice services should be put in place to assist and support customers through the welfare changes. The Executive made a commitment to provide £8 million funding over four years to provide the additional services, which is £2 million per annum. The Department is currently finalising arrangements with regional advice organisations. They will work with their front-line advice centres and a wide range of partner organisations to ensure that appropriate help and support is provided to people across Northern Ireland affected by forthcoming changes to the social security system as a result of welfare reform.

It is intended to have a dedicated 0800 Freephone number in place to provide advice and support to anyone affected by welfare reform. In addition to the telephone helpline, it is intended to have face-to-face services in each of the eleven council areas. The service will also ensure that those impacted will have access to specialist support where required. In line with working group recommendations, help will also be offered to assist those impacted in order to improve their digital and financial capability and to enhance their employability.

As well as support for a telephone service and face-to-face advice, my Department is currently developing proposals to support front-line staff, as recommended by

the working group. This will include welfare reform training for all front-line advice staff, adequate digital infrastructure and ensuring that advice organisations are in a position to assist clients with digital and financial capability and enhancing employability.

Mr Lunn: I thank the Minister for that very complete answer. He has just about taken away every supplementary question that I might have dreamt of. Just to be clear, only £2 million of the £8 million that he mentioned over four years is in the current Budget period. Is he satisfied that that money will still be available in future years? Also, is he satisfied that the quality of advice given across council areas will be reasonably uniform?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): That sounded like one more question.

Mr Givan: The £8 million has been specifically ring-fenced by the Executive as part of the overall £501 million that the Executive have decided to allocate to mitigate the worst impacts of the welfare change programme. So that £8 million is there. It is ring-fenced for the next four years, and £2 million has been made available this year.

There are key organisations involved in this — Advice NI, Citizens Advice and the Law Centre — and discussions are ongoing for them to come to an agreement on how the service is going to be provided. Obviously, councils outside this also support the agencies. This is to be welcomed. It is additional to what is currently provided, and I hope to be in a position to announce soon that there is an agreement in place that will allow this to be taken forward. Therefore, there is an onus on those organisations involved to come to a conclusion so that we can make this available to the people who are most vulnerable and need to have this support.

Mr Hussey: I thank the Minister for his responses so far. Can the Minister advise the House what steps he will take to provide voluntary services, such as the Royal British Legion and other ex-service organisations, with support to provide assistance for people who need it but who will not be approaching the Department or advice centres directly?

Mr Givan: I am happy to engage with any organisation. However, this £2 million is primarily being delivered through citizens advice bureaux and Advice NI and with Law Centre involvement. If there are issues in respect of the Royal British Legion, I will be more than happy to meet that organisation directly.

Mr Kearney: Go raibh maith agat, a LeasCheann Comhairle, agus a Aire. Minister, given that of the support for welfare advice has been allocated to the larger voluntary organisations, can you confirm that you will examine how the work of smaller organisations in the community sector that operate in that independent sector can also be supported in the vital work that they provide in disadvantaged rural and urban settings?

Mr Givan: The Executive have decided to support the most vulnerable following welfare reform through the recommendation from Professor Evason's team that this will be additional money to provide support to those independent organisations. It will be done through Advice NI and citizens advice bureaux with Law Centre engagement. For organisations outside that, if support can be provided from councils and so on and they want to do that, councils can feel at liberty to do that. That is how this specific pot of money is being developed.

This Department supports the voluntary sector, and I want to make sure that that continues. This scheme is additional; if it were not available, my Department would still provide support to people through all the jobs and benefits offices that exist across this Province. This is additional to what exists. People can come directly to social security offices to get support and advice, but this £8 million is above and beyond what we put into that, and it is being developed through Advice NI and citizens advice bureaux.

Ms S Bradley: Thank you, Minister, for your answers so far. You have touched on some of the issues that I was hoping to raise with you. In terms of accessibility to advisory services, given the complex nature of the issue that will be dealt with during those advisory services, can you indicate further what detail has really been broken down in terms of people with mental health issues, disability access, or other vulnerable groups that may need more tailored services?

Mr Givan: A support network exists through citizens advice bureau offices across the Province and Advice NI, and they are very much involved at the front line in giving people an independent organisation to support them. I expect that those organisations, as with my own offices, will link into specialist groups, such as disability services and those that are involved in that, to make sure that the right support is tailored to those that need it in the specific manner in which it will address their needs.

Mr Bell: Minister, in recognising that the mitigation measures are one of the successes of devolved government in that they have helped the most vulnerable people in our society, will you acknowledge that there are many people who live with very specific conditions and needs? Is there room in the programme for specialist support to be given to them?

Mr Givan: Again, I will be happy to look into that in more detail for the Member.

Mr Attwood: Given that the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 freezes benefits up to 2020 and that that applies to Northern Ireland, and given that inflation is now anticipated, because of the EU vote, to be at least 2% in the next year and probably at that level for the next two or three years, can you confirm that, further to the Evason package, there is no mitigation available for people whose benefits are frozen arising from the 2016 legislation?

3.00 pm

Mr Givan: The Member raises an important point. It is important to emphasise that the mitigation measures that we have put in place deal with what came out of the 2012 Westminster legislation. It is worth putting on the record that the Executive are doing far more than is being done any other region in the United Kingdom. Let me put it on the record. The Executive will mitigate as follows: £94 million for the loss of disability living allowance; £27 million for the loss of disability related premiums; £18 million for the loss of carer payments; £25 million for the benefit cap; £24 million for the time-limiting of employment and support allowance; £91 million for the social sector size criteria, or bedroom tax; £105 million for the cost of work allowance; £62 million for discretionary support; £25 million for universal credit payment flexibilities; £7 million for the administration of support for universal credit; £2.7

million for financial capability, and £20 million for the administration of that.

The Executive have taken tough decisions that have impacted on other Departments so that, as best we can within the budgetary constraints that exist, we can support the most vulnerable in our society. It is something that the Executive were right to do and we are supporting those most in need.

The only additional mitigation from the outworkings of the subsequent legislation from the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 deals with the reduced benefit cap level of £20,000. That will be mitigated in full. There will be no mitigation for the other measures associated with that Act. The Executive are putting the most vulnerable right at the very heart of their efforts and are trying to provide the best support that we can within existing financial constraints.

Benefit Fraud

4. **Mr Humphrey** asked the Minister for Communities how much money his Department has recovered from people found guilty of benefit fraud. (AQO 165/16-21)

Mr Givan: During the year 2014-15, the most recent year for which audited figures are available, a total of £1.8 million was recovered from people who were found guilty of benefit fraud. That figure includes sums that were recovered by the financial investigation unit by means of confiscation orders, compensation orders and voluntary payments.

Mr Humphrey: First, I congratulate the Minister on facilitating an excellent event at Titanic Belfast last night for the green and white army to round off a fantastic and memorable campaign for the Northern Ireland team. Even the most senior members of the green and white army enjoyed it.

How much money has the Minister's Department recovered from people who are guilty of fraud?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Minister, if you would care to address the question.

Mr Givan: Mr Deputy Speaker, as an avid member of the green and white army, I noticed the latitude that you gave to the Member for North Belfast. I will maybe address it later in Question Time, but I thank the Member for those kind comments about the event that the Department organised.

On the specific question about tackling fraud, the Department invests £7 million per year in 186 staff who tackle claimant fraud and benefit error. Further investment is planned under the Fresh Start Agreement and negotiations are ongoing with the Treasury. Almost 3,000 cases of claimant fraud or error were detected last year. In my initial answer, I said that £1.8 million was recovered as a result of fraud, but £17 million was recovered as a result of error. This is an area that we need to invest in. It is estimated that 1% of benefit entitlement is gained through fraud, which comes to about £50 million of public money. It is at a reduced level from that in previous years and we are moving in the right direction, but more than 900 cases of benefit fraud were received for sanctions last year and 272 of them saw convictions being secured through the courts. It is an area of work that needs to continue to be tackled. People who receive support are entitled to receive it and need to receive it. However, those who do so fraudulently

undermine the entire system, and it is right for us to tackle that problem aggressively.

Mr Butler: I would like to thank the Minister. I am not sure of the procedure, but I no longer have a question for him.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I am happy enough with that. That is OK.

Mr F McCann: I noticed that the Minister mentioned error at the same time as fraud. Does he agree that more is lost through departmental error than through fraud? What is being done to tackle that?

Mr Givan: The Member makes a valid point; more is lost through error. For something to be deemed as fraud, there needs to be an admission. Error may have occurred through a genuine mistake or someone may have received money by being deliberately misleading. When it comes to putting down a figure for fraud, there are criteria to be met through the courts or the official penalty process, if there is an admission. Tackling error is, of course, a major issue. People can unwittingly have benefits paid to them that they should not be in receipt of. When you identify that, it is important that they are repaid, and people cooperate willingly on that.

The Member is right: it is important that we do not stigmatise people who receive benefits in error. That is an issue that we need to work out through the normal processes, and that does happen. We are investing in support so that we can tackle error. That is why we have a team of 186 staff carrying out that work for us.

Mr Dickson: Fresh Start promises up to £25 million of new ring-fenced funding each year for five years to reduce welfare fraud. How does the Minister intend to use that money?

Mr Givan: That money is there to ensure that we have the support in place to continue with the work that we have been engaging in. I indicated that, we believe, around 1% of all benefit claims could be fraud. That equates to £50 million. So even though, last year, fraud and error recovery came to the value of about £17 million, obviously, there is more work to do. It has been recognised by Treasury that, if we invest in this issue, more money will be recoverable. That is why it is in Fresh Start. That money is to enhance the work that we are doing. Work is taking place with DWP on enhancing IT equipment, improving the targeting of fraud and error, and developing closer relationships with the PSNI and HMRC. All of that will help to make us more effective in addressing the issue.

Mr Agnew: The Minister gave the figure of 1% as an estimate of the number of claims that he and his Department believe are down to fraud. Can he confirm that 99% of those who claim benefits are needing, deserving and entitled?

Mr Givan: Very much so; that is the case. In 2002, the figure was at 3%, which was significant. If you look over that intervening period, you will see that the level of benefit fraud has reduced to 1%. This is something that we are going to continue to work at, because we want to tackle the issue. Sadly, there are still some — of course, an extreme minority — who engage in fraud, and we need to identify and pursue those people.

It is right to say that 99% of people who are in receipt of entitlements are receiving them because they need them

due to the situation that they are facing. It is right that we as a society support them.

Regeneration Powers

5. **Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister for Communities when he plans to transfer regeneration powers to local government. (AQO 166/16-21)

Mr Givan: The extension of regeneration and community development powers to local government did not proceed under the last mandate. The new Department for Communities has been established, with a much wider range of responsibilities, including responsibility for local government. It will be in that context that I will wish to consider the options for going forward. Ultimately, any decision to extend powers to local government is a matter for the Executive. The timing of an extension would be subject to the successful completion of the legislative process, if that is the option that is pursued.

Mrs Dobson: I thank the Minister for his answer. Does the Minister appreciate that there is frustration amongst councillors because they have not been given the powers that the public thought they would get when they were elected two years ago? What is the timetable for devolving regeneration powers to the 11 councils?

Mr Givan: I share the Member's concerns around this. Obviously, local government needs to have certainty. It is a decision that, from my perspective, will need to be taken sooner rather than later so that we have a definitive position. If that is to retain the function, that is a decision that we need to take; if it is to devolve it, we need to take that decision. It is important that certainty is brought into this, because there are investment opportunities and so on that require certainty if we are to take them forward. These powers are very important. They have a positive impact in our communities through urban regeneration and the support of neighbourhood renewal areas. So this is an area that we will need to engage on, and the Executive will need to come to a view on, sooner rather than later.

Mr Middleton: I thank the Minister for his answers so far. Will he outline what total budget was due to transfer if powers had been conferred on councils?

Mr Givan: At that time, the total budget was approximately £56.5 million. That was broken down into particular categories: physical regeneration was £18.6 million; tackling deprivation was £23.8 million; community development was £7 million; Laganside was £2.1 million; and administration was around £5 million.

Mr Durkan: I thank the Minister for his answers thus far. The fear, frustration and uncertainty that other Members and the Minister spoke of are not exclusive to local government. Indeed, all that is prevalent among departmental staff. Will he give the House an assurance that he is working with staff to ensure that staff charged with regeneration in the Department are being kept abreast of the situation as it develops?

Mr Givan: Very early on, I have been putting myself around the Department and meeting people. From Marlborough House in Craigavon, I met the staff who are involved with urban regeneration in that regional area. They spoke to me about physical regeneration issues and the community aspect of the function. There is a need for certainty so that people in the Department know the role

that they will have and where it will be. I am listening to what Members are saying. I share the view that certainty is needed, and we need to come to a decision, whatever it is, so that certainty is brought into the system.

Ms Dillon: Has the Minister had any meetings with the chief executives, chairpersons or mayors of the councils? Your predecessor in DSD had such meetings when I was on the previous Mid Ulster Council, and I have to say that that did a lot to allay any fears that we had. That would be beneficial and give reassurance to councils. I hope that, when powers are transferred, you will give the councils the resources, unlike previous Ministers who did not do that.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I think that there is a question there, Minister.

Mr Givan: I have meetings lined up with local government through the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), and I am almost certain that this will be one of the main subjects on the agenda. Local government want to know what is happening, so it is important that we give that certainty to them. The point is well made. Should the decision be that a transfer takes place, of course the resource needs to follow the function. Local government cannot be seen as the area in which central government can pass on problems that we may be facing with resource. I will want to make sure that, if that is the option, the appropriate resources will be made available to councils.

Dromore, County Down: Regeneration

6. **Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the regeneration of the town centre in Dromore, County Down. (AQO 167/16-21)

Mr Givan: I thank the Member for the question. The Department is working closely with officials from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to regenerate the town centre of Dromore. A master plan to guide this regeneration was funded by my Department and published in May 2015. The master plan document was widely consulted on and received full support from the then Banbridge District Council elected members. One of the primary master plan recommendations was for the completion of a transportation assessment to review the current traffic arrangements in the town centre, with particular reference to Church Street. This work was funded by my Department and concluded in March 2016, thus enabling a number of the proposals in the master plan to be progressed.

Initial work has recently commenced on the appointment of an integrated consultancy team to develop public realm proposals for the outer square and Church Street in the town centre. This work will complement the public realm improvements that were completed around the town hall in the main square in 2009. A number of revitalisation initiatives have also been delivered in Dromore town centre, including shop frontage improvements; the introduction of Wi-Fi services; the installation of decorative planters; the creation of a community garden; the promotion and marketing of events; and the purchase of an outdoor stage and seating. A further phase of this work is being planned for later this year.

3.15 pm

Mrs Hale: I thank the Minister for his answer. Given — pardon the pun — that this historic and ancient market town is in our constituency, Minister, how much does your Department propose to spend on the regeneration of the town centre?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): No pressure. [Laughter.]

Mr Givan: I thank the Member for that question. I wondered who would be the first to come up with the surname joke. I know that the Member has worked very well in taking forward the Dromore area. As Minister for Communities, is it my responsibility to represent all of Northern Ireland, not just my constituency, so it will be treated fairly, as every other constituency will be treated fairly.

As for how we will take work forward, £100,000 will be allocated to a new revitalisation programme to commence later this year. The council is developing the action plan in conjunction with local traders, and £0.5 million has been identified to deliver a new public realm scheme in the outer area of Market Square and Church Street. The design stage is under way, with work planned to commence in 2017-18.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): That ends the period for listed questions. We move on to topical questions.

Unauthorised Monuments: Public Land

T1. **Mrs Barton** asked the Minister for Communities whether he is content that council planning committees have sufficiently robust enforcement powers to deal with unauthorised monuments that are put up without permission on public land. (AQT 126/16-21)

Mr Givan: I thank the Member for that question. Part of my Department's remit is responsibility for local government, insofar as it does not include planning functions, which rest entirely with the Department for Infrastructure and the planning committees. There is a clear line of responsibility. The Department for Infrastructure deals with issues to do with planning applications, approvals, refusals and, indeed, enforcement. The Member should take up the issue with that Department.

Mrs Barton: Thank you for your answer, Minister, but will you consider legislating to clamp down on unauthorised monuments on properties belonging to the Department and, indeed, on other public lands? Do you agree that memorials glorifying terrorist organisations, past and present, are unacceptable?

Mr Givan: Memorials that commemorate any form of terrorism are wrong. I do not support that, but, sadly, it does take place. In the Upper Bann constituency, a recently erected memorial has caused justifiable outrage. It is on Housing Executive property, and that issue needs to be dealt with. However, in all these things, the safety of those involved is paramount, and engagement with communities is needed. As repugnant as these memorials are, the ability of contractors to do the required work — ultimately, they are the ones who would have to go into the area — will always raise security and safety issues. The PSNI will have an advisory role, so it becomes a difficult issue to manage. The issue is not confined to the memorial that I am aware of in Lurgan; it exists in other communities as well.

Northern Ireland Football Team, Manager and Fans: Tribute

T2. **Mr Douglas** asked the Minister for Communities, assuming that he, too, is absolutely delighted by the recent success of the Northern Ireland football team in France, to join with him to pay tribute to the manager, players and fans for the way in which they represented our wee country. (AQT 127/16-21)

Mr Givan: I thank the Member for that question. It gives me an opportunity to put on record my real sense of pride in the Northern Ireland football team and how the players conducted themselves on and off the pitch. Of course, our fans have been tremendous ambassadors for this country. Right across Europe, it has been widely reported that our fans are what football is all about. They have been a tremendous advertisement for the sport and, of course, for our country. I cannot praise enough the way in which the team played. It is true: sport unites our country, and football is very much a cross-community sport that is truly representative of all sections of our society.

The team represents all sections of our society and is supported by all sections of our community, so it is right that we as an Assembly pay tribute to the Northern Ireland football team. That is why I decided that it would be appropriate, when the dream came to an end, to mark it with the homecoming event that took place last night. That is why I approved the organisation of that, and my Department led on it. For those who were able to be there — I know that some people had to be here to vote — it was another truly rememberable night.

These are new memories. Some people in the Chamber can remember Gerry Armstrong in 1982. I was one year old when that happened — I have only watched it on television — but now I will be able to remember Gareth McAuley, Niall McGinn and Michael McGovern. Those memories will stay with me for a lifetime.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): I was there in 1982.

Mr Douglas: At the event last night, Michael O'Neill stated his desire for those born in Northern Ireland to play for Northern Ireland. Can the Minister — a bit like Will Grigg, the Minister is on fire today — outline his commitment to working towards that vision for football and all other sports, including boxing?

Mr Givan: We will not start doing the dance associated with that song. Michael O'Neill made a powerful point when he said that he wanted everyone born in Northern Ireland to play for Northern Ireland. I endorse and give my full support to that. Maybe in times gone by there were some who did not feel able to support Northern Ireland, but that is changing. People from right across our community support the Northern Ireland football team.

The Executive are investing heavily in sport infrastructure, including soccer stadia. That is good for our community. Football truly is a uniting sport, and therefore I want to see it developed and taken forward. That will be a priority for me. Let us look forward to September, when the redevelopment of Windsor Park will be complete and there will be a full stadium for our first World Cup qualifier. The journey and the dreams will begin again with that campaign. Let us get behind sport. It unifies our community and has huge benefits for health and so on. The different sports in Northern Ireland are a way for

people to come together. Let us bottle a little of what has taken place over the last three weeks and apply it to other aspects of our society, and we will go a long way.

Orange Order: Support

T3. **Mr T Buchanan** asked the Minister for Communities to commit to engaging with the loyal orders to explore how their positive work can be supported, given that, as we look forward to the Twelfth of July celebrations in just over two weeks' time, it is only right and proper that the Orange Order, in encouraging participation and cultural activity, be acknowledged for the great work that it does. (AQT 128/16-21)

Mr Givan: I agree with the Member's sentiments. In my constituency, there is a vast number of Orange halls. They are used extensively by those in the Orange but, I would say, even more by people in the community who are not in the Orange Order. They provide a hub, particularly for rural communities. The Executive have recognised that, and that is why we have a policy that Orange halls do not pay rates. That is right, and it has ensured that the halls continue to operate and provide vital component in supporting our community.

As we move into the months ahead, I want to give my support to the campaign launched by Orangefest. It is important that, when we commemorate these events, it is about the battle not the bottle. Unfortunately, irrespective of what community event takes place, there can, at times, be people who engage in antisocial behaviour, which can lead to denigration of the organisation involved. I appeal to people to pay heed to what Orangefest is saying. Enjoy the celebrations — communities should respect them — but those who take part should follow the advice from the Orange by commemorating the battle and not taking up the bottle.

Mr T Buchanan: The Minister will know that thousands of people, particularly young people, are involved in marching bands. Will he therefore explore what support can be provided to the sector?

Mr Givan: I have been looking at the issue. A scheme operated for a number of years, and then my predecessor brought it to an end. I am exploring what we can do about the musical instruments fund. The bands are heavily involved in our communities, providing an outlet, particularly for young people, to be involved in disciplined organisations that engage them in productive activity. If the young people did not have that involvement, I believe that there would be more problems in areas. It is right that we engage them positively. The fund was used for that, and I am exploring options to find a way forward so that it can be reopened.

European Funding: DFC Plans

T4. **Mr Lunn** asked the Minister for Communities whether he has any plans in place or under consideration to replace European money in the coming years, given that he, like Mr Lunn, will have welcomed the large investment recently offered to the housing associations by the European Investment Bank and will recognise that it is unlikely that much more money will come from that source. (AQT 129/16-21)

Mr Givan: Investment in our housing stock, both current and new social housing, is obviously a priority for the Executive. We want to build 1,600 houses this year, and there is a budget for that. Housing associations are heavily involved in taking forward that plan. The contract with the European Investment Bank has been secured. It was made clear at the time that, irrespective of the outcome of the referendum, the contract is there. It will be for the European Investment Bank to decide how it invests its money. It invests heavily beyond the boundaries of the European Union in other continents. The message to me at the time was that Brexit would make things more complicated, but that is something that we will have to navigate.

There are emerging issues with housing. I want to explore them, because it is vital that we provide the housing needed to meet the ongoing demand.

Mr Lunn: The European Investment Bank, in the past eight years, has invested £43 billion in projects within the European Union and £1 billion in projects outside it. I admire the Minister's confidence that there may still be money coming from that source, but I frankly doubt whether that will be the case. Has he anything concrete to offer by way of facilities that may replace that kind of loan?

Mr Givan: There are lending institutions that already lend to our housing associations. This was the first time that the European Investment Bank had got involved in providing support to housing associations. For a number of years, housing associations have had to raise finance on the private markets, long before the European Investment Bank got involved. I hope — indeed, I am confident — that lending institutions will want to be involved, because it has been proven that these are sound investments for financial institutions to make in our social housing sector.

European Funding: Voluntary and Community Groups

T5. **Mr Kelly** asked the Minister for Communities, given last week's decision to leave the EU, to state how his Department will help those many voluntary and community groups that rely on European funding. (AQT 130/16-21)

Mr Givan: I have already authorised a course of work in the Department so that we can scope out the impact. That will feed directly into the Executive Office, which, obviously, will lead on this. The First Minister outlined on behalf of the Executive the approach that will be taken. It is important that that work take place and that we put forward the best possible case for Northern Ireland. For community groups and for everybody, uncertainty can create anxiety, and we need to make sure that we give them the best support that we can. Just as there are challenges as a result of the decision of the United Kingdom there are opportunities, and I want to explore those opportunities to see how the Department can capitalise on what, I believe, is a positive decision by the people of the United Kingdom.

Let me reassure the Member that this is a very urgent piece of work that will be going to the Executive. The First Minister and deputy First Minister will, with my support, be leading on this collectively.

3.30 pm

Mr Kelly: I thank the Minister for his answer. As he said, it is an urgent piece of business. However, on the social fund, the Peace fund and Erasmus, how will you deal with continuity? When will the funding stop? Despite what the Executive and your Department might do, how will all these groups survive and maintain continuity in going from where they are now into whatever the new situation is?

Mr Givan: The Member raises very valid questions. Irrespective of your view on the decision, these are questions that need to be answered. The United Kingdom Government have to lead on the negotiations, and the regions need to feed into that. I have every confidence that the First Minister and deputy First Minister, with counterparts in Scotland and Wales — and, indeed, the Republic of Ireland, given the nature of the relationship and the impact that the decision will have — will make the case collectively to those who are going to be responsible for negotiating this with the European Union.

This is something that is emerging. The sooner that there is certainty around the politics in London and we know the way in which things will develop, the better. We will then need to make sure that we feed into the process. However, the preparatory work has been taking place and is coming together. I am confident that the Northern Ireland Executive will be able to put forward the strongest possible case to benefit Northern Ireland in the relationships that will exist once the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Time is now up. I ask Members to take their ease while we make some changes at the Table.

Mr McGrath: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I offer apologies for missing a topical question earlier.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): Thank you.

Motion made:

That the Assembly do now adjourn. — [Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy).]

Adjournment

Learning Disability Services: Western Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy): The proposer of the topic will have 15 minutes. As an unprecedented number of Members have indicated their desire to speak, I will be able to allow each Member only three minutes, with no additional time for interventions unless some names are removed.

Mr Hussey: I thank the Minister for her attendance. The fact that so many Members are still in the Chamber is an indication of how seriously they take this issue. I am going to start by putting a question in the air: when is a parent not a parent? I am going to follow that up with: when is a child not a child? I am going to leave those questions in the air for a few moments.

Any of us from my part of the world or other parts of the world who have attended meetings with the parents of children — I will refer to them as children — with learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities will understand the frustration and pain that these people have suffered over the past few years. In April of this year, I was contacted by a constituent about the underspend in the Western Health and Social Care Trust on adult learning disability services. As we were in purdah, I wrote directly to the chief executive of the Western Health and Social Care Trust, following which myself and several other Members from the Western Health and Social Care Trust area were summoned to a meeting in Londonderry; some of those Members are in the Chamber now.

We were given a presentation, which raised more questions than it answered. The figure of £8 million was floated, which might have been underspent in these services. As we left the meeting, one of the worst comments was, “Well, we may have to balance the books, but that money may have to come from the services for the elderly”. I see Members here nodding; that is exactly what was said to us, but nobody could identify this particular figure or where it came from.

I am now going to go off script and read a portion of a speech that was given by Gemma Doherty, or Gemma McGorty as she was, from Garrison, County Fermanagh. I started work 40 years ago today, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I know you are about to say that I am far too young to have been working for 40 years, but 40 years ago, I worked with this lady's father. The letter that she wrote concludes with the speech that she gave:

“My final thought today is this: we, the parents and carers of children and adults with disabilities, are soft targets for all those who are supposed to be providing a just and equitable system for us all. They know that we will make ourselves unwell, as we turn ourselves inside out in an attempt to take care of our children; they know that we will never abandon them; they know that in many, many cases, a sibling will take over the role when we are no longer fit; they know we are too exhausted to have enough energy to make phone

calls and write letters; and they know that for years and years, we have not told half the story, because we don't want to appear to let our children down, or make it sound that we don't love them, or say that we can't cope, and that will suit them.

They talk about equal rights for all, yet we all know that even highly intelligent people with physical or mental disabilities find it very difficult to get employment and face discrimination every day. And as for the children and adults who have the additional complication of a learning disability, well, have a look at Western Trust policy to see what they and their carer's chances are.”

Most of us know somebody with a learning disability; most of us know the parent of someone with a learning disability. How many of us can say that we could do the job that they do?

My aunt and uncle had a daughter who had Down's syndrome, and my cousin was one of the brightest people that I have ever met. If she met you once, she would know you again 30 years later. My aunt and uncle were well into their 80s when my cousin passed away in her 60s, yet they were still acting as parents to their child. Back to the question: when is a parent a parent? A parent will always be a parent, but when you are dealing with someone with learning difficulties, you are on your own in many cases. In the public meetings that we have attended, we have seen parents in their 80s bringing along their 60-year-old child. That person, to them, is their child, and that child is fully dependent on their parent.

Over the years, the Western Health and Social Care Trust, or the Sperrin Lakeland Trust, or the Foyle Trust, have taken money away from the services that these people should get. When did that start? Well, we know that it started at least in 1994, and, at that time, there was an underspend of £4 million. These are the figures that were uncovered. When we ask the trust for an exact figure, we are not going to be given an exact figure.

If it was £4 million in 1994 and £8 million in 2016, is the figure cumulative? Is it £4 million over 20 years, so that we end up, after we start adding inflation, talking about an underspend that is in excess of £100 million? Is that the figure? The people who look after adults with learning disabilities are convinced that more than £100 million has not been allocated to the parents or to those who suffer from adult-learning disabilities. If that is the case, shame on us, because for 20 years that was allowed to happen.

What have we been doing to help those people? If I were sitting in the Chamber today as the parent of a child with learning disabilities, I would be thinking, “You've done nothing. You've turned a blind eye to these people”. We did not know — quite honestly, we did not know — but shame on us for not knowing.

Since I became a Member in 2011, I have often dealt with the parents of children with learning disabilities, and I have accepted the story from the trust when it was said, “We don't have the money. We do not have sufficient funds”, but, if they do not have sufficient funds because they siphon money away from this area, shame on them. If it was allowed to happen under the management of the trust, shame on the trust. If it was allowed to happen under the supervision of a board, shame on the board. If it was allowed to happen under the supervision of the Department, shame on the Department — and shame on

this House for allowing it to happen. So, there are answers that we need.

There are also things that we need to know about who was responsible for this. We all know in the House that civil servants are never responsible for anything. Civil servants cannot carry the can because, oh dear, that person just happened to retire last month or will be retiring next month. This is a 20-year scandal — uncovered by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), apparently — so, now is the time for us to uncover the truth. Every single piece of paper that is available must be made available. Every single pound that was taken from the service must be given back. Whenever parents in their 80s cannot get respite care because we did not give the services sufficient money, that is wrong. If this trust did that, and the trust's management board allowed it to happen, then there are quite a few heads that have to be knocked together. When they all head off to their golden retirement with bucket loads of money, what about those they are leaving behind and who still have to deal with this?

(Mr Deputy Speaker [Mr McGlone] in the Chair)

Gemma is a lady in her 40s and she has looked after three children with learning disabilities. Two of them have degrees; the third one is at home, having been there during childhood and adolescence and now into adulthood. Sometimes, he is very difficult to control. He has wrecked televisions and wrecked rooms. That parent has been looking after that adult for 20 to 25 years. Look at cases in which adults in their late 50s or early 60s have a parent in their 80s who is attempting to look after them. When the parent asks for respite, it cannot be given, because we have closed many of the houses that we used for those services. Why did we close those services? It was because somebody said, "Three people living in one house cannot share a bathroom. All facilities must be en suite. So, we will close it". Or, they say that the service has been withdrawn because, "We don't have the money". That is not the case: the money was there but was redirected.

I and others met with Mencap on Friday morning. Part of our new system in west Tyrone is that we are going to regularly meet with Mencap. I am going to list the key issues that they have asked me to raise here today.

3.45 pm

As we stand, no health and social care trust can identify all those with a learning disability within their area. On average, each trust can identify only those with the most severe learning disability. Across all trusts, that number is 9,600, and in the Western Health and Social Care Trust it is — we do not know. In 2013, the RQIA identified that there was underfunding by 5% per annum in the Western Health and Social Care Trust in learning disability services. We are now in June 2016. Why has it taken so long for this matter to reach the public agenda? Well, it is here today, and it is not going away.

What action has the RQIA taken to hold the Western Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to account for this? The RQIA should, as a matter of public confidence in its role, explain its actions in how it tried to address this situation. The HSCB must, as a matter of urgency, publish the review of expenditure on learning disability services across all trust areas.

The review undertaken in 2013 details the level of underfunding and should be made publicly available. The Western Trust must detail for each year from 1996 how much funding it provided to learning disability services and by what percentage those were underfunded. It is estimated that the underfunding was approximately 5% per annum amounting to some £8 million in any given year. Families in the Western Trust have indicated that there has been an underfunding situation since 1996. That amounts to approximately £80 million in services that families and adults with a learning disability have been denied. I think that figure is in excess of £100 million.

The Western Trust must identify who took the decision to move the funding allocated by the HSCB for learning disabilities to a different programme of care. The trust must identify where that decision originated and who ratified it. Did it go to the trust board for ratification, or was it ratified by senior management?

In real terms, the decision has meant that families are continuing to care when they are at breaking point, putting lives and relationships in danger. Carers are continuing to care into their seventies, eighties and even nineties as they despair for the services they needed. Adults with a learning disability have been denied the services that would enable them to have a better quality of life. There has been a failure to provide services that meant adults could be part of our community and a failure to provide housing and support options that would let adults with learning disabilities live independently.

It is essential, Minister, that there is now a robust and independent inquiry into how this could, and did, happen. We need to know how much was underfunded in the Western Trust area. It does not matter whether you come from Lisnaskea, Londonderry or Limavady. We have four counties, I think, and at least four parliamentary constituencies affected here. We have hundreds of families affected. Why did we let it happen?

I will go back to the question. When is a parent a parent? A parent is always a parent. My mother died last year. She was 87. She was always my mother, she was always the parent and she remained that way her entire life. Parents here are carrying a burden that we, as a state, must help to support.

Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for your time, and Minister, I look forward to your answer.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): Thank you for that. Just before we move to the next Member, I advise Members that, where interventions are concerned, a large number of Members wish to speak on this issue. I advise Members that anybody who gives way cannot necessarily expect to be given an extra minute. I am just, if you like, marking people's card on that one.

Mr T Buchanan: First of all, I thank the Member for bringing this very important matter to the House today. It lies very close to my heart, as my elderly parents, one in their early eighties and one in their late seventies, are carers for a brother and an uncle. I know the care and devotion that are given day after day with very little respite care being given to them.

This is something that reads like a children's mystery book entitled 'The Western Trust and the case of the missing millions'. Unfortunately, this is not a work of fiction. For

over 20 years, the Western Trust has been removing millions every year from its budget allocation for adult disability services in the western area.

The trust thought that adult disability services in the constituency should not be allocated their funding and removed the money from those vital services. Is it the case that the Western Trust got away with that scheme for so long that it thought that it would continue to go undetected? It is absolutely appalling that, for 20 years, up to £8 million a year has been directed away from adult disability services and used in other areas. That fact is so startling that it adds nothing but questions. No one from the Western Trust appears to be prepared to give answers to the questions being asked. Is it any wonder that parents, carers and people who work in special educational needs facilities are angry today? The realisation that those people and the services that they are entitled to have been shunted by the trust for all these years is an extremely bitter pill to swallow.

Let us stop for a moment today and weigh up the mental and physical cost to carers. Let us add up the cost of the actions by the trust. Struggling parents have been refused respite care to relieve them from their extremely difficult lives. Day centres have restricted schedules and facilities because of a so-called lack of funds; obviously, those funds were directed away somewhere else. Young people have been sidelined and marginalised. Crucial interventions, which could make a difference to the quality of life of those people, have been deemed unnecessary for funding purposes. The most vulnerable in our society have been discriminated against.

Many of those people, who will never be able to speak —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I ask the Member to draw his remarks to a close, please.

Mr T Buchanan: — for themselves or stand up for their rights, have been let down by the trust. As the proposer of the Adjournment topic said today, there must be a robust intervention —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): The Member is past his time. Will you draw your remarks to a close, please?

Mr T Buchanan: — so that the trust is held to account for what has been done.

Ms Boyle: I congratulate the Member for securing the Adjournment debate. I congratulate those involved in the campaign — families, service users, the western adult learning disability action group, Mencap and organisations in my area like Parents and Friends of Glenside Community and many others — for putting the spotlight on the issue and supporting the families and individuals in their quest to get real answers in this debacle since the shock announcement — answers as to why there has been consistent underfunding for quite a number of years in adult learning disability services, amounting to £8 million in the Western Trust.

Families of adults with a learning disability have made repeated representations over many years to the former Western Health and Social Care Board, the Health and Social Care Board and the trust about the lack of services for learning disability in the Western Trust compared with others. On a number of occasions since 2002, carer representatives from the western adult learning disability action Group have presented to the Western Board and

the Western Trust their analysis of actual expenditure, which pointed to significant levels of underfunding. It fell on deaf ears. Families believe that they were ignored when they presented the trust with that information. On 20 May, I, like others, met the trust officials for a briefing in relation to how that underspend came about. I will put in context how that came about: we were informed that it was down to a resettlement programme going back a number of years.

A learning disability can affect many people's lives in many ways, as was said, causing difficulties in learning, communication and tasks of everyday life. This is what we are dealing with. The impact of the deficit on adult learning disability services across the trust will need to be fully documented. Families have continued to cope with a caring role with limited assistance and at great cost to family life, health and income.

It has impacted the ability of the trust to recruit appropriate numbers of social workers, community workers, community nurses, day-care staff and other professionals who can identify the needs of those families and deliver for them. The pressure on front-line staff trying to cope with unrealistic caseloads —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I advise the Member to draw her remarks to a close.

Ms Boyle: — and maintain some services has an impact on delivery. That needs to be addressed. As the Member said, there are key issues that need to be explored.

Mr Durkan: I agree with everything that everyone has said thus far, apart from one point from the Member who secured the debate, Ross Hussey. Talking about the deficit, he said, "We did not know", and similar shock was expressed by other Members. This issue, however, did not just drop out of the sky. The deficit in spending on learning disability services in the Western Trust had taken on almost mythical proportions over a number of years, so people would have heard about it. It might have reared its ugly head during, for example, the annual furore over day-care places for young adults with a learning disability, but it was never confirmed. I am not the only person here who raised questions about it, only to be bamboozled, in effect, by obfuscation and denial. Now, finally, the huge and historical underspend in the area has been confirmed by the trust.

The feeling of the families on the ground whom I have spoken to — I think that Members from elsewhere across the trust area confirmed this today — is that, had it not been for the RQIA report and its imminent publication, the trust would not have gone public about the underspend. In fairness to the trust, it facilitated meetings with us as MLAs and elected representatives. We have asked a lot of questions. We have, as Mr Hussey said, probably come away with more questions. There are layers and layers — I said "layers".

The deficit, it seems, can be traced back through legacy trusts and the myriad of bureaucracy to as far as 1994. A failure to address that meant that it snowballed from, we think, £4 million in 1994 to the amount that Mr Hussey mentioned — probably in the region of £8 million, which is the figure in the wording for the debate and the figure that we are all using. For those listening to or reading this who might not be aware, that is the figure each year for over 20 years. Tens of millions of pounds — possibly over

£100 million — have not been spent on services for some of our most vulnerable, and that is just shocking to say the least. It is my understanding that the RQIA is completing a further study that should establish the full extent of the underspend, but how could anyone calculate its full cost? The physical, emotional and mental cost to service users, the people who wanted to use a service but were denied —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I advise the Member to draw his remarks to a close.

Mr Durkan: — and to families as they fought for services for their loved ones and support for themselves, is immeasurable.

Mr Middleton: I thank the Member for bringing this very important topic to the Floor today. Several weeks ago, I went to a public meeting in the City Hotel in my constituency. Family members, carers and fellow elected Members were gathered there to discuss this very serious issue. The high emotion was understandable — there was hurt, tears and anger. Of course, as elected Members, we shared in that and voiced our concerns and anger as well.

We met the trust on 20 May, as was mentioned. It was a useful meeting, albeit that we left with more questions than answers. It was made clear to us that it was first identified in 1996 that there was a £4.4 million deficit in the money going to adult learning disability services. It is staggering that that was over 20 years ago and that, still to this day, very little has been done about it. In 2015, the previous Minister allocated an additional £350,000 to learning disability services. That was helpful, but, unfortunately, it was, given the overall scale of the problem, a drop in the ocean.

4.00 pm

Other Members have touched on the fact that, at this stage, we still do not know the extent of the deficit; £8 million has been mentioned, of course. The fact that we do not know is worrying in itself, because it will be more; it is just a question of how much more. We need to see the report from the Health and Social Care Board, which is due out, hopefully, in the next couple of months. We look forward to seeing that, and seeing how the Minister is going to tackle the serious underspend.

Last week at the Health Committee, I mentioned to the Minister that there needs to be a thorough investigation into why and how this happened. There is uncertainty as to how this went under the radar for so long. It is clear that family members had suspicions and concerns about services, but, again, this is not all about finance. It is about the fact that these family members will not get back the time that they have lost with their relatives or the support that they lost out on. I call on the Minister to provide reassurances to the families — I know that she listened to the Committee last week — and ensure that this situation cannot be allowed to happen again.

Ms Gildernew: Like others, I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter, and I thank the Member for bringing it to the House. I do not disagree with anything that has been said either. These families are genuinely bereft at all that they have gone through and the experiences that they have had. The care and support that they needed was not forthcoming. At the meeting on 20 May, the trust made it very clear to us that it would not be seeking additional resources from the Minister and that the situation would have to be managed from the budget allocation.

There are families out there, however, who are treating this almost as a bereavement. All the things that they have been asking for have not been forthcoming for years because of budgetary issues. They have found out that that money was available and was spent on other things, and it is a massive blow to families who are, as we have heard today, supporting adults. Thankfully, those are adults who are living much longer. I can remember when, probably a generation ago, the life expectancy of adults with conditions such as Down's syndrome was very poor. It is much better now, but, as a result, if we have adults who are living into their 40s and 50s and even, in some cases, into their 60s, their parents are getting older and much less capable of providing care. The parents are also dealing with their own health issues, including their mental health, their ability to care for a child and the uncertainty around who is going to pick up when they are no longer able to do it or no longer here. The fear and worry among parents of children with learning disabilities, when they do not know what kind of care their child is going to get after they pass away, eats them up.

Like others, I ask the Minister to carry out a very thorough investigation into how this happened and see what can be done to support those families, perhaps, by bringing in some creative and innovative ideas to help them to cope with this news and give them some succour for the future that their needs will be met in a more timely fashion. That might mean procuring extra respite beds to give people a break and enable them to continue the fight and ensure that they are giving their child the best support they can now, but also that their child has the best and most dignified care that they need —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I ask the Member to draw her remarks to a close, please.

Ms Gildernew: — when their parent is no longer able to provide it.

Mrs Barton: I have listened intently to what each Member has had to say this afternoon. I want to mention a lady I sat beside at one of the meetings of the western learning disability action group. She spent most of that meeting wiping tears from her eyes and becoming more and more emotional, frustrated and angry as the appalling extent of the underspend became apparent. She explained how it was a continuous battle over the years to have her family member assessed and to fight to find an acceptable school and how, during that time, as her child reached adulthood, she had to move house from the country to the town so that she could avail herself of some of the services provided. As a carer, she felt totally isolated, with no one to turn to.

That is only one example. Generations of adults with learning disabilities have been deprived of the opportunity of a better life. That has had a detrimental effect on many families' personal and family lives, which no financial compensation will ever redress. However, I urge the Minister, through the Western Health and Social Care Trust, to start working immediately with all the families of adults with learning disabilities to cut through the red tape and provide immediate support for respite services, day care and social work.

The Western Health and Social Care Trust must come clean and explain fully how this gross underspend happened. It must be transparent and open in its explanation, including about the number of years for which

the deficit has existed. Many of the carers whom I have spoken to have, for years, lived on a knife edge financially. Many homes have had to be adapted and renovated to accommodate loved ones, sometimes at the expense of family holidays. Caring is 24/7, 52 weeks a year, with extremely limited opportunities for respite and, indeed, very limited family time. The impact that that money could have had on their families will never now be able to be measured.

What makes the deficit more difficult to accept is that it is the most vulnerable in society who have suffered. I ask that the Minister immediately put in place a programme of support for carers and those with the various adult learning disabilities that there are —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I ask the Member to draw her remarks to a close, please.

Mrs Barton: — so that the high cost financially, socially and to health is lessened forthwith.

Mr McElduff: The western learning disability action group and the parents who are associated with that group, many of them based in the Omagh area, are very familiar to me. I found the engagement with Mencap in the course of the recent election to be very compelling. As Ross said, the group of MLAs in West Tyrone subsequently agreed to meet Mencap in a regular format to discuss issues pertaining to the learning disability debate and to be properly informed to support people.

I want it noted that the RQIA identified in 2013 that there was underfunding by 5% per annum in adult learning disability services in the Western Trust area. That is the key point. It would be good to know what the RQIA has done to hold the Western Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board to account for that. If the Minister can throw any light on whether it was the responsibility of the trust or the board, that will be useful. The Health and Social Care Board should publish the review of expenditure on learning disability services across all trust areas, not least the Western Trust area.

I commend families, parents and those who care for adults and children with learning disabilities. Proper funding would enable them to have a better quality of life. I identify with what Michelle Gildernew said when she described the experience of many of the families on learning about the underfunding over a lengthy period as being like a bereavement. It appeared to me to be like that. I support Michelle Gildernew in that point that she made.

I support the call for much-improved respite services in the future for ageing carers, for adults who care for other adults and for families. Where should the money be taken from? It definitely should not be taken from domiciliary care, as was hinted at in one meeting that I attended. The key point to make is that there is a major disparity in support services across trust areas.

Parents in Omagh, Strabane and other parts of the Western Trust area look enviously across at services enjoyed by families —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I ask the Member draw his remarks to a close, please.

Mr McElduff: — in other health trust areas. I just want to add my voice to the consensus today.

Mr McCrossan: I thank my constituency colleague Ross Hussey for bringing this debate to the House. Given that we have a limited time frame for the number of people who can speak on this, I will get straight to the point. This was an unprecedented scandal. We are not getting answers. Who is responsible? Is it the health and social care trust? We cannot even get those answers in relation to this unbelievable failure in relation to the most vulnerable people in our society. How on earth are people supposed to have trust in this House if we still do not have those answers? We still do not know if it is £8 million a year or less. How are we supposed to get the answers for the people out there who are suffering day and daily if we cannot answer the most simple of those questions?

People are suffering. Michelle Gildernew is absolutely right: it was like a death. We stood in those public meetings and watched people crying and watched people's lives ripped apart, and, even yet, we cannot get the answers to the questions that we have.

This is the most important debate, in my view, that has come to the Floor of the House at this juncture, and I sincerely hope that, beyond this point, we can get the answers that are necessary. I commend the people who have brought this issue to the public domain. The families have been saying for over 20 years that something is wrong. They knew people in other trust areas who were getting better services than we were. The most disappointing thing about this is that when we ask who is responsible, we are told, "This is not a game of pointing fingers". Well, I am sorry, but someone needs to be held to account for a lost life, because that is what it is. For the many families out there, it is a lost life. Mothers and fathers have given up jobs to look after their loved ones, to look after the most vulnerable in our society and ensure that they have the most fundamental, necessary care that should have been protected by the trust.

Some of those people are in the Gallery. Frances McHugh is listening intently. I commend her, because she is one of those people who has suffered unnecessarily. We can go into the ins and outs, but we have only three minutes. My point is simple. This House, those families, our communities and the Western Trust area wants and deserves answers and must have them. No more of the tail wagging the dog. This has to be sorted out.

Mr McCartney: I commend Ross Hussey for bringing this important issue to the Assembly today. All the issues have been well and truly articulated, but there are just a number of points that I would like to make. I met the families in Derry on 18 May, and one of the things that struck me about the meeting — and there had been a public meeting in the City Hotel previous to that — was that the families had known for a long number of years about this. Despite their best efforts to break through the barriers that were surrounding it, they always knew that there was a sense of underfunding and that other services were being provided.

The other thing that struck me, despite the obvious emotion — people here have spoken about the emotion surrounding the issue — was their positivity and determination. For them, the way forward was to right the wrong that had been brought upon them, their families and the people whom they care for. It is important that we lend our weight to that positivity to ensure that we get a resolution to the problems that, undoubtedly, have been there.

Other Members have mentioned the meeting on 20 May when the trust briefed us on this. The trust accepted that there was underfunding and that the funding had been provided and given to other services. The focus should be on how that was allowed to happen. From my recollection, that was the main thrust of the conversation that morning.

4.15 pm

Speaking to members of the action group and to families, they welcomed the pledge by the trust that it wanted to resolve this in the spirit of partnership, and I think that the families and the action group have welcomed that. There are some genuine concerns that the definition of partnership may be different for the trust than for the families, and I think that we have to create the climate where that sense of partnership is true. They are already saying that, because of the way the trust is approaching this, the families do not want to be put in a position that it looks as if money is being taken from other services to close the gap in their funding. They do not want to be seen to be responsible for raising their voices to get their entitlement and for it to then look as if money has been taken from someone else. There has been a genuine request by the families and the action group that how these decisions will be made —

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): I ask the Member to draw his remarks to a close, please.

Mr McCartney: — and how the trust is resolving them should be done in true partnership.

Mr Lynch: A lot has been said to date, and I agree with all the Members, who have ventilated everything very well. How can we go forward and give hope to these families? We have all listened to them. We have been at the meetings. I say to the Minister that the trust needs to work with the families and the Department and put in place a plan to rectify this gap in funding. That is what families need.

The issue has been very badly handled by the Western Trust; there is no doubt about that. Families were rightly angry when this underspend became apparent. The families need clarity. They should not have to fight tooth and nail. I know a woman who has been looking after her 18-year-old daughter. It did not come as a shock. She has been fighting for years. These families all need our support, Minister. Sin é.

Mr McPhillips: It is great to get the opportunity to contribute to today's debate, and I thank Mr Ross Hussey for tabling it. Members have covered much of the ground, and I just want to make a few points. In May, I had one of the first opportunities to meet families in Enniskillen, and I heard at first hand of the great difficulties that they face. These families are struggling through no fault of their own. The chronic underspend has left many of them trying to cope in a carer role with no hope of assistance, and that comes at great financial cost and great cost to family life, health and well-being.

I reiterate my full support for the families. Many of them are from across my constituency, and I fully support them in their campaign for a proper service to be put back in place immediately and to have this historical underspend dealt with. Like many other Members, I fully support their calls for a proper independent inquiry.

It has become clear that many of the families affected have struggled and fought for years for proper funding, only to be told by the trust, the Department, and the Health and Social Care Board that there is nothing irregular in how resources are allocated to learning disability services. It is a sort of buck-passing exercise and about blaming someone rather than taking responsibility and being held to account for their actions. If this funding shortfall has existed for some 20 years, it is nothing short of a travesty, and the question has to be asked: how has that impacted on other services? Patients and families want answers, and they deserve answers now.

The trust has also stated that it will work with the families affected and will bring them on board, but I have to report that I had a visit to my office in Lisnaskea from one of the parents, and she advised me last week that no contact has been made to date to take them on board. Is this yet another empty promise? The SDLP also met Trevor Millar recently, who assured us that plans will be put in place to address all the very serious concerns. We wrote to Mr Millar and, on that day, we marked his card. We have written to him in the last few days looking for an update on what progress has been made.

In conclusion, I give a commitment to the families that we will continue to seek monthly updates on what is happening. I am glad that the Minister is here today, and I look forward to her response on these very important issues. The families need answers, and she is in the position to provide them.

Ms Archibald: I also commend Mr Hussey for securing the debate. I know that I will repeat some of what has been said, but I feel that it is important to put on record the concerns of my constituents in East Derry.

Like others here, I attended a public meeting organised by the Western Learning Disability Action Group in Benbradagh Resource Centre in Limavady. I also attended the Western Trust briefing on the underspend. The sentiments being expressed by families have already been articulated very well. They have been let down over many years. It is difficult to quantify. When I say "quantify", in this instance, I do not mean numerically or financially; I mean the services or support that could have been provided if the appropriate funding had been available and the difference it might have made to the lives of those living with learning disabilities and their families. At the meeting, we heard from families who had supported loved ones over many years. We heard about the lack of respite care and limited day centre services. We heard about how much of a difference these services can make to families and how many parents feel abandoned as they get older and struggle to cope with adult dependants with very little support. We also heard of their very real worries about what will happen to their loved one if they are unable to care for them. We also heard about the massive difference that real, effective support from organisations like Destined can have on the lives of those living with learning disabilities by allowing them to reach their full potential. Our citizens deserve nothing less than to have those opportunities. It is a travesty that more of those support services are not in place.

It is important that we learn from this. Families have called for an independent inquiry, and we support that call. We need to get a full understanding of the level of the underspend and how it was allowed to continue over

the considerable time that it occurred, and we need to address that underspend with a similar level of investment. We need to listen to what the advocacy groups, support groups and individuals tell us about the care and support services that are needed, and we need to work to deliver on those. We need to have different models of support — trust-delivered direct payments or whatever it is — available for individuals to access depending on their circumstances. Families need to know that support is there for them and their loved ones as they get older, and young people who are struggling to cope with learning disabilities need to have hope that they will have support into the future.

I know that we have a receptive Minister of Health who is open to listening to all those suggestions. I am confident that she will ensure that the issue is fully addressed in a way that is acceptable to those who are most affected.

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Health): From the start, like other Members, I want to recognise that I believe that the issue has been badly handled. Families and carers deserve answers, and that will certainly be my job as I look at the information in front of me. All Members have spoken passionately about the real face of the issue and the challenges for those who care for a loved one with a learning disability. It is important that we discuss the issue, and it is right and proper that it has given rise to a great deal of concern across all the political parties, families and communities in the Western Trust area.

Before I address the points made during the debate, I want to assure all the families that I share their concerns and that my priority is to ensure that their voices continue to be heard and listened to, as the trust seeks to resolve the issue. As I said in the Chamber last week in response, I think, to Ross Hussey at Question Time, it was the level of concern expressed by family members in my first week in office that prompted me to seek an urgent briefing from my officials. That confirmed that the problem concerning the funding of adult learning disability services in the Western Trust was historical, and Members have referred to that today.

I am aware that a figure of £8 million has been discussed and quoted widely in recent weeks as being the amount of underspend that the trust needs to address. Members have referred to other figures today, and it is important to state that we do not have the figure in the information that we have. I have heard some people saying that the issue may go back over 20 years, so we could be looking at an even larger figure. I want to be very clear to the families who may be listening to the debate, and I do not want to cause any more angst for people who are already extremely concerned and angered by what they have seen unfolding over a number of years. I absolutely understand why families are anxious to know the actual figures involved. That is why my focus is on ensuring that they are fully engaged in the development of the plan going forward. The Western Trust is now working urgently, with the support of the HSC Board, to robustly and accurately quantify the spending gap that has occurred. The provision of that information and clarity is important, so that we know the scale of the problem that we are dealing with.

I have also listened to Members refer to the need for real engagement with families and carers. I was disappointed to hear some of the evidence suggesting that the trust has still not learned its lesson and is still not engaging properly with families. I will make sure that I take that on board and

relay it to the trust to make sure that there is proper and real engagement.

Going forward, the plan will set out how the trust intends to address the gap. That is, obviously, something that families want to know about and be involved in. Again, that aspect of the plan must be fully communicated to the families, who, I am aware, have raised concerns about the implications of redressing any imbalance for other programmes of care. This is a group of people who feel they have been wronged by the trust, but they are concerned about the implications for other people who may need health and social care services. That is a testimony to the people that they are.

A lot of questions have been asked today around responsibilities and who does what. Whilst, ultimately, spending decisions at a local level are for trusts to make, I will closely monitor the trust's progress to ensure that it is focused on delivering solutions that take account of what families and carers say.

It will come as no surprise to the Assembly when I say that there are obvious and real budgetary constraints facing the health and social care system. They are such that it is incumbent on all parts of the system to ensure that the resources that we have are prioritised to meet the needs of our communities. That, no doubt, will be a key factor in the work that the trust is doing now, together with the board, to resolve this issue.

I have been in post for four weeks. I want to transform the health and social care system, and I want to get to a point where we adequately address the needs of people with learning disabilities and those who are more vulnerable in society. I want to see a changing picture in which we have real investment to provide real opportunities for people who have learning disabilities and provide real support for those who have caring responsibilities. That is when we will be truly judged on delivery. I want to get us to that point, and I look forward to engaging with Members on how we get there.

Going back to the issue that we are dealing with today, I hope that it is clear from my remarks that I take the issue very seriously. It is the people behind the headlines, the people with learning disabilities and their families whom we need to reassure and support going forward. That is why, as I said last week in the Chamber, I have sought an explanation from the trust of its handling of the issue to date. I am considering the trust's response. It is also why I will meet some of the families later this week. At that meeting, I look forward to hearing at first hand their views and concerns, which will, obviously, help to inform any future action I may take in relation to the issue.

In conclusion, I think that many will agree that, whilst it is absolutely right that the Chamber gives a voice to people with real issues that need to be addressed, like the Western Trust issue that we have just debated, I should put it on the record that we must not forget to recognise the good work that goes on in the health and social care system and acknowledge the staff who work tirelessly to make sure that there are proper opportunities and support for people who are more vulnerable, particularly those with learning disabilities.

Mr McCrossan: Will the Minister give way?

Mrs O'Neill: I have a very short time. I take the opportunity to thank those working across the five trusts for the high-quality care they provide, because, whilst we have identified a problem and something that needs to be seriously addressed — I recognise that — it is important that we acknowledge that there are excellent healthcare staff who work hard, day and daily, to support people who need services and support. I wanted to put that on record.

The clear message that I want to send to the families and carers is that I take this issue seriously, I am listening to your concerns, I will engage with you in person and I will give due consideration to the report from the trust. Having listened to all the comments around the Chamber today, I think that people still do not understand the problem. People still do not seem to be getting the answers that they need. Obviously, the trust is not communicating properly with people. I look forward to taking that forward, and I assure the House and those who are impacted that I will not be found wanting in my support for people with a learning disability.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone): Before we turn to the Adjournment, I realise that this is the last formal session of the Assembly in this term. I wish all Members a somewhat restful recess period, given that we have just come out of an election followed by a referendum. I am sure that people are a wee bit drawn with that. I wish everybody all the best, and I look forward to seeing everyone back in September.

Adjourned at 4.29 pm.

Written Ministerial Statement

The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.

Written Ministerial Statement

The content of this ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.

Health

All-island Congenital Heart Disease Network

Published at 3.30 pm on Monday 4 July 2016

Mrs Michelle O'Neill (The Minister of Health): This statement is to bring Members' attention to the attached Joint Ministerial Statement issued today by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Health in the South, and me, announcing new investment in the All-island Congenital Heart Disease Network to support the full development and embedding of this important service.

Draft Joint Policy Statement by the Ministers of Health, Simon Harris TD and Michelle O'Neill MLA, on the All-island Congenital Heart Disease Network

In March 2015 our respective Departments confirmed that they would establish an All-island Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Clinical Network from 1 April 2015. This followed the outcome of a public consultation in the North on the International Working Group's (IWG) recommendations published by both Departments in October 2014. The Network is comprised of an All-island Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Clinical Network Board and a Cross-Jurisdictional Oversight Group

The initial Action Plan to be implemented by the Network Board committed to a phased introduction of the Network. In this respect the Network Board has produced a Vision Statement and put forward a Full Business Case for the necessary investment, which sets out a detailed plan to deliver the implementation targets set out in the Joint Policy Statement on 14 October 2014. Having given these our full consideration, we are pleased to announce that we are fully committed to the Network Board's Vision for the All-island Congenital Heart Disease Network which is: "To establish a world class family-centric congenital heart disease service for the island of Ireland."

We recognise that the realisation of this vision requires a number of essential developments, such as the expansion of Intensive Care capacity in our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin (OLCHC) and the associated requirement for additional medical and nursing staff; the development of a Specialist Children's Cardiology Centre in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; further development of a number of regional children's cardiology centres across the island and training in CHD for all health professionals in the network, with associated opportunities to move within the network to develop competencies. To further

underpin the development of an innovative service, formal links will be established with an appropriate Academic establishment and supported by a research and innovation fund. Over the next 5 years, approximately €57 million / £42 million will be invested between our two jurisdictions to support these developments.

The Business Case endorsed by the CHD Network Board envisages completing the phased implementation of the transfer of all urgent surgical cases from the North (in addition to the Emergency cases currently being transferred) to OLCHC between now and the end of 2017 and all elective surgical cases by the end of 2018. In the interim the Belfast Trust will continue to operate a service level agreement with OLCHC to provide emergency surgical treatment in OLCHC for Northern patients.

The immediate focus of the Network Board has been to ensure that children currently transferred from the North for treatment at specialist surgical centres in England receive their treatment in future at OLCHC as soon as possible. However, the remit of the Board is to build a world class CHD service for all of the children and young people in the island who have a congenital heart condition.

We are therefore pleased to announce that the Network will, in the near future, expand the capacity for catheterisation procedures in the newly opened, state of the art Hybrid Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory at OLCHC, as a result of the investment we have announced today. This will create an All-island Catheterisation Waiting List, to the benefit of children across the island. This will be the first All-island waiting list of its kind.

Taken together, the joint investment we are announcing today to expand surgical and catheterisation capacity at OLCHC clearly demonstrates the potential of North-South collaboration on healthcare to bring tangible benefits and outcomes for patients across Ireland. The Network has also overseen good progress in terms of improving telemedicine and image exchange links between Dublin and Belfast, improving the rate of antenatal detection of congenital cardiac conditions, improving the experience of young people transitioning into adult settings for their care, upgrading equipment used to monitor babies' hearts, and expanding ambulance provision for the transfer of children between heart centres. Recognising the progress and benefits of such developments, we wish to announce that we will be tasking officials with carrying out a scoping study to identify further areas of co-operation in health and social care across the island of Ireland.

We wish to thank Dr Len O'Hagan, Chair of the Network Board, and his colleagues on the Network Board for

their dedicated efforts over the past year in carrying out the necessary detailed planning to move forward the ambitious plan for an All-island CHD Network which our predecessors confirmed in March 2015. We pay tribute to the patient representative organisations, both for their continued support of heart families across the island of Ireland, and for their significant contribution to the development of the Network. Finally, we wish to record our gratitude to the clinical, nursing and administrative staff who are dedicated to providing high quality treatment and care for CHD patients.

We close by reaffirming the commitment of our respective Departments to the provision of an optimal service, with the critical mass to provide safe high quality outcomes for congenital cardiac surgery and associated cardiology services for all children and young people in Ireland, as the goal of all of the work described above. At the centre of this is our clear aim to support and meet the needs of these vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Written Answers

This section contains the written answers to questions tabled by Members.

The content of the responses is as received at the time from the relevant Minister or representative of the Assembly Commission, and it has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process or changed.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 24 June 2016

Written Answers to Questions

The Executive Office

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will continue the practice of holding Executive meetings outside Stormont; and whether they will hold such a meeting in Omagh or Strabane.
(AQW 1/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): We intend to hold Executive meetings on a regular basis in towns and cities outside Stormont. While no specific locations have been confirmed at this stage, all options will be considered.

Mr Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Investment Fund projects for extensions to the Whitehill, Bloomfield, Kilcooley, Breezemount and Rathgill community houses in Bangor, including a timescale for the commencement of works.
(AQW 77/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Social Investment Fund's (SIF) Community Houses project, which includes extension to the Whitehill, Bloomfield, Kilcooley, Breezemount and Rathgill community houses in Bangor, has recently been approved for funding.

We are in the process of finalising a letter of offer for issue and will work closely with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to expedite delivery of the project. The timeframe for completion of the works will be subject to satisfying the necessary planning and procurement requirements.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, to list the dates when any Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation material, including any part of a report, in draft, preliminary or in any form was provided or shared with anyone from the ILiAD project team to their Department.
(AQW 123/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The ILiAD team submitted to the former OFMDFM advisory group members:

- March 2012 – initial materials identifying the seven case study areas and geo-social mapping of case study wards
- October 2012 – progress report 1
- March 2013 – progress report 2
- October 2013 - progress report 3
- March 2014 - progress report 4
- Jan 2015 – progress report 5
- August 2015 – draft research volumes
- March 2016 – draft final report to advisory group for comment
- April 2016 – draft final report to the Statistics & Research Branch for methodological review

The ILiAd team also conducted two presentations to departmental officials to update on fieldwork to date and emerging findings of each case study:

- February 2013 - lunchtime seminar detailing the plan for the project and analysis of secondary data
- February 2015 –lunchtime seminar to detailing work to date and emerging findings from case study areas

A Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series presentation was conducted in November 2014 for which the presentation slides were sent to Departmental research managers on 31 Oct 2014. The ILiAd team contributed to a workshop at the Delivering Social Change conference in June 2013 discussing the outline for the research and secondary data analysis as well as some early case study research.

An early draft of the final report was received by the Department on 14 December 2015 and is currently undergoing finalisation by the QUB research team for further consideration by the research advisory group.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, to detail (i) how many consultation meetings took place with the research advisory board; (ii) whether minutes were taken at the meetings; (iii) in what form the consultation meetings took place; (iv) the location of meetings and duration of each meeting; and (v) the attendees at each meeting.

(AQW 124/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The project's advisory group was appointed by the academic researchers in QUB. Meetings were organised and chaired by the lead researcher from QUB and five meetings took place throughout the duration of the research period. No formal minutes were taken at meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to ensure that research fieldwork maintained momentum and remained methodologically sound. Meetings were organised by QUB and held in QUB premises, usually lasting around 1-2 hours. All advisory group members were invited to each meeting.

In addition to these advisory group meetings, the research team also provided confirmation of fieldwork and progress to date to officials through written progress reports. These reports were linked to the contract's payment plan.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, who gave permission to the QUB School of Education ILiAD research team to present findings from the Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD) research to community and education stakeholders at the North West Teacher Centre in Londonderry, when the conclusions and recommendations of the ILiAD project had yet to be delivered to their Department.

(AQW 164/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: Permission was neither sought from nor given by the Department. However, during the normal course of a research contract, findings which are at a developmental stage can often be presented as draft for discussion to inform further development prior to any publication in a final form.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, when they will publish the ILiAD projects conclusions, recommendations and bibliography; and why the publication has been delayed.

(AQW 165/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: Six of the 7 stages of the research have been completed to the satisfaction of the advisory group and the research is currently in its final stage. The research team has submitted a draft report for further consideration by the research advisory group and this draft report is with statisticians for methodological assessment.

Publication has not been delayed.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, to identify and enumerate any penalties applicable to late delivery of the ILiAD project by the QUB principal investigators.

(AQW 168/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: While the research contract does provide the facility to withhold payment under certain circumstances, penalties will only arise in the event of a breach of that contract. The Department is unaware of any breach to date, therefore no penalties apply.

Mr Beattie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when monies will be released from the Social Investment Fund for the agreed project to refurbish the Corcrain and Redmonville residents groups' community building in Portadown.

(AQW 320/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The refurbishment of the Corcrain and Redmonville residents groups' community building in Portadown is part of the Sustaining the Infrastructure project which includes work to twelve other premises.

To date, funding has been released for the detailed design work and the necessary approvals are now being secured in light of increased cost estimates for the proposed refurbishment works to be carried out.

Further funding will be released once a contractor has been procured, in line with the agreed schedule of works. The timeframe for this is subject to completion of works currently being carried out to the roof, windows and doors which are not part of the Social Investment Fund project.

Mr Beattie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when monies will be released from the Social Investment Fund for the project to refurbish Corcrain Orange Hall in Portadown.

(AQW 321/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The refurbishment of the Corcrain Orange Hall is part of the Sustaining the Infrastructure project which includes work to twelve other premises.

Whilst an Integrated Consultant Team was appointed to complete the detailed design work and initial funding has been released, significant issues, including health and safety issues associated with the building, have arisen which are expected to change the scope of the proposed works and increase the cost.

Discussions are ongoing to finalise and agree the scope of the works to be taken forward and any associated procurement requirements.

Subject to this and revised business case approval, further funding will be released to complete the detailed design and proceed to contractor appointment.

Mr Mullan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the community and voluntary organisations in East Derry that received funding from their Office, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 334/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Executive Office, previously OFMDFM, funded various groups in the East Londonderry area within the past five years. Details are provided in the following table.

Year	Name of group
2015/16	Causeway Rural and Urban Network (CRUN)
2014/15	None
2013/14	CALMS
	Big Telly Theatre Company
2012/13	CALMS
2011/12	None

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail how much (i) their Department; and (ii) each of its arm's length bodies have spent on consultants since May 2011.

(AQW 384/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Executive Office (TEO) and its arm's length bodies incurred the following consultancy expenditure:

	2011-12* £	2012-13 £	2013-14 £	2014-15 £	2015-16 £	Total £
TEO	490,872	589,472	39,289	21,720	49,138	1,190,491
ALBs	1,242,132	995,118	840,470	703,267	567,804	4,348,791
Total	1,733,004	1,584,590	879,759	724,987	616,942	5,539,282

* these totals are for the financial year April 2011 to March 2012

ALB – External Consultancy Expenditure 2011 to 2016

	2011-12* £	2012-13 £	2013-14 £	2014-15 £	2015-16 £	Total £
Maze Long Kesh	-	97,333	56,791	7,379	-	161,503
NI Commissioner for Children and Young People	9,432	1,170	-	-	-	10,602
Community Relations Council	22,546	-	-	-	-	22,546
Commissioner for Victims and Survivors NI	12,360	-	11,619	5,310	3,233	32,522
NI Judicial Appointment Commissioner	12,513	10,536	6,268	7,917	9,484	46,718
Ilex	5,980	-	249,907	71,932	-	327,819
Strategic Investment Board	1,179,301	882,692	511,885	607,129	555,087	3,736,094
Victims and Survivors	-	3,387	4,000	3,600	-	10,987
Total	1,242,132	995,118	840,470	703,267	567,804	4,348,791

* these totals are for the financial year April 2011 to March 2012

TEO and its ALBs have attained a 15% and 19% respectively, year on year reduction in 2015-16.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much (i) victim and survivor funding; and (ii) other funding has been given to ex-prisoner groups since 2011.

(AQW 427/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: Our Department has not provided any victims and survivors funding directly to ex-prisoners' groups since 2011.

Since May 2011 ex-prisoners' groups have been allocated £114,831 by our Department through the Central Good Relations Fund for time-bound projects which contributes towards one or more of the T-BUC priorities and associated outcomes.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the rules which govern access by Ministers to papers held in their respective Departments and generated for, or by, their predecessors; and who oversees the implementation of any such rules.

(AQW 429/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: Ministers and Junior Ministers are expected to observe the convention that they should not normally ask to see, or be shown, documents or papers, prepared by departments for a former Executive Minister of a different political party. The relevant departmental Permanent Secretary oversees the implementation of this convention.

Mr Allen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether funding will be made available for summer diversionary related schemes in Belfast.

(AQW 436/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: It has been agreed that Belfast City Council and the Education Authority will administer a Planned Interventions Programme during 2016/17. Up to £500,000 will be available through the Programme which is funded by the Executive Office.

We anticipate that groups will be advised of the scheme in the coming weeks.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of staff employed in their Department, broken down by the section or area in which they work.

(AQW 585/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: At 1 June 2016 there were 284 staff employed in the Department: the breakdown by business area is shown below.

Business Area	Number of staff (headcount)
Office of the Head of the Civil Service	8
Office of the Legislative Counsel	17
Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments	2
Overseas Offices, International Relations and European Policy & Coordination Unit	14
North South Ministerial Council	11
Executive Information Service	11
Information Management & Civil Contingency Planning	16
Support for the Executive	30
Private Offices	24
Strategic Policy, Equality & Good Relations Directorate	2
Programme for Government, Delivering Social Change & Strategic Policy	19
Equality, Victims & Human Rights	28
Urban Villages, Racial Equality & Interface issues	15
Good Relations & TBUC	27
Infrastructure	24
Finance & Corporate Services	36
Total	284

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their Department has spent on producing material in Irish in each of the last three years.

(AQW 587/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Department has spent the following amounts on producing material in Irish in each of the last three financial years.

Year	Amount
13/14	£847.00
14/15	£2794.95
15/16	£2405.68
Total	£6047.63

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given the developments at the Executive over recent days, for an update on the report from the panel tasked with bringing forward recommendations for a strategy to end paramilitarism.

(AQW 672/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The report of the three-person panel was published on 7 June 2016. It is a comprehensive report and it will now be for the Executive to consider and take forward its recommendations. It is our intention, in line with our Fresh Start commitments to publish, by the end of June, an action plan aimed at ending paramilitarism. This will reflect the recommendations of the Panel.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the woodland cover; and annual tree planting rates, for each of the last three years.

(AQW 26/16-21)

Miss McIlveen (The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs): Forest Service's draft Woodland Register identifies 112 thousand hectares of woodland which equates to approximately 8% of land area of Northern Ireland. Over the last three years, tree planting supported through the Rural Development Programme was 268 hectares in 2013/14, 208 hectares in 2014/15 and 54 hectares in 2015/16.

The rate of woodland expansion in recent years has slowed and is insufficient to meet the long term aim of the Forestry Strategy to increase woodland cover to 12% of land area by 2050. Through support provided under the Rural Development Programme, I intend to encourage more planting so that people in Northern Ireland will have better access to woodlands for health and wellbeing, for economic development including tourism, and to deliver a better environment.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the number of cattle slaughtered after a positive reactor test for Bovine TB, in each of the last two financial years; and how many were subsequently found not to have had the disease.

(AQW 32/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: DAERA systems are set up to provide this information by calendar year, and therefore my response refers to calendar years 2014 and 2015 respectively.

The number of cattle slaughtered after a positive reactor test for Bovine TB in 2014 was 8,838 and 11,002 in 2015. In 2014, 4,492 (50.8%) were not confirmed to have TB by subsequent laboratory tests (Histopathology and Bacteriology), while in 2015 the number was 5,698 (51.8%).

Note that some animals which did not show evidence of TB at post-mortem inspection will not have had further laboratory tests.

There are several reasons why a reactor is not confirmed to have TB. The most common reasons are that lesions have not had time to develop to the stage when they can be seen with the naked eye and that the post-mortem examination, which is designed to check that meat is fit for human consumption, may not detect a small number of lesions. The specificity of the skin test (its performance in identifying TB clear animals as negative) is very high (in the region of 99.98%) and so false positive animals are rare.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, in the last twelve months, how many applications for Young Farmers support were rejected by her Department because (i) the applicant did not provide proof of their qualification; and (ii) the applicant provided proof of a qualification but it was not confirmed by the college director or college principal; and whether these reasons were either the sole reason or part of a reason for rejection.

(AQW 44/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Eleven Young Farmer applications were rejected in the last twelve months. Eight applications were rejected because the applicant did not provide proof of an eligible qualification, an ineligible qualification or their qualification after the closing date and two for other reasons. No Young Farmer applications were rejected because a qualification was not confirmed by the college director or college principal.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what is the timeline for implementation of the Conlig Village Plan; and how much has been budgeted for its completion.

(AQW 148/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Conlig Village Plan, which aims to underpin the future sustainable growth of this rural community over the next 10 – 15 years, has been developed by North Down and Ards Borough Council. My Department has had no involvement in the process to date.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what effect the Ulster Bank's sale of £15m worth of Northern Ireland based agricultural loans will have on the industry.

(AQW 174/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I understand that the Ulster Bank plan to sell Northern Ireland based agricultural loans to the value of £15million, is part of a larger portfolio in the region of £2 billion, and will impact on approximately 20 local farm businesses.

It would not be helpful to speculate what impact this may ultimately have on the affected businesses, and indeed on the industry as a whole, although the number of businesses involved is very limited. However, clearly this will be a difficult and stressful time for the individuals concerned.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how many farmers have yet to receive their Single Farm Payment for 2015; and if she will make a commitment as to when all will be received.

(AQW 222/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: 117 eligible farm businesses have yet to receive their Basic Payment for the 2015 scheme year. Officials are working hard to pay these claims as quickly as possible. In many cases, however, the claim is not paid due to factors outside my Department's control such as probate proceedings, farmers not providing bank account details and disputes between businesses. Payment can only be made in these cases when the necessary information is provided.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether an impact assessment was completed on the likely effect the proposed commercial ferry and associated works at Greencastle would have on the local Greencastle Oysters business.

(AQW 332/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: A full Environmental Impact Statement was completed by RPS Consulting on behalf of the applicant and my Department has considered this through both the planning and marine licensing processes. This indicates that there is minimal risk to the local Greencastle Oysters business, and my Department will monitor the project during its construction and operation as part of its statutory obligations.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether any consideration has been given to introducing Marine Protected Area or Marine Conservation Zone status to the lands south and south east of 10 Quarterland Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RW.

(AQW 391/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Marine Protected Area status can only be allocated to designated sites that extend below the high water mark and therefore the lands in question cannot be considered for this form of protection.

There are however Marine Protected Areas in the vicinity of Islandmagee that are both designated and proposed for designation. Larne Lough is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), RAMSAR site and Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). There is also the Gobbins and Portmuck ASSIs.

In recognition of the need to increase protection for seabirds and Harbour porpoise, my Department is currently considering responses received during the consultations on the proposals for an East Coast SPA and the North Channel Special Area of Conservation for Harbour porpoise.

As part of the Marine Conservation Zone stakeholder engagement process, my Department received nominations for Marine Conservation Zones in this area. One proposal was for a designation to the east of Islandmagee but the proposal duplicated the work that was ongoing to prepare for the East Coast SPA and North Channel SAC, and there was insufficient evidence available to support the designation of the features that were not already included in either of these proposals or the existing Portmuck and Gobbins ASSIs.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail her departmental priorities in the 2016-2021 Assembly mandate.

(AQW 404/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Departmental priorities will include:-

- Working with the industry and the Department of the Economy to implement the Executive's response to the 'Going for Growth' initiative;
- Assisting farmers by delivering on the Basic Payment Scheme as quickly and efficiently as possible;
- The promotion of fairer profits throughout the supply chain to achieve sustainable prices and address market volatility issues;
- Implementing the Rural Development Programme 2014-20 which will provide opportunities to improve the competitiveness of farm and agri-food businesses through initiatives such as the Farm Business Improvement Scheme;
- Working with stakeholders on a range of environmental issues including sustainable agriculture land use, Climate Change, Waste handling and Air Quality;
- Promoting a fair system which allows local fishermen to derive a viable living from the sea while conserving fish stocks and the marine environment; and
- Improving animal health and welfare and enhancing plant health.

This provides a broad indication of some of my initial priorities aimed at promoting a thriving and sustainable economy, environment and rural community.

In the near future I intend to publish a DAERA Strategic Plan which will provide further details of my Department's key priorities and objectives.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she has responsibility for Rathlin Island.
(AQW 485/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Executive's Rathlin Island Policy and Action Plan sets out the framework for addressing the key issues relating to Rathlin Island. Responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan rests with the Department for Infrastructure, working in partnership with other Departments, including DAERA, and the local community to develop policies which improve conditions for all residents of the Island while protecting its environment.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail all capital projects that are (i) currently being completed; and (ii) expected to be completed in the next three years in West Tyrone.

(AQW 542/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has two capital projects in the Forest Service Woodland Management Capital Grant Scheme totalling £2,500 that are due to be completed in West Tyrone in 2016-17. This scheme aims to assist and promote the sustainable management of existing woodlands.

As the Executive has not yet agreed any capital budgets beyond 2016-17, it is not possible to set out the capital projects to be completed over the 2017-18 to 2019-20 period at this stage.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the amount of money from the European Union received by farmers in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 546/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The amount of money from the European Union received by farmers in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, in each of the last five years is detailed in the table below:-

Financial Year	Total of funding €,000
2011 / 2012	62,305
2012 / 2013	64,070
2013 / 2014	66,087
2014 / 2015	66,851
2015 / 2016	43,991
Total	301,976

Mr McKee asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) the total number of recorded Bovine TB reactors in the last five years; (ii) the total number of cattle slaughtered; and (iii) the total level of compensation paid out to farmers over each year.

(AQW 577/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Data relating to financial years rather than calendar years are presented as compensation data and recorded according to financial year. Compensation data for financial year 2015-2016 are not finalised.

The number of Bovine TB reactors which were slaughtered in each of the last five financial years are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The number of recorded Bovine TB reactors slaughtered in the last five financial years.

Financial Year	No. of Bovine TB reactors slaughtered
2010/2011	6,400
2011/2012	8,505
2012/2013	10,471
2013/2014	8,024
2014/2015	9,117
Total	42,517

Table 2 shows the number of cattle slaughtered by DARD under the TB eradication programme in the last five financial years.

Table 2: The number of cattle slaughtered by DARD/DAERA under the TB eradication programme in the last five financial years.

Financial Year	No. of cattle slaughtered under the TB eradication programme
2010/2011	7,412
2011/2012	9,402
2012/2013	12,272
2013/2014	9,242
2014/2015	10,795
Total	49,123

Table 3 shows the total level of compensation paid out to farmers over each of the last five financial years.

Table 3: The total level of compensation paid out to farmers over each of the last five financial years.

Financial Year	Compensation paid to farmers
2010/2011	£8,593,038
2011/2012	£12,910,656
2012/2013	£16,157,933
2013/2014	£12,500,762
2014/2015	£14,037,743
Total	£64,200,132

Mr McKee asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an updated breakdown of the anticipated cost of the relocation of her departmental headquarters to Ballykelly.

(AQW 578/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The anticipated cost of relocating my departmental headquarters to Ballykelly is estimated to be £21.5m capital and £11.8m resource.

All costs will continue to be refined and scrutinised as we move through the various stages of the project.

Mr McKee asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) the total number of applicants to the Young Farmers' Scheme; (ii) how many of these applicants were refused; (iii) how many are still under consideration; and (iv) how many are still awaiting payment as of 1st June 2016.

(AQW 579/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The following information relates to applications for the 2015 Common Agricultural Policy scheme year. (i) The total number of applicants to the Young Farmers' Scheme was two thousand one hundred and thirty four (2134). (ii) A total of four hundred and forty eight (448) applications were rejected. (iii) All applications have been processed and none are still under consideration. (iv) Payments for ten (10) applications are currently being processed. These customers will receive their payment within ten working days.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how her Department's plans to plant more native tree species.

(AQW 619/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Forest Service encourages landowners to plant both native and non-native trees in the right place, through a mixture of grant aid, advice and regulation. The Forest Expansion Scheme's second tranche is planned to open in July 2016 and will encourage planting of woodlands of 5 hectares and greater, including new native woodland. Grant support for planting small woodlands will be offered also through the Department's Environmental Farming Scheme as a stand-alone option for native woodland less than 5 hectares. The Environmental Farming Scheme is planned to open for applications later this year.

When Forest Service and other woodland owners come to harvest mature coniferous woodland to supply industry with timber, the UK Forestry Standard requires that the forests are regenerated with a proportion of native broadleaf trees or shrubs and this will gradually increase the proportion of native tree species in these forests.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the number of Single Farm Payment applicants who were (i) turned down on an active farmer definition; (ii) how many of those turned down were successful on review; (iii) of those still refused how many have lodged an appeal; and (iv) what is the anticipated timescale for these appeals.

(AQW 625/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: European Commission Regulations require that beneficiaries of the Basic Payment Scheme must be able to demonstrate that they enjoy the decision making power, benefits and financial risks in relation to the agricultural activity on each parcel of land for which an allocation of entitlements is requested. This is known as the active farmer requirement. At present:

- (i) 1,638 applicants were assessed and found not to meet the requirement;
- (ii) 10 of those applicants have, so far, been successful upon Review of Decision;
- (iii) 855 applicants have requested a Stage 1 Review of Decision;
- (iv) My Department has reassigned staff to process the high volume of Review of Decision applications and decisions are being issued as quickly as possible.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what findings have been reported to her Department from tests of water quality in the River Faughan carried out in the weeks beginning (i) 1 Jan 2012; (ii) 1 April 2012; (iii) 1 July 2012; and (iv) 1 October 2012 and in these weeks of each year up to and including 1 April 2016.

(AQW 644/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Monitoring by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is carried out at 9 sites on the River Faughan to assess water chemistry and biological status. Chemical monitoring is carried out on a monthly or quarterly basis and biological monitoring is carried out on a seasonal basis. The results are assessed against Water Framework Directive Standards on an annual basis. The detailed results for the monitoring undertaken is attached, but does not correlate with the weeks you have requested. A copy of the results will also be placed in the Assembly Library.

The most recent annual classifications (2015) for water quality parameters are good or better for all sites.

The overall results obtained from the invertebrate biological sampling investigations and ongoing Invertebrate Surveillance monitoring in the River Faughan at Mobuoy Bridge indicate that good water quality conditions generally prevail.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what tests of water quality in the River Faughan have been carried out since the start of 2012; and whether these tests have given rise to any concern about the quality of drinking water in Derry.

(AQW 645/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Monitoring by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is carried out at 9 sites on the River Faughan to assess water chemistry and biological status. Chemical monitoring is carried out on a monthly or quarterly basis and the biology is monitored on a seasonal basis. These results are assessed against Water Framework Directive Standards on an annual basis.

The most recent annual classifications (2015) for water quality parameters are good or better for all sites. The overall results obtained from the invertebrate biological sampling investigations and ongoing Invertebrate Surveillance monitoring in the River Faughan at Mobuoy Bridge indicate that good water quality conditions generally prevail.

NI Water undertake the testing of drinking water supplies as required under the drinking water quality regulations and the outputs from this testing is required to meet strict drinking water quality standards. They are also required under the regulations to test the quality of its raw water sources based on the outcomes from its risk assessments. These regulatory processes are in place to ensure drinking water supplies remain safe. Through these regulatory processes there has been no evidence of contamination of the water supply from Carmoney Water Treatment Works (WTWs) due to water quality in the River Faughan. The risk assessment for Carmoney WTWs includes an ongoing review of potential risks to the drinking water supply and includes an assessment of the potential impacts from contamination of the River Faughan. Carmoney WTWs supplies water to Derry City and surrounding areas.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to ensure Basic Payment Scheme appeals are processed swiftly.

(AQW 676/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department has reassigned additional staff to process the high volume of Review of Decision applications received in recent months. The Review process has been streamlined although it is important to ensure that each case is assessed thoroughly. These measures have already delivered an increase in output and the position is monitored on a continual basis.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs if she intends to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment into the drilling at Woodburn Forest to assess any potential environmental impact.

(AQW 690/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department is a statutory consultee to the relevant planning authority. DAERA does not conduct EIA's as defined by the Planning (EIA) Regulations 2015.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to improve farm safety.

(AQW 696/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Health and Safety is the remit of the Health and Safety Executive NI, however, I continue to show my commitment to the safety of our farmers, families and employees through significant input to the work, in association with our partners, on the Farm Safety Partnership (FSP).

The FSP was established four years ago and in that time its actions have been successful in increasing the awareness of farm safety, however, there is no room for complacency.

The 'Stop and Think SAFE' farm safety multi media campaign, was developed by the FSP to help tackle the high rates of serious accidents and deaths on Northern Ireland's farms. It raises the issues of the four main causes of fatalities on our farms - Slurry, Animals, Falls (from height) and Equipment. My Department continues to provide funding for this ongoing, high profile and often hard hitting campaign.

FarmsafeNet, the online learning tool designed to raise awareness of Farm Safety is still available at www.farmsafenet.org. It provides a range of useful resources along with practical information, all to encourage farmers to think seriously about safety on their farm. In addition, the new 'Making it Safer' tool, which has been included in FarmsafeNet, will allow farmers to carry out a simple risk assessment that could help them manage their farm in such a way that it is safer for themselves, families and employees.

I strongly recommend that all farmers, farm family members and farm workers access these online tools.

As part of the current Rural Development Programme, the first phase of the Farm Business Improvement Scheme (FBIS) - Business Development Groups (BDG) and Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) has been launched and groups have now been formed. The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise has responsibility for the development and delivery of this knowledge transfer element of the FBIS. Farm Safety will be a mandatory element of the discussion programme and also a key area of training as part of FFKS.

The proposed capital element of the FBIS will be rolled out in the coming months, subject to DFP approval, and farm safety will be a cross cutting feature of the scheme in line with proposals within the current FSP action plan.

My Department will continue to work collaboratively with its partners on the FSP to help drive home the importance of farm safety and develop a safety-first culture on our local farms. It is however, the farmers and those living and working on our farms that must put into practice those actions that are required to minimise or eliminate the risks of serious injury or death on our farms.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to address rural crime.

(AQW 697/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Rural crime is primarily the responsibility of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), however DAERA, through its Veterinary Service Enforcement Branch (VSEB) and College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, (CAFRE), works closely with the PSNI in relation to tackling agricultural-related rural crime.

DAERA VSEB has a seat on the Rural Crime Partnership, a multi-agency body led by the Department of Justice (DOJ) which is developing strategies to counter rural crime.

DAERA VSEB works closely with the PSNI, the Garda Síochána, veterinary colleagues from DAFM in the Republic of Ireland and other agencies on cross-border agricultural-related crime.

I am very aware of the real concerns that the levels of crime are causing amongst the farming community, including the number of livestock thefts from farms.

DAERA continues to work with the Department of Justice, the PSNI and representatives of the farming community on a number of joint initiatives aimed at reducing rural crime and raising awareness of action that can be taken to help prevent rural crime, including Farm Watch, the Freeze-branding initiative and the Crimestoppers Campaign.

I would encourage farmers to participate in these initiatives and to do all they can to secure their properties. Anyone who has information which might help us combat this threat to rural businesses should report their suspicions to either my Department or the PSNI.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline any discussions she has had with the Minister for the Economy to ensure there is adequate broadband connectivity to ensure that the move to paperless farm returns is successful.

(AQW 708/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Rural broadband is one of my key priorities and I will be holding discussions with my colleague Minister Hamilton shortly to discuss how we can maximise any opportunities available to us to ensure maximum broadband coverage for farmers, rural businesses and householders. I am aware that a significant amount of work has already been done through the Next Generation broadband and NI Broadband Improvement Projects to improve broadband in rural areas, but there are still some not spots.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, following the lift on the ban on trawlers in Strangford Lough, to detail the compensation provided for those put out of business by the ban; and whether a compensation scheme was created from European Fisheries Fund or local sources, as outlined by the then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on 5 February 2013.

(AQW 759/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Following concerns about the impact of trawling and dredging on the horse Mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*) communities on the seabed of Strangford Lough, these fishing activities were prohibited in December 2003, and this prohibition remains in place. Fishermen were not put out of business by this action having the opportunity to continue trawling outside the Lough and to continue to fish within the Lough with static gear such as pots.

A further fishery prohibition was introduced in January 2013 to create a non-disturbance zone consistent with the agreed objectives of the 2012 revised *Modiolus* Restoration Plan.

Fishing in Strangford was the subject of an adjournment debate on 5 February 2013, and Minister O'Neill discussed the possibility of a compensation scheme in the event of decommissioning, however since that time my Department has been working with Strangford fishermen on a fisheries management plan for the Lough and this included consideration of financial assistance under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) to assist them to implement measures to ensure the sustainability of the fishery. To date this has resulted in a Pot Replacement Scheme funded by the EFF. Letters of Offer were issued to 10 fishermen who applied for funding in November 2015, totalling £46,116. At the closure of the scheme fishermen had submitted 6 claims amounting to £14,328, providing 420 lobster and 240 Nephrop pots. Fishery conservation measures adopted under the Fishery Management Plan in future, may also qualify for financial assistance under the new funding programme, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to strengthen the Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) 2013.

(AQW 768/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department recently published the Final Report of the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011. The Report was prepared following extensive engagement and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including animal welfare charities, animal rescue and re-homing organisations, and the public.

The Review considered the requirements for the licensing and inspection of dog breeding establishments, which are laid down in the Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2013 (the 2013 Regulations).

Several of the Report's recommendations will strengthen the legislation on dog breeding establishments, improve enforcement, and encourage good practice among dog breeders. For example, it requires the 2013 Regulations to be amended so Council Enforcement Officers will verify that written socialisation, enhancement and enrichment programmes are being effectively implemented in each establishment. This will provide reassurance that both adult dogs and pups in breeding establishments are receiving appropriate mental stimulation and physical exercise.

The 2013 Regulations will also be amended to implement the Report's recommendation that the public are given access to sufficient information about licenced dog breeding establishments to allow them to make an informed decision about the legitimacy of a business when buying a pup. This will help buyers to avoid sourcing pups from unlicensed breeders.

My Department will also review the level of the licence fee for dog breeding establishments in the 2013 Regulations to take into account the need on occasion for multiple inspections of premises.

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of current legislation to ensure that all dogs are microchipped; and to detail how her Department ensures dog owners provide up to date details.
(AQW 769/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The control of dogs here, including the requirement for dog licensing, is legislated for by the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 (the 1983 Order) as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act (NI) 2011. Councils are responsible for enforcing all aspects of the legislation, including the detailed provisions on dog licensing laid down in the Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations (NI) 2012 (the 2012 Regulations).

The above legislation introduced, from April 2012, a new dog licence condition requiring all dogs to be microchipped.

Once the microchipping requirements had become established, my Department amended the 2012 Regulations so that, from 1 January 2015, owners no longer had to attach a Council issued licence tag to their dog's collar. This was achieved through the Dogs (Licensing and Identification) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014.

At that time, my Department took the opportunity to clarify the legal requirement for the keeper of a dog to ensure that all information on the microchip database is up-to-date in relation to their dog. This means that if the information on the database changes at any time after it was recorded, the keeper must notify the operator of the database with the new information as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to do so is an offence.

Council Dog Wardens have the power to scan any dog and to check its microchip details against records held by a database operator to establish the identity of the owner. They also have powers to prosecute or issue a fixed penalty to the owner of any unlicensed dog, and to attach control conditions to dog licences where an offence under the 1983 Order has been committed. A person found guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to mitigate the pressures facing dairy farmers.
(AQW 796/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I am aware of the very challenging market conditions that dairy farmers have been facing over the past 18-24 months with the fall in milk prices. Whilst the factors contributing to the continuing low prices are outside DAERA's control, my Department will continue to do what it can to assist farmers at this difficult time and to help them cope with future market volatility.

I recognise that many dairy farmers have been experiencing cashflow difficulties in the business during this period of low returns. I have written to the local banks and financial institutions to arrange a number of meetings over the coming weeks to discuss what further measures the banks, together with my Department, can take to assist the industry.

In relation to EU Commission support, I intend to press Defra and the EU Commission on meaningful action to help address the particular issues faced by the Northern Ireland dairy sector.

My Department will continue to work to build the resilience, efficiency and competitiveness of the sector through a range of support, including education, training and research. We will also continue to make the most of measures through the new Rural Development Programme to help ensure that farmers are better equipped to meet the challenges ahead and take advantage of future market opportunities.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department has any plans to review its policy on coastal erosion.
(AQW 797/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: No department currently has overall responsibility for strategic coastal erosion risk management. My Department does, however, have a specific role as the marine licensing authority and in nature conservation protection.

It is in this role as the marine licensing authority that my Department will consider any construction/development proposals up to the high water mark. It is also legally obliged to consider enforcement action where there is non-compliance with the relevant legislation.

I have, of course, seen the devastating effects that coastal erosion can have on people's lives. So while my Department has no plans to review its enforcement policy, I can assure you that enforcement action remains a measure of last resort.

The challenge for us all is to manage the natural process of coastal erosion in a more strategic and co-ordinated way. It is the reason I established and chaired a Coastal Management Forum in my previous role as the Minister for Regional Development; to address the issues around coastal management, and, in particular, the management of coastal erosion.

My remit has, of course, changed now that I am the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - my Department's coastal management responsibilities being related to marine licensing and nature conservation protection. Nevertheless, I look forward to continuing to co-chair the Coastal Forum and to ensuring that its good work is continued.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) the number of staff transferring to Ballykelly as part of her Department's decentralisation; and (ii) the timescales for those transferring.

(AQW 798/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I am currently considering a detailed staffing plan that will set out what posts will relocate to Ballykelly and when they will relocate. The new building in Ballykelly will be ready for occupation by December 2017 and the plan will see mainly Corporate Service support services move in first. The aim is to have 250 posts in place when the building opens.

There is a balance between relocating posts from Belfast to Ballykelly and retaining the skills and knowledge to ensure business continuity, and in taking the move to Ballykelly forward I want to reflect further on the plans at this stage.

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she will publish a report on the costs, benefits and difficulties associated with the decentralisation of forestry and fisheries services in her Department.

(AQW 801/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The business cases for the relocations of the headquarters of Fisheries Division to Downpatrick and the headquarters of Forest Service to Enniskillen outlined a monitoring and review process that provides for a formal evaluation to be completed. In order to allow sufficient time for the the benefits and issues associated with relocation to emerge, these evaluations are scheduled to take place 2 years after the date of relocation. I will publish both these reports as and when they are available which should be towards the end of 2017.

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the fish kills of perch at the Public Reservoir of Seaghan Dam, Armagh, at the end of May; and what action has been taken by her Department to recover the dead perch.

(AQW 827/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) received a report of dead Perch at Seaghan Reservoir on Sunday 22nd May 2016. A Water Quality Inspector assessed the Dam and all of its tributaries, no evidence of pollution was found and only Perch species appeared to be affected.

The fact that a single fish species is involved and the seasonal timing of the incident would be consistent with post spawning stress as the cause of the fish kill. Inland Fisheries Officials are content that this is a natural post spawning stress event, anglers have confirmed that this event occurs every few years at the site affecting the same species.

Recent inspections have found no recently deceased carcasses and it appears that the incident is now over.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail all changes that have taken place to brucellosis testing arrangements, including staffing levels, following the confirmation that Northern Ireland is now a brucellosis-free region.

(AQW 858/16-21)

Miss McIlveen:

Testing arrangements

Northern Ireland was granted Officially Brucellosis Free (OBF) status on 6th October 2015. In line with Directive 64/432/EC and as a result of the absence of confirmed disease since February 2012, following consultation we reduced testing of beef herds from annually to biennially in June 2015 and abolished pre-movement testing for internal moves on 28th September 2015.

After publication of our OBF status, on 19th October 2015 we lifted the age at which animals are subject to a routine test from 12 to 24 months.

On 2nd November 2015, the frequency with which dairy herds are tested decreased to some 20% of herds each year for the next 5 years; bulk milk testing continues. Biennial testing for beef herds will continue for two years post OBF being granted and over the subsequent three years approximately a third of beef herds will be tested each year.

Staffing levels

A total of 17.7 full time equivalent Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors who were directly involved in the delivery of the Brucellosis Programme left the Department under the Voluntary Exit Scheme during 2015-2016, offering savings of £631,000 to the Department.

With the Department receiving OBF status, the resource requirements to deliver the Brucellosis Programme have significantly reduced. Over and above the 17.7 full time equivalent staff referred to above, a further 30 Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors who were key in the delivery of the Brucellosis Programme have been temporarily redeployed to assist and support other high priority work in Veterinary Service Animal Health Group and the wider Department, representing a further saving to the Brucellosis Programme of some £1.1 million.

As Brucellosis blood testing requirements on farms reduce further around 2020 it is anticipated that a further 40 posts may no longer be required at that point, although a decision has not been made on future surveillance, potentially offering a further saving of approximately £1.5 million at that time.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the proposed transfer of Cairn Wood to Forestry Service ownership.

(AQW 879/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Forest Service is considering a positive business case for the transfer of Northern Ireland Water land to my Department – but there are still some key issues to resolve. The Forest Service is clearly the best organisation to manage the trees, but it needs the Ards and North Down Borough Council (or a partner of equivalent standing) to take responsibility for managing public access.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail all savings her Department (i) has realised; and (ii) has yet to realise as a result of Northern Ireland receiving brucellosis free status.

(AQW 882/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The achievement of Officially Brucellosis Free (OBF) status in 2015 has enabled a welcome series of cost saving benefits for the Department.

We are now in a period where, according to EU law, we are required to maintain appropriate monitoring for five years. While we will continue to follow our surveillance plans, we still expect to be able to further relax testing for beef herds in 2017, achieving a further reduction in costs and further benefit to the industry.

The savings being realised by DAERA relate to Programme staffing costs, laboratory costs and consumables expenditure.

Staffing reductions and associated savings

A total of 17.7 full time equivalent Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors who were directly involved in the delivery of the Brucellosis Programme left the Department under the Voluntary Exit Scheme during 2015-2016, offering savings of £631,000 to the Department.

With the Department receiving OBF status, the resource requirements to deliver the Brucellosis Programme have significantly reduced. Over and above the 17.7 full time equivalent staff referred to above, a further 30 Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors who were key in the delivery of the Brucellosis Programme have been temporarily redeployed to assist and support other high priority work in Veterinary Service Animal Health Group and the wider Department, representing a further saving to the Brucellosis Programme of some £1.1 million.

As Brucellosis blood testing requirements on farms reduce further, around 2020, it is anticipated some further 40 posts may no longer be required at that point, although a decision has not been made on future surveillance. This would potentially offer a further £1.5 million saving at that time.

Laboratory test savings

The costs of the AFBI Brucellosis Work Programme reduced from approximately £2.5 million in 2014/15 to approximately £1.7 million in 2015/16, following the significant dismantling of the testing programme,

The AFBI Brucellosis Work Programme costs for the 2016/17 financial year, are approximately £1.6 million. Further commensurate savings will be expected at the end of the five year post-OBF stage.

Consumables savings

Prior to the attainment of OBF status, in 2014/15 the cost of field consumables (that is, blood testing kits used in the sampling programme) was approximately £300K. During 2015/16, and largely as a result of decreasing test levels, the costs dropped to approximately £220K. It is estimated that the cost of field consumables will reduce further to £160K, representing savings of £140K compared to two years previously.

In the areas described, the total savings realised from the Brucellosis Programme during 2015/16 were approximately £2.6 million. The ongoing cost of the Programme is now estimated as some £3.6m per annum.

Potential future savings should be available at the end of the five year post-OBF period, assuming that there are no new confirmed cases of Brucellosis.

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to prevent a reoccurrence of the recent fish kill at Seaghan Dam, Co Armagh.
(AQW 896/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: DAERA Inland Fisheries has confirmed that the recent fish kill at Seaghan Dam, which affected only perch, was a natural post-spawning stress event and no action can be taken to prevent such an incident reoccurring.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline what action her Department will take to help open up new market opportunities for the agri-food sector.
(AQW 908/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My officials continue to work closely with industry and government groups such as DEFRA, the United Kingdom Export Certification Partnership, the Export Certification User Group, the Meat Exporters Working Group, Invest NI and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine in order to support trade and seek new markets.

My Department will further assist in any way possible to improve marketing opportunities for the agri-food sector both within and outside the EU. International trade is a reserved matter, with DEFRA leading on negotiations with non-EU countries and I am pleased to say that they continue to conduct this work in close partnership with my officials thus ensuring a joined up and strategic approach to opening new markets for agri-food exports.

A recent example of the support my officials from the Veterinary Service Animal Health Group have been giving to the industry is through the dairy sector's new three year export programme. Officials will continue to outline to foreign visitors the guidance and oversight DAERA, along with Food Fortress and the Food Standards Agency, provides right across the dairy supply chain. This provides much assurance that our industry can continue to supply China, and other third countries, high quality, wholesome dairy products. I know that our Industry greatly value the support we have given them and will continue to give them as we work together to build further opportunities.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the value and reason for Common Agricultural Policy disallowance that her Department has either paid, made allowances to pay or has presented monitoring round bids to pay in the last three years.
(AQW 928/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The total value of payments made by my department to the European Commission in respect of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) disallowance between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2016 is £18.8 million. Total allowances charged to my department's accounts over this period for this purpose equalled £19.9 million. One approved monitoring round bid relating to CAP disallowance was presented by my department, in the 2013-2014 financial year, for £3 million. Disallowance is not paid in the CAP year to which it corresponds. Payments and allowances in any particular year will therefore not match.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how many cases of animal cruelty have been reported in the last two years.
(AQW 972/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The welfare of animals here is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011. It contains a range of offences including those relating to activities which may cause animals to suffer unnecessarily. However, it does not contain an offence specifically referred to as 'animal cruelty'.

My Department is responsible for investigating animal welfare cases in respect of farmed animals. Often, cases do not, upon investigation, reveal unnecessary suffering. However, it is important to note that all complaints are treated seriously regardless of the nature of the allegation.

The figures for farmed animals provided in Table 1 relates to the number of farm animal welfare inspections carried out in response to welfare complaints received by my Department's Veterinary Service Animal Health Group in the last two years.

Table 1 Farm animal Welfare Inspections

Year	No of Reported Inspections
14 June 2014 -13 June 2015	287
14 June 2015 - 13 June 2016	251
Total	538

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what portable (i) certified; or (ii) recognised qualification will a person hold after completing Farm Family Key Skills Health and Safety Training.
(AQW 991/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) Health and Safety Training is an awareness level half day course. The trainees will be able to use the training material provided to complete an assessment in their own time. The Health and

Safety assessment can then be submitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). If successfully completed, candidates can gain units towards a Level 3 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate or Diploma.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure that beef from the Republic of Ireland that may have been fed with Angel Dust has not entered the Northern Ireland food chain.

(AQW 1058/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department operates an extensive surveillance programme to detect residues of veterinary medicines and illegal substances in food producing animals and their products. The programme covers cattle, sheep, pigs, eggs and milk and involves testing for a wide range of substances, including illegal growth promoters such as clenbuterol, also known as angel dust. Samples are collected at abattoirs from animals for slaughter and at farms and can be random or targeted on the basis of risk. The testing programme can be escalated quickly in response to an identified risk or potential problem.

In addition to random and targeted sampling, all cattle entering abattoirs in Northern Ireland are inspected ante-mortem by Department Official Veterinarians (OVs) to check if they pose any public health or food safety risk. Where an OV suspects illegal treatment of an animal with a growth promoter, the carcass is sampled and detained until a negative result is reported. Any animals found positive are condemned, without compensation, and are not permitted to enter the food chain. A follow-up investigation is undertaken on the holding of origin and further samples taken.

My Department's Central Enforcement Team works closely with their counterparts in the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as well as the PSNI and Gardai. As such any intelligence and information concerning cross border agri-food crime, including illegal use of growth promoters, is routinely shared and where appropriate joint investigations are undertaken.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether tyres can be used as a defence for coastal erosion.

(AQW 1090/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Tyres which have reached the end of their useful life are classified as waste.

The UK is a contracting party to the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic. Annex II of OSPAR specifically prohibits the disposal of waste in the marine area.

Therefore, the use of tyres as a method of protection against coastal erosion could not be considered as a licensable activity on the coast.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she can give an assurance that the oil spill on the coast of Larne represents no threat to the health of residents along the East Antrim coast.

(AQW 1173/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My officials have been involved with the investigation of this incident since it was reported to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on Saturday 11 June.

I am unable to give an assurance regarding the health of residents along the East Antrim Coast because it is outside the remit of my Department. I can however assure you that Mid and East Antrim Council, the Food Standards Agency and the Public Health Agency have all been kept informed of the incident to allow them to assess the consequences of the incident for their areas of responsibility.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what action the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is taking to mitigate the damage from the recent oil spill at Larne.

(AQW 1210/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: As the product discharged from the Caterpillar NI factory in Larne was diesel and it was released into the sea there is very little that can practically be done to clean it up as it spreads so quickly. Once released the behaviour of this light oil is influenced by the wind and tide and at this stage it would be expected that at least 50% of the product will have evaporated (hence the strong smell associated with such spills) and the rest will be broken down by natural dispersion and biodegradation. The biggest risk to the environment is through certain toxic chemicals dissolving in the water column but even this should be limited in the marine environment because of the massive dilution and strong tidal movements.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline under what legislative authority it was appropriate to conduct a retrospective Habitats Regulations Assessment for the exploratory drilling at Woodburn Forest after development consent had already been granted.

(AQW 1415/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: There has been no retrospective Habitats Regulations Assessment carried out for the exploratory drilling at Woodburn Forest. NIEA had assessed the proposal prior to consent being issued and determined a HRA was not required.

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she plans to introduce a Climate Change Bill.

(AQO 74/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Legislation to help address climate change is already in place in the form of the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The Act sets an ambitious long term target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% over 1990 levels by 2050 across the UK.

Northern Ireland is making good progress on reducing its emissions. The latest Greenhouse Gas Inventory, published last week, shows a reduction of 17.4% from 1990 levels. Updated projections, published in December 2015, show that we are broadly on track to achieving the Programme for Government target set by the previous Executive of a 35% reduction by 2025.

I will keep the need for local legislation and other measures which might help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions under review. But our continued progress, without a NI Climate Change Act, shows our commitment to tackling one of the most serious global challenges that we face.

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how her Department can work with the Department for the Economy to deliver the Going for Growth strategy.

(AQO 65/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I recognise that the Northern Ireland agri-food sector is one of the most strategically important sectors to our local economy and will be a key driver in securing economic growth going forward.

Delivering on the actions contained in the NI Executive Response to the Agri-Food Strategy Board's Going for Growth is a key priority for both DAERA and the Department for the Economy. It is my intention to work closely with the Economy Minister to drive forward the effective implementation of actions to support the NI agri-food industry.

We will be taking every opportunity to work together on our key priorities to deliver growth for the sector, such as through the support our Departments provide to agri-food companies, in looking for new export markets and in progressing the development of the agri-food marketing body. We see opportunities in all of these areas for more joined-up working between our respective Departments.

My officials will work closely with their counterparts in the Department for the Economy as well as Invest NI in delivering the agreed actions arising from Going for Growth and we intend to publish a further Progress Report by the end of March 2017 to outline the key achievements over the year.

I look forward to working with the Agri-Food Strategy Board as we progress the implementation of Going for Growth. I intend, jointly with the Economy Minister, to meet with the Board in the coming weeks, so that we can outline our expectations to the Board for the remainder of their term.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, given the upcoming review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, what plans she has to liaise with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to highlight the role the Groceries Code Adjudicator should be given on the issue of pricing for farmers' produce.

(AQO 66/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I am aware of the concerns about the differential between supermarket prices and the price that farmers receive for their produce. I am also aware about the concerns about differences in the price being paid to producers in Northern Ireland compared to in Great Britain in relation to pigs and beef.

It is important that all along the supply chain get a fair return for their work, including farmers.

I intend to build constructive working relationships with my Ministerial counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales to look at actions to encourage sustainable growth along the agri-food supply chain and help farmers cope with market volatility.

I understand that the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) plans a formal review this year of the operation and role of the Groceries Code Adjudicator. I will wish to engage with BIS, which is the UK Department with policy responsibility in relation to the Groceries Code Adjudicator before the review is completed. I have asked my officials to engage in this review at as early a stage as possible.

Mr Carroll asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the assessment her Department has made of the impact of the drilling at Woodburn Forest on the drinking water quality of those homes and businesses supplied by Woodburn Reservoir.

(AQO 67/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: As you are aware on the 16 June, Infrastrata released a press statement in which they advised of the cessation of exploratory drilling at the site without encountering oil. The company will now work with its local contractors to professionally restore the site.

However I can assure members that there are stringent regulations in place to protect the quality of our drinking water. These regulations require Northern Ireland Water to regularly monitor drinking water quality at consumer taps, and to immediately report to my officials within the Drinking Water Inspectorate where drinking water fails to meet public health standards. There is a further measure within the regulations requiring NI Water to undertake a risk assessment of its drinking water sources, water treatment works, and onward distribution of water to consumers taps. The risk assessment is required to be kept under review and the outputs from this process are also reported to the Drinking Water Inspectorate. These measures are in place to ensure the ongoing provision of safe, clean drinking water. Based on the outputs from both these regulatory processes, it

is my assessment that the drilling which took place at Woodburn Forest did not have an impact on those consumers receiving water from Woodburn Reservoir.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the investment planned to ensure local country parks and beaches are safe and attractive places for visitors and tourists.

(AQO 68/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Most beaches and several country parks are under local authority management. My Department is responsible for managing seven Country Parks, some 50 nature reserves and stretches of the Lagan Towpath and North Down Coastal Path. The County Parks, which receive around 1.8 million visits per year, are accessible to pedestrians at all times and are managed to provide the public with safe countryside recreation facilities. Most nature reserves are also accessible to the visiting public.

DAERA properties include: the two beaches at Crawfordsburn Country Park - Helen's Bay beach and Crawfordsburn beach, which was recently awarded both the Blue Flag and Seaside Awards; two short stretches of nature reserve beach between Magilligan Point and Benone; and two stretches of beach at Killard National Nature Reserve. My Department also owns Ballyhornan beach, which is managed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

An initial allocation of over £440,000 for 2016/17 has been made to invest in the management of these properties. This will facilitate routine maintenance of paths and other infrastructure, site patrolling, litter collection and grass cutting to provide safe and attractive destinations for all visitors. In addition to the small team of permanent staff, 17 seasonal workers are being engaged to assist with the additional visitor demand over the summer months. In the event of unplanned events, such as large gatherings causing excessive littering, staff respond as quickly as possible to ensure any disruption to Park facilities and standards are addressed effectively.

Capital investment projects at DAERA country parks include the replacement of footbridges, upgrading and creation of paths, improvements to toilets and provision of additional signage.

I can assure you that the local staff who manage the Department's properties take great pride in them and will continue to manage them to the best of their abilities. However park staff also require the co-operation of visitors over disposal of their rubbish. Unfortunately far too many fail to use the bins provided or, better still, take their rubbish home.

Given that littering is a much wider problem, not confined to DAERA properties, my Department provides funding towards the Eco-schools Project which all schools in Northern Ireland have joined. This will contribute to greater environmental awareness in the rising generation. DAERA also funds Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful who also help to address the problem of littering at other beaches and beauty spots.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the broadband voucher scheme.

(AQO 69/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Rural Broadband Vouchers Scheme has issued broadband vouchers to rural businesses which had previously applied to the BDUK Broadband Voucher Scheme, but had missed out due to lack of funding. It is delivered on the ground by Belfast City Council on the Departments behalf.

To date, 121 vouchers worth £369,000 have been issued to rural businesses under this scheme and I am pleased to confirm that 10 businesses in the Causeway Coast and Glens council area have benefitted. My officials continue to work with their Belfast City Council counterparts to implement the scheme on the ground for my Department.

I am strongly committed to improving access to Rural broadband as I believe it can act as an economic driver for rural areas to develop and expand businesses. The new Rural Development Programme has a rural broadband fund available to Local Action Groups. This can be used to tackle the 'harder to get at' areas that still do not have access to broadband. Local Action Groups have indicated through their Local Rural Development Strategies, that they plan to invest £1.8m to improve broadband access in rural areas.

Going forward, I will work with my party colleague Simon Hamilton, Minister for the Economy, to ensure that the appropriate resources are made available to tackle the remaining rural broadband not spots and areas with poor line speeds.

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how she plans to represent both the agricultural and environmental sectors.

(AQO 70/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Bringing together agriculture and environmental responsibilities under the same Departmental umbrella creates a unique opportunity to maximise positive environmental outcomes whilst supporting the agri-food sector.

A clean, healthy environment is good for Northern Ireland business as it can add value to local produce and increases the competitiveness of Northern Ireland businesses in the marketplace.

My Department will work with businesses that look for innovative ways to develop their business which also protect and improve the environment and we will strengthen and extend existing networks across the Department to facilitate this.

The new Department is well placed to explore solutions to the challenges and take forward opportunities, to optimise the needs of both agriculture and the environment. For example, the Going for Growth report recommended the development of a land management strategy which outlines how best to support productive agriculture while improving environmental performance. This is being developed by an expert working group, , and the Department will give careful consideration to this.

Another key component is the development of a new Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS), which will be delivered under the Rural Development Programme. The primary objectives of EFS are to protect and enhance biodiversity and water quality through changes in agricultural and land management practices.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency regulates emissions to air land and water and will enforce legislative requirements to ensure environmental protection, including prosecution where appropriate. However, the Agency seeks to prevent pollution or other problems arising, by providing guidance and advice to all those we regulate.

We are exploring a new Environmental Advisory function within the new Department to help industry, and farmers, to deliver profitably and sustainably.

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the Rural Development Programme.

(AQO 71/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Rural Development Programme is continuing to be rolled out in a phased and co-ordinated way.

Under the RDP competitiveness objective, the roll-out of the knowledge transfer element of the Farm Business Improvement Scheme began in November last year. Over 2950 farmers have now joined Business Development Groups and attended their first meeting. The second knowledge transfer element, Farm Family Key Skills, opened in March this year.

Under the RDP environment objective, three forestry schemes opened last November and applications for over 300 hectares of new woodland for planting this winter have been received. Payments for the 2016 Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme commenced in March and the target of making payments, worth £17.9m, to 95% of eligible businesses was achieved.

Under the rural development objective all local rural development strategies have now been assessed and all Local Action Groups (LAGs) have signed and returned their legal contracts to implement their strategy. All LAGs have held funding workshops for potential applicants under the Rural Business Investment Scheme and 7 LAGs have invited applicants to apply to the scheme.

A Rural Network has been established to engage with all those interested in rural development and to roll out publicity of the schemes.

My officials are continuing to work to obtain the necessary business case approval and complete scheme design, to enable the rollout of further RDP schemes, including FBIS capital, the Agri-Food Processing Scheme, Rural Tourism and the Environmental Farming Scheme.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the Challenge Fund.

(AQO 72/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Over £4.6 million of Carrier Bag Levy revenue has been issued through the Challenge Fund since its inception in 2011 and almost 600 environmental projects have been completed across the breadth of Northern Ireland.

The programme enabled schools and communities, at a grass roots level, to become engaged in the enhancement of our shared environment through the delivery of local environmental projects. These have included a diverse range of projects that have helped wildlife, created green spaces, provided learning experiences and cleaned up the local environment.

The Fund was administered by Northern Ireland Environment Link during its first four years of operation with the Department of the Environment providing overall governance. The Department administered the Fund during the 2015/16 financial year.

The Fund has been run annually and the majority of the previous Funds were launched in September or October of the financial year. This provided a short focused timeframe for project delivery to be completed within the financial year. I note that the the former Department of the Environment did not launch a 2016/17 Fund prior to the formation of my Department.

I therefore intend to review the estimated 2016/17 carrier bag levy income against existing commitments, the outcome of the June Monitoring round and wider departmental budgetary pressures and priorities to assess the feasibility of launching a 2016/17 Challenge Fund this year.

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the community asset transfer of Colin Glen Forest Park.

(AQO 73/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I acknowledge that when the Northern Ireland Environment Agency was part of the Department of the Environment, Minister Durkan had been briefed on the issues associated with the community asset transfer of the lands currently managed by Colin Glen Trust which include Colin Glen Forest park itself and Colin Park off Black's Road. However I will want to review the details associated with this transfer before making any final decisions. Approval will also need to be

obtained from the Department of Finance for the business case and I can confirm that my officials are currently liaising with that Department in regard to the financial implications of the possible transfer.

Department for Communities

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Communities what steps he will take to promote and protect the Irish language sector; and whether he will seek to introduce an Irish Language Act.

(AQW 163/16-21)

Mr Givan (The Minister for Communities): My Department meets all its obligations towards Irish under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Support for Irish includes joint funding of the North/South Language Body. The Department funds the Gaeltacht Quarter Action Plan and the Liofa campaign, and work is ongoing to set up an Irish Language Academy and an Ulster-Scots Institute.

I have no plans to introduce an Irish Language Act.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Communities to detail the community and voluntary organisations in East Derry that received funding from his Department, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 236/16-21)

Mr Givan: Detail of the community and voluntary organisations in East Londonderry that received funding from the Department, in each of the last five years, is provided in the attached Annex A and Annex B.

Annex A

Community and Voluntary groups in East Derry funded by the Department (Financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16)

2011/2012

Arts & creativity Branch

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Articlave Community Development Group | ■ Moneydig Rural Network Group |
| ■ Building Ballysally Together | ■ Portballintrae Residents Association |
| ■ Castlerock Community Association | ■ Portstewart Community Association |
| ■ Coleraine Festival Committee | ■ Roe Valley Folk Club |
| ■ Greysteel Community Association | ■ Stendhal Festival Ltd |
| ■ Limavady Jazz & Blues Committee | ■ Ulster Fleadh |
| ■ Millburn Community Association | |

Arts Council

- Big Telly Theatre Co

Foras na Gaeilge

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh | ■ naiscoil léim an mhadaidh |
| ■ Glór Dhún Geimhin | |

Northern Ireland Museum Council

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| ■ Coleraine Museum | ■ Green Lane Museum |
|--------------------|---------------------|

NWDO

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Glens Community Association | ■ Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC) |
| ■ Limavady community Development Initiative | |

RDO Northern

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ■ Building Ballysally Together | ■ Millburn Community Playgroup (formerly Brookvale Community Playgroup) |
| ■ Causeway Enterprise Agency | ■ Threshold |
| ■ Focus on Family | ■ West Bann Development |

Sport NI

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ■ Coleraine FC | ■ Portrush Hockey Club |
| ■ Greysteel Community Enterprises | ■ Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd |
| ■ JOHN MITCHEL'S GLENULLIN GAC | |

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Aghanloo Flute Band
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Articlave Flute Band
- Ballinrees Pipe Band
- Ballinteer Flute Band
- Ballyquin Flute Band
- Ballysally Culture, Heritage & Development Group
- Ballywillan Flute Band
- Benwarden Flute Band
- Blackhill Accordion Band
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Coleraine Ulster-Scots Regeneration Group

VCD

- Age Concern Causeway
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Ballykelly Community and Youth Association
- Benedy Community Association
- Bovalley Community Association
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Castlerock Community Association
- Castlerock Senior Citizens Wednesday Club
- Causeway Rural & Urban Network
- Causeway Volunteer Centre
- Coleraine Disability Forum
- Crafts With Love
- Dromboughil Community Association
- Drumsurn Community Association
- Dungiven Retirement Club
- Feeny Community Association
- Foreglen Community Association

- Drumaheagles Young Defenders
- Dungiven Flute Band
- Edenmore Flute Band
- Garvagh Pipe Band
- Glenkeen Fife and Drum
- Kilrea & District Ulster Scots Society
- Kilrea Pipe Band
- Macosquin First Flute Band
- Star of the Bann, Castleroe
- Star of the Roe Flute Band
- Trench Memorial Flute Band

- Glens Community Association
- Gortnaghey Community Association
- Greysteel Community Association
- Harvest Moon
- Home-Start Causeway
- Killowen Community Association
- Limavady community Development Initiative
- Limavady Senior Citizens
- Macosquin Village Community Association
- Meeting Point Luncheon Club
- Movenis Area Community Association
- North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin
- Portstewart Vision
- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)
- Windyhall 50 Club

2012/2013**Arts & creativity Branch**

- Limavady Jazz & Blues Committee
- Roe Valley Folk Club
- Stendhal Festival Ltd

- Ulster Fleadh
- University of Ulster Foundation

Arts Council

- Aghanloo Flute Band
- Ballyquin Flute Band
- Big Telly Theatre Co

- Craigbane Accordion Band
- Limavady Drama Club/Foreglen Drama Group

Coleraine Council

- Ardreagh Road Churches in Celebration
- Castlerock Community Association
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Focus on Family
- Glenullin & Agivey Conservation & Development Group
- Killowen Community Association

- Macosquin Village Community Association
- Millburn Community Association
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- Portballintrae Residents Association
- Portstewart Community Association
- Windyhall Community Association

Foras na Gaeilge

- Destined Ltd
- Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh
- naíscoil léim an mhadaidh

Moyle Council

- Bushmills & District Community Association

Northern Ireland Museum Council

- Coleraine Museum
- Green Lane Museum

NWDO

- Glens Community Association
- Limavady community Development Initiative
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)

RDO Northern

- Building Ballysally Together
- Causeway Enterprise Agency
- Focus on Family
- West Bann Development

Sport NI

- JOHN MITCHEL'S GLENULLIN GAC
- Segway Express
- Xplore Outdoors

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Aghanloo Flute Band
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Articlave Flute Band
- Ballinrees Pipe Band
- Ballinteer Flute Band
- Ballyquin Flute Band
- Ballysally Culture, Heritage & Development Group
- Ballywillan Flute Band
- Benvardan Flute Band
- Blackhill Accordion Band
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Coleraine Ulster-Scots Regeneration Group
- Drumaheagles Young Defenders
- Dungiven Flute Band
- Edenmore Flute Band
- Freeman Flute Band
- Garvagh Pipe Band
- Glenkeen Fife and Drum
- Kildoag Pipe Band
- Kilrea & District Ulster Scots Society
- Kilrea Pipe Band
- Macosquin First Flute Band
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- North West Historical & Cultural Society
- Royal Scottish County Dance Society
- Star of the Bann, Castleroe
- Star of the Roe Flute Band
- Trench Memorial Flute Band
- Ulster Protestant Boys Flute Band
- Windyhall Cultural, Community & Sports Action Group

VCD

- Age Concern Causeway
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Asian Over 50 Club
- Ballykelly Community and Youth Association
- Benedy Community Association
- Bovalley Community Association
- Boveedy Community Assoc
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Castlerock Community Association
- Causeway Rural & Urban Network
- Causeway Volunteer Centre
- Crafts With Love
- Creative Holistic Art as Therapy
- Dromboughil Community Association
- Drumsurn Community Association
- Dungiven Retirement Club
- Eagle Glen Community Partnership
- Feeny Community Association
- Glens Community Association
- Glenshane Care Association Ltd
- Hearts of Gold 50+ Club
- Home-Start Causeway
- Killowen Community Association
- Kilrea Ageing Well Club
- Limavady Senior Citizens
- Meeting Point Luncheon Club
- North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin
- Portstewart Community Association
- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)
- Windyhall 50 Club
- Windyhall Community Association
- Windyhall Youth Club

2013/2014**Arts Council**

- Articlave Flute Band
- Ballyrashane Flute Band

- Bellarena Accordion Band
- Big Telly Theatre Co

Ballymoney Council

- Ballymoney Royal Black Preceptory

Coleraine Council

- Building Ballysally Together
- Castlerock Community Association
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Garvagh & District Development Association
- Garvagh District Cultural Society
- Glenkeen Fife and Drum
- Lower Bann Riverfest Ltd

Foras na Gaeilge

- Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh
- Glór Dhún Geimhin

Languages & Waterways Ireland

- Hands That Talk

Limavady Community Development Initiative

- 2nd Chance - Ashes to Gold
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland
- Ballykelly Boxers
- BALLYSPALLEN CRICKET CLUB
- Benedy Community Association
- Bovalley Community Association
- Building Ballysally Together
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Castlerock Community Association
- Causeway Christian Services
- Coleraine FC Academy
- Crafts With Love
- Dromboughil Community Association
- Drumsurn Community Association
- DUNGIVEN CELTIC YOUTH FC
- Dungiven Retirement Club
- Eagle Glen Community Partnership
- Ethnic Minorities Empowerment Association
- Glenshane Care Association Ltd
- Gortnaghey Youth Club
- Home-Start Causeway

Limavady Council

- Greysteel Community Association
- Limavady Jazz & Blues Committee

Moyle Council

- Bushmills & District Community Association

North West Office

- Stendhal Festival Ltd

NWDO

- Glens Community Association

RDO Northern

- Blackhill Accordion Band

- Macosquin Village Community Association
- Millburn Community Association
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- Portballintrae Residents Association
- Portstewart Community Association
- Windyhall Community Association

- naIscoil Léim an mhadaidh

- KEVIN LYNCH HURLING CLUB
- Killowen Community Association
- Limavady Senior Citizens
- Limavady Wolfhounds GAC
- Loughview Community Development
- Meeting Point Luncheon Club
- Millburn Community Association
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- New Beginnings
- North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin
- NORTHWEST COUNSELLING
- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd
- Roe Valley Arts Heritage Committee
- Roe Valley Folk Club
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)
- Stendhal Festival Ltd
- Winding Roe Magazine
- Windyhall 50 Club
- Windyhall Community Association
- Windyhall Youth Club

- Roe Valley Folk Club
- Stendhal Festival Ltd

- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)

- Building Ballysally Together
- Causeway Enterprise Agency
- Focus on Family

Sport NI

- Alive Surf School
- Bann Rowing Club

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Articlave Flute Band
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Edenmore Flute Band
- Freeman Flute Band
- Garvagh District Cultural Society
- Garvagh Pipe Band
- Glenkeen Fife and Drum

- Oasis Caring in Action
- West Bann Development

- Sandelford Special School (Coleraine)

- Kildoag Pipe Band
- Kilrea Pipe Band
- Macosquin First Flute Band
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- North West Historical & Cultural Society
- Trench Memorial Flute Band
- Ulster Protestant Boys Flute Band
- Windyhall Cultural, Community & Sports Action Group

VCD

- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Benedy Community Association
- Bovalley Community Association
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Causeway Rural & Urban Network
- Causeway Volunteer Centre
- Drumsurn Community Association
- Dungiven Retirement Club

- Feeny Community Association
- Glens Community Association
- Greysteel Community Association
- Limavady Senior Citizens
- Naíscoil Neachtain
- North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)

2014/2015**Arts Council**

- Big Telly Theatre Co

Coleraine Council

- Articlave Armed Forces Day Support Group
- Articlave Community Development Group
- Big Telly Theatre Co
- Building Ballysally Together
- Causeway Association of Urban Sports
- Coleraine Festival Committee

- Macosquin Village Community Association
- Millburn Community Association
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- Portballintrae Residents Association
- Portstewart Community Association
- Windyhall Community Association

Co-operation Ireland

- Causeway Rural & Urban Network

Disability Employment Service

- Hands That Talk

- North Coast Community Transport

Foras na Gaeilge

- Craobh Ghleann an Iolair
- Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh

- naíscoil léim an mhadaidh

Limavady Community Development Initiative

- 1st Faughanvale Girl Guiding Unit
- Aghanloo Flute Band
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Ballinrees Pipe Band
- Ballykelly Boxers
- BALLYSPALLEN CRICKET CLUB
- Benedy Community Association

- Bovalley Community Association
- Building Ballysally Together
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Castlerock Community Association
- Causeway Befrienders
- City Of Derry Young Farmers Club
- Coleraine FC

- Coleraine Historical Society
- Coolessan Community Organisation
- Crafts With Love
- Creative Holistic Art as Therapy
- Dromboughil Community Association
- Drumsurn Community Association
- DUNGIVEN CELTIC YOUTH FC
- Dungiven Retirement Club
- Eglinton Womens Institute
- Feeny Community Association
- Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh
- Gelvin Community Association Ltd
- Glenshane Care Association Ltd
- Glenshane Community Development Ltd
- Gortnaghey Community Association
- Greysteel Community Association
- Home-Start Causeway
- KEVIN LYNCH HURLING CLUB
- Killowen Community Association

Limavady Council

- Limavady Jazz & Blues Committee
- Roe Valley Folk Club

North West Office

- Limavady Jazz & Blues Committee

NWDO

- Glens Community Association
- Limavady Wolfhounds GAC

RDO Northern

- Building Ballysally Together
- Causeway Enterprise Agency
- Focus on Family

Sport NI

- BALLYSPALLEN CRICKET CLUB
- Greysteel Community Enterprises

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Freeman Flute Band

VCD

- Causeway Rural & Urban Network

2015/2016

Arts Council

- Big Telly Theatre Co

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

- Big Telly Theatre Co
- Building Ballysally Together
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Glack Community Association
- Glenmanus Residents Association

- Limavady Wolfhounds GAC
- Macosquin Senior Citizens Club
- Magilligan Community Association
- Meeting Point Luncheon Club
- Moneydig Rural Network Group
- North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin
- NORTHWEST COUNSELLING
- Portstewart Community Association
- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd
- Roe Angling Limited
- Roe Valley Folk Club
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)
- St Canice's GFC
- Stendhal Festival Ltd
- Windyhall 50 Club
- Windyhall Community Association
- Windyhall Youth Club

- Stendhal Festival Ltd

- Stendhal Festival Ltd

- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)

- Oasis Caring in Action
- West Bann Development

- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd

- Glenkeen Fife and Drum
- Macosquin First Flute Band
- Windyhall Cultural, Community & Sports Action Group

- Causeway Volunteer Centre

- Greysteel Community Association
- Juniper Hill Caravan Occupiers' Association
- Killowen Community Association
- Millburn Community Association
- Moneydig Rural Network Group

- Portballintrae Residents Association
- Portstewart Community Association
- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd

Disability Employment Service

- Hands That Talk

Foras na Gaeilge

- Craobh Ghleann an Iolair
- Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh

Limavady Community Development Initiative

- 1st Faughanvale Girl Guiding Unit
- Aghanloo Flute Band
- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland
- Ballinrees Pipe Band
- Ballykelly Boxers
- Ballykelly Community and Youth Association
- BALLYSPALLEN CRICKET CLUB
- Beautiful Minds
- Bee Heard
- Benedy Community Association
- Bovalley Community Association
- Building Ballysally Together
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Castlerock Community Association
- Causeway Volunteer Centre
- City Of Derry Young Farmers Club
- Coleraine Historical Society
- Coleraine Ulster-Scots Regeneration Group
- Coolestan Community Organisation
- Crafts With Love
- Derramore Presbyterian Church PW (Womens Group)
- Dromboughil Community Association
- Drumsurn Community Association
- DUNGIVEN CELTIC YOUTH FC
- Dungiven Retirement Club
- Eglinton Womens Institute
- Feeny Community Association
- Foreglen Community Association

North West Office

- Limavady community Development Initiative

Northern Ireland Museum Council

- Coleraine Museum

NWDO

- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)

RDO Northern

- Building Ballysally Together
- Cross Glebe Community Association
- Focus on Family

- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)
- Somerset Residents Association
- Windyhall Community Association

- North Coast Community Transport

- Glór Dhún Geimhin
- naíscoil léim an mhadaidh

- Gelvin Community Association Ltd
- Glenshane Care Association Ltd
- Glenshane Community Development Ltd
- Gortnaghey Community Association
- Greysteel Community Association
- Home-Start Causeway
- Killowen Community Association
- Limavady Recreation Club
- Limavady Senior Citizens
- Little Rascals Community Playgroup
- Macosquin Senior Citizens Club
- Magilligan Community Association
- Magilligan Community Playgroup
- Meeting Point Luncheon Club
- Millburn Community Association
- Newtowne Football Club
- North West Junior Zone Bowlers
- North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin
- Roe Angling Limited
- Roe Valley Artists and Musicians Collective
- Roe Valley Folk Club
- Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)
- St Joseph St Marys Banagher Conference of St Vincent de Paul
- Stendhal Festival Ltd
- Synergy Ireland Ltd
- The Harry Gregg Foundation
- Windyhall 50 Club
- Windyhall Community Association
- Windyhall Youth Club

- Stendhal Festival Ltd

- The Dry Arch Centre For Families
- The Glens Community Development Association

- Oasis Caring in Action
- West Bann Development

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society
- Ballinteer Flute Band
- Ballynarrig Pride of Orange Flute Band
- Ballyquin Flute Band
- Coleraine Festival Committee
- Glenkeen Fife and Drum
- Macosquin First Flute Band

VCD

- Causeway Rural & Urban Network
- Causeway Volunteer Centre
- The Harry Gregg Foundation

Annex B

Community and Voluntary groups in East Derry funded by the NIHE (Financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16)

East Derry	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Abbeyfield UK (NI) Ltd	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Alpha Housing	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Apex Housing Association	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Benbradagh Community Support			Y		
Board of Social Witness	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bovalley Community Centre					Y
Building Ballysally Together			Y	Y	Y
Causeway Rural and Urban				Y	
Causeway Womens Aid	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Choice Housing Ireland Ltd	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Clanmil HA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Coleraine Street Pastors				Y	Y
Coolessan Community Association					Y
Cross Glebe Community Association			Y	Y	Y
Drumturn Community Association					Y
First Housing Aid & Support Services (FHASS)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fold HA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Glens Community Association The					Y
Greysteel Community Association			Y		Y
Harpers Hill Bonfire Committee		Y			
Killowen Community Association				Y	Y
King Of Castles				Y	
Macosquin Village Community Forum				Y	
Millburn Community Association			Y	Y	Y
Praxis Care Group	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)			Y	Y	Y
Simon Community	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Somerset Residents Association				Y	
Threshold	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Windyhall Cultural, Community & Sports Action Group				Y	Y

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Communities to detail the community and voluntary organisations in Fermanagh and South Tyrone that received funding from his Department, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 265/16-21)

Mr Givan: Detail of the community and voluntary organisations in Fermanagh and South Tyrone that received funding from the Department, in each of the last five years, is provided at the attached Annexes A and B.

Annex A

Community and Voluntary groups in Fermanagh and South Tyrone funded by the Department (Funding years 2011/12 to 2015/16)

2011/2012

Arts & creativity Branch

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ An Mhaigh GFC | ■ Feis Lios Na Sceithe (Lisnaskea Feis) |
| ■ Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum | ■ FIVEMILETOWN UNITED FC |
| ■ Augher St Macartan's GFC | ■ Irvinestown Lady of the Lake Festival |
| ■ Aughnacloy & District Cultural Development Association | ■ Island Wheelers Cycle Club |
| ■ Aughnacloy Race Committee | ■ Kesh Community Carnival Company |
| ■ Ballinamallard Development Association | ■ Killeeshill Community Centre |
| ■ Ballygawley Community Initiative Group | ■ Killyman District Cultural Group |
| ■ Ballysaggart (Black Lough) Environmental Group | ■ Killynure, Alveston & Doon Community Association |
| ■ Belleek Chamber of Commerce | ■ Leo's Boys & Girls Tug of War Club |
| ■ Boho Community Association | ■ Lisnaskea Community and Tourism Group |
| ■ Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band | ■ Lisnaskea District LOL No 4 |
| ■ Caledon Vintage Rally Club | ■ Loughans Cultural & Development Association |
| ■ Carricklongfield Cultural Group | ■ Lurgan & District Horse and Cattle Show Society |
| ■ Castlecaulfield Horticultural Society | ■ MacNean Community Partnership |
| ■ Clogher Development Association | ■ Moygashel Community & Cultural Association |
| ■ Clogher Valley Agricultural Society | ■ Mummerys Foundation |
| ■ Clogher Valley Outdoor Bowling Federation | ■ Naomh Treasa Camogie Club |
| ■ Clonmore Regeneration Group | ■ Newtownbutler St Patrick's Day Parade |
| ■ County Fermanagh Grand Orange Lodge Social & Charitable Committee | ■ Project St Patrick |
| ■ Cunninghams Lane Residents Association | ■ Rainbow Daycare (Eglish) Ltd |
| ■ Derrygannon Crafts & Heritage Society | ■ Richmond Parent Support Group |
| ■ Derrygortreavy Vintage Club | ■ Shannean Set Dancing Club |
| ■ Donagh Development Association | ■ Share Discovery Village |
| ■ DRFC Mini Rugby Support Group | ■ South Armagh Community Safety Support Group |
| ■ Dungannon Thomas Clarkes GFC | ■ South East Fermanagh Foundation |
| ■ Dungannon Youth For Christ (MORPH) | ■ St Malachy's GAC |
| ■ Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Club | ■ St Patrick's Parent Support Group |
| ■ Erne Music Club Belleek CCE | ■ Stewartstown Sports and Cultural Initiative |
| | ■ The Molly & Mia Foundation |
| | ■ Tiny Stars Playgroup |
| | ■ Tyrone Towers Basket Ball Club |

Arts Council

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| ■ Creative Collaborations | ■ Fuel Ltd |
|---------------------------|------------|

BCCRD

- Delorean Owners Association (Ireland)

BRO South & East Team

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Foras na Gaeilge

- Comhairle Dún Geanainn

Games Legacy Unit

- Youth Sport Trust

Northern Ireland Museum Council

- Fermanagh County Museum

- The Inniskillings Museum

RDO Western

- Devenish Partnership Forum
- Dungannon Youth Resource Centre

- Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd
- First Steps Womens Group

Sport NI

- 1st Aughnacloy Scouts
- Aughintober Regeneration
- Derrylin Boxing Club
- DUNGANNON GOLF CLUB
- Dungannon Thomas Clarkes GFC
- Dungannon United Youth
- EGLISH ST PATRICKS GAC
- ERNE PADDLERS
- Fermanagh Lakers Basketball Club
- Malone Womens Rugby Football Club

- Mayobridge Community Association
- Naíscoil Aodha Rua
- NI Equestrian Sports Committee
- North Fermanagh Cricket & Football Club
- Northern Ireland Small Bore Shooting Union
- Omagh District Rifle and Pistol Club
- Parent Teacher Association Aughnacloy Primary School
- St Endas GAC
- The Sports Centre Management Group
- Triathlon Ireland

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Aughintober Pipe Band
- Bawn Junior Silver Band
- Benburb Memorial Pipe Band
- Blair Memorial Flute Band
- Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band
- Cooneen Pipe Band
- Curlough Accordion Band
- Edentiloan and District Ulster-Scots Association
- Edentilone Pipe Band
- Enniskillen Fusiliers Flute Band
- Erne Highland Dancers
- Fardross Heritage and Vision Society
- Glassmullagh Accordion Band

- Killadeas Pipe Band
- Lack Pipe Band
- Magheraboy Flute Band
- Maguiresbridge Pipe Band
- Maguiresbridge Scottish & Country Dancing Group
- Moybrone Pipe Band
- Mullaghy Flute Band
- North Fermanagh Young Defenders
- South East Fermanagh Foundation
- Tievmore Pipe Band
- Trillick Pipe Band
- W J Armstrong Memorial Pipe Band
- William Kerr Memorial Pipe Band

VCD

- Boho Womens Group
- Cancer Choices
- Carers Group Clogher Valley
- Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association
- Community and Voluntary Services
- CRUSE Bereavement Care (Armagh/Dungannon)
- Drumgallon Area Community Association
- Eglis Cross Community Group
- Fermanagh Voluntary Association Of The Disabled
- Fermanagh Voluntary Support Group
- First Steps Womens Group

- Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon
- Irvinestown Cross Community Playgroup
- Little Castle Playgroup
- Newtownbutler Playgroup
- Omagh District Special Olympics Club.
- Shopmobility Enniskillen
- South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
- Teemore Womens Group
- The Fermanagh Trust
- The Molly & Mia Foundation
- Trendsetters Irvinestown
- Women In Agriculture

2012/2013**Arts & creativity Branch**

- 1st Tyrone Scout Group
- ADOPT (Association for the Development of Pettigo & Tullyhommon)
- Annahoe Historical Society
- Aughnacloy Race Committee
- Aughnacloy Truagh Historical Society

- Aughnacloy Women's Institute
- Ballinamallard Development Association
- Ballygawley Community Initiative Group
- Ballynakelly CPLC
- Belleek Chamber of Commerce
- Boho Community Association

- Borderline Players
 - Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band
 - Bush Primary School PTA
 - Caledon Parish Youth Fellowship
 - Caledon Vintage Rally Club
 - Carricklongfield Cultural Group
 - Castlecaulfield Horticultural Society
 - Clogher Cathedral Parish (COI)
 - Clogher Eire Og GFC
 - Cornagague Primary School Reunion Committee
 - County Fermanagh Grand Orange Lodge Social & Charitable Committee
 - Crilly Cultural Group
 - Cunninghams Lane Residents Association
 - Derrygannon Community Association
 - Derrygannon Crafts & Heritage Society
 - Derrygortreavy Vintage Club
 - Donagh Development Association
 - Dungannon Ladies Hockey Club
 - Dungannon Thomas Clarkes GFC
 - Eglis Presbyterian Women
 - EGLISH ST PATRICKS GAC
 - Enniskillen Business Partnership
 - Enniskillen District Orange Lodge
 - Fairmount Park Tennents Association
 - Feis Dhún Geanainn
 - Feis Lios Na Sceithe (Lisnaskea Feis)
 - Fivemiletown District Cultural & Sports Association
 - FIVEMILETOWN UNITED FC
 - Irvinestown Lady of the Lake Festival
 - Island Wheelers Cycle Club
 - Killeeshil & Clonaneese Historical Society
 - Killeeshill Community Centre
 - Killyman District Cultural Group
 - Killymerron Community and Cultural Group
 - Killynure, Alveston & Doon Community Association
 - Leo's Boys & Girls Tug of War Club
 - Lisnaskea Community and Tourism Group
 - Lisnaskea Lambeg Drumming Club
 - Lurgan & District Horse and Cattle Show Society
 - Maguiresbridge Village and Rural Development Association
 - Milltown Area Community Association
 - Moygashel Community & Cultural Association
 - Mummers Foundation
 - Naomh Treasa Camogie Club
 - National Trust Florence Court
 - Parents & Friends of Dungannon Primary School
 - Pettigo District Orange Lodge NO 10
 - Priory Stage
 - Project St Patrick
 - Rainbow Daycare (Eglis) Ltd
 - Ren-Bu-Kan Judo Club
 - Rhone Valley Community Group
 - Richmond Parent Support Group
 - Roan St Patrick's Primary School Parent Support Group
 - RUC GC Assoc East Tyrone Branch
 - Servite Trust NI
 - Simpson Grant Association
 - South East Fermanagh Foundation
 - South lough Neagh Historical Society
 - St McCartans GFC
 - Stewartstown Sports and Cultural Initiative
 - The Molly & Mia Foundation
 - The Noble Thespians
 - The Sports Centre Management Group
 - Tyrone Towers Basket Ball Club
- Arts Council**
- Aughintober Pipe Band
 - Curlough Accordion Band
 - Derryclavin Pipe Band
 - Loughkillygreen Accordion Band
 - North Fermanagh Young Defenders
 - South Fermanagh Loyalists Flute Band
- BRO South & East Team**
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Foras na Gaeilge**
- Bunscoil an Traonaigh
 - Campa Chormaic Co. Thír Eoghain
 - Comhairle Dún Geanainn
 - Grathaine na Cnoc
- Games Legacy Unit**
- Youth Sport Trust
- Northern Ireland Museum Council**
- Fermanagh County Museum
- RDO Western**
- Devenish Partnership Forum
 - Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd
 - Milltown Super Adults
 - South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
- The Ulster Scots Agency**
- Ballindarragh Accordion Band
 - Benburb Memorial Pipe Band

- Blair Memorial Flute Band
- Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band
- Cavancarragh Pipe Band
- Crilly Pipe Band
- Curlough Accordion Band
- Dungannon Volunteer Flute Band
- Dyan Pipe Band
- Edentiloan and District Ulster-Scots Association
- Edentilone Pipe Band
- Enniskillen Fusiliers Flute Band
- Erne Highland Dancers
- Fardross Pipe Band
- Fermanagh Ulster Scots Empowerment (FUSE)
- Fivemiletown District Cultural & Sports Association
- Glassmullagh Accordion Band

VCD

- 4th Fermanagh Scouts
- Boho Womens Group
- Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association
- Community and Voluntary Services
- CRUSE Bereavement Care (Armagh/Dungannon)
- Derryhirk Rural Development Association
- Derrylin Boxing Club
- Donagh Development Association
- EDGE
- Fermanagh Voluntary Association Of The Disabled

2013/2014

Arts Council

- Blair Memorial Flute Band
- Church Hill Silver Band
- Crilly Pipe Band
- Dungannon Silver Band

Foras na Gaeilge

- Bunscoil an Traonaigh
- Campa Chormaic Co. Thír Eoghain
- Comhaltas Uladh

Limavady Community Development Initiative

- 1st Tyrone Scout Group
- 4th Fermanagh Scouts
- Belcoo Community Playgroup
- Boho Womens Group
- Caledon Playgroup
- Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association
- Castlecaulfield Horticultural Society
- CRUSE Bereavement Care (Armagh/Dungannon)
- Donaghmore Historical Society
- ERRIGAL BOWLING CLUB
- Fermanagh Womens Network

Northern Ireland Museum Council

- Fermanagh County Museum

- Killadeas Pipe Band
- Lack Pipe Band
- Lisnaskea Silver Band
- Magheraboy Flute Band
- Maguiresbridge Pipe Band
- Maguiresbridge Scottish & Country Dancing Group
- Moybrone Pipe Band
- Mullaghy Flute Band
- North Fermanagh Young Defenders
- South East Fermanagh Foundation
- South Fermanagh Loyalists Flute Band
- Tievemore Pipe Band
- Trillick Pipe Band
- W J Armstrong Memorial Pipe Band

- First Steps Womens Group
- Fountain Youth Centre
- Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon
- Irvinestown Community Partnership
- Naíscoil an Traonaigh
- Newtownbutler Playgroup
- Shopmobility Enniskillen
- South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
- The Fermanagh Trust
- Trendsetters Irvinestown

- Lack Pipe Band
- Letterbreen Silver Band
- Sliabh Beagh Development Association

- Gaelscoil Aodha Rua
- Grathaine na Cnoc

- Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon
- Lisnaskea Emmetts GAC
- Loughview Partnership Association
- Naíscoil an Traonaigh
- Rascals Playstation Day Care Centre
- Riverdale Football Club
- Shopmobility Enniskillen
- St Molaise GAC Irvinestown
- The Molly & Mia Foundation
- Trendsetters Irvinestown
- Tullysaran Community Association

- The Inniskillings Museum

NWDO

- CAW Community Playgroup

- Creggan Enterprises Ltd

RDO Western

- Devenish Partnership Forum
- Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd

- Milltown Super Adults
- South Tyrone Empowerment Programme

Sport NI

- Dungannon United Youth
- Share Discovery Village
- St Euenes College (Roslea)

- St Joseph's GAC (Ederney)
- Triathlon Ireland

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Aughintober Pipe Band
- Ballindarragh Accordion Band
- Blair Memorial Flute Band
- Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band
- Cavancarragh Pipe Band
- Crilly Pipe Band
- Curlough Accordion Band
- Dungannon Volunteer Flute Band
- Dyan Pipe Band
- Erne Highland Dancers
- Fardross Pipe Band

- Fermanagh Ulster Scots Empowerment (FUSE)
- Lack Pipe Band
- Lisnaskea Silver Band
- Magheraboy Flute Band
- Maguiresbridge Scottish & Country Dancing Group
- Moybrone Pipe Band
- Mullaghy Flute Band
- South East Fermanagh Foundation
- South Fermanagh Loyalists Flute Band
- Tievmore Pipe Band
- Trillick Pipe Band

VCD

- Dungannon Youth Resource Centre
- EDGE
- First Steps Womens Group
- Irvinestown Lady of the Lake Festival

- South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
- Speedwell Trust
- The Fermanagh Trust

2014/2015**Foras na Gaeilge**

- Bunscoil an Traonaigh
- Campa Chormaic Co. Thír Eoghain
- Comhaltas Uladh

- Gaelscoil Aodha Rua
- Knocks Grattans Hurling Club
- Seal Spraoi Dún Geanainn

Limavady Community Development Initiative

- 1st Inniskilling Scouts
- 4th Fermanagh Scouts
- Acorn Womens Group
- Aodh Ruadh Dun Geanainn Ladies GAC
- Aughintober Regeneration
- Ballinamallard United Football Club
- Boho Womens Group
- Cancer Connect
- Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association
- Clogher Eire Og GFC
- Community and Voluntary Services
- Crilly Cultural Group
- CRUSE Bereavement Care (Armagh/Dungannon)
- Dawn Womens Group
- Derrygannon Community Association
- Derrygannon Crafts & Heritage Soceity
- Derrylin O'Connells GAC
- Donagh Development Association

- Donagh Wee Folk Playgroup
- Donaghmore Historical Society
- Dungannon Thomas Clarkes GFC
- Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre
- Enniskillen Athletic Football Club
- Fermanagh Rose of Tralee
- Fermanagh Stroke Support Group
- Fermanagh Voluntary Association Of The Disabled
- Fermanagh Womens Network
- First Fermanagh GAA
- Fivemiletown District Cultural & Sports Association
- Girlguiding Tyrone
- Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon
- Knocks Community Association
- Lisbellaw United FC
- Moygashel Community & Cultural Association
- Naíscoil an Traonaigh
- Newtownbutler Playgroup
- Rascals Playstation Day Care Centre

- Shopmobility Enniskillen
- The Molly & Mia Foundation

RDO Western

- Devenish Partnership Forum

Sport NI

- Aodh Ruadh Dun Geanainn Ladies GAC

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Aughintober Pipe Band
- Ballindarragh Accordion Band
- Benburb Memorial Pipe Band
- Brackey Flute Band
- Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band
- Brookeborough Flute Band
- Curlough Accordion Band

VCD

- First Steps Womens Group
- South Tyrone Empowerment Programme

- Trendsetters Irvinestown
- Upper Lough Erne Tourism Development Association

- Milltown Super Adults

- Triathlon Ireland

- Erne Highland Dancers
- Lisnaskea Silver Band
- Magheraboy Flute Band
- Moygashel Community & Cultural Association
- South East Fermanagh Foundation
- Trillick Pipe Band
- William Kerr Memorial Pipe Band

- The Fermanagh Trust

2015/2016**Arts & creativity Branch**

- SOUTH WEST COLLEGE

Foras na Gaeilge

- Campa Chormaic Co. Thír Eoghain

Limavady Community Development Initiative

- 4th Fermanagh Scouts
- Acorn Womens Group
- Belnaleck Art McMurrough's GFC
- Benburb District Community Association
- Boho Womens Group
- Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association
- Clogher Eire Og GFC
- Coonian/Cooneen Community Assoc
- CRUSE Bereavement Care (Armagh/Dungannon)
- Dawn Womens Group
- Derrygannon Community Association
- Derrylin O'Connells GAC

Northern Ireland Museum Council

- Fermanagh County Museum
- National Trust Florence Court

NWDO

- CAW Community Playgroup

RDO Banbridge

- Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Club
- Fivemiletown District Cultural & Sports Association

RDO Western

- Devenish Partnership Forum

Sport NI

- Triathlon Ireland

- Seal Spraoi Dún Geanainn

- Donagh Development Association
- Fermanagh Rose of Tralee
- Hanging Rockers Climbing Club
- Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon
- Home-Start Clogher Valley
- Knocks Community Association
- Little Castle Playgroup
- Naíscoil an Traonaigh
- Rascals Playstation Day Care Centre
- Shopmobility Enniskillen
- St McCartans Ladies GFC
- Trendsetters Irvinestown

- The Inniskillings Museum

- Maguiresbridge Pitch Development & Management Committee

- Milltown Super Adults

The Ulster Scots Agency

- Benburb Memorial Pipe Band
- Brackey Flute Band
- Brookeborough District Orange Lodge & Flute Band
- Brookeborough Flute Band
- Curlough Accordion Band
- Erne Highland Dancers
- Magheraboy Flute Band
- South East Fermanagh Foundation
- Trillick Pipe Band
- William Kerr Memorial Pipe Band

VCD

- First Steps Womens Group
- South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
- The Fermanagh Trust

Annex B
**Community and Voluntary groups in Fermanagh and South Tyrone funded by the NIHE
(Funding years 2011/12 to 2015/16)**

Fermanagh & South Tyrone	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Action for Children					
APEX					
Ballynakelly Residents Association					Y
Belfast Central Mission	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Carrosyl Community Association			Y		
Carrowshee/ Sylvan Hill					Y
Cavanaleck Community Association					Y
Charlemont & Collegeland Comm Dev Assoc					Y
Clanmill Housing	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Depaul Northern Ireland	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Devenish Partnership Forum					Y
Dungannon & District Housing Association Ltd	Y				
Dungannon Youth Resource Centre		Y			
Eastvale/Kilcoole Community Association				Y	
FACT	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fermanagh Housing Community Network					Y
Fermanagh Womens Aid	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fermanagh Writers					Y
First Housing Aid & Support Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fivemiletown Estates Group		Y			
Fold Housing Association	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
First Moy Boys Brigade					Y
Galbally Youth & Community Association			Y		
Hillview Kilmaccormick 2					Y
Irvinestown Trust Enterprise Company			Y		
Killymerron Community Association				Y	
Leonard Cheshire	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Moy Area Community & Dev Assoc				Y	
Moy Parents & Toddlers Group					Y
N I A M H	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Oaklee Care & Support Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Fermanagh & South Tyrone	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Parkview Community Group					Y
Positive Futures For People	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Praxis Care Group	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
South Tyrone Empowerment Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Triangle					
Tullysaran Community Association			Y		
West End Partnership					Y

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Communities how many social houses his Department or its agencies plan to build in North Antrim over the next five years; and the location of each build.

(AQW 354/16-21)

Mr Givan: There are currently 205 social housing units under construction in the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency. The detail of these schemes is included in Appendix 1.

The Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) is currently formulated on a 3-year basis, so it is not possible to provide plans for new social housing for 2019/20 or 2020/21 at this stage. There are currently 365 social housing units programmed to start on-site in the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency as part of the SHDP 2016/17 to 2018/19 (176 units in 2016/17, 121 units in 2017/18 and 68 units in 2018/19). The detail of these schemes is included in Appendix 2. Please note that 58 of the units programmed to start in 2016/17 are classified as Supported Housing.

Programmed schemes can be lost or slip to future programme years for a variety of reasons e.g. relating to delays in acquiring sites and/or failure to secure planning permission. Additional schemes can be added to the SHDP as part of the annual programme formulation process (housing association bidding round) or through the purchase of existing satisfactory/off-the-shelf properties on an in-year basis.

Appendix 1: Social housing schemes recorded as starts but not completed (under construction) in the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency at 6th June 2016

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Strategic Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Ark	Templemoyle (Transfer)	Kells	New Build	General Needs	Rural	3	2015/16	2017/18
Ark	Templemoyle (Transfer)	Kells	New Build	Physical Disabilities	Rural	1	2015/16	2017/18
Ark	Templemoyle (Transfer)	Kells	New Build	Active Elderly	Rural	5	2015/16	2017/18
Choice	61 Market Road	Ballymena	New Build	General Needs	Urban	28	2015/16	2017/18
Choice	61 Market Road	Ballymena	New Build	Active Elderly	Urban	6	2015/16	2017/18
Choice	61 Market Road	Ballymena	New Build	Physical Disabilities	Urban	2	2015/16	2017/18
Choice	Carniny Court	Ballymena	Re-improvement	Vulnerable Women	Supported	20	2015/16	2017/18
Choice	Carniny Court	Ballymena	New Build	Vulnerable Women	Supported	3	2015/16	2017/18
Fold	19-21 Pottinger Street	Cullybackey	New Build	General Needs	Rural	15	2015/16	2017/18
Fold	19-21 Pottinger Street	Cullybackey	New Build	Active Elderly	Rural	6	2015/16	2017/18

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Strategic Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Fold	19-21 Pottinger Street	Cullybackey	New Build	Physical Disabilities	Rural	3	2015/16	2017/18
Fold	Leyland Heights	Ballycastle	New Build	General Needs	Urban	28	2015/16	2017/18
Fold	Leyland Heights	Ballycastle	New Build	Physical Disabilities	Urban	2	2015/16	2017/18
Fold	18 Royal Court	Gracehill	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Urban	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	131 Tobar Park	Cullybackey	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Rural	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	9 Trinity Mews	Ahoghill	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Rural	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	15 The Mews	Ballycastle	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Urban	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	46 Leyland Meadows	Ballycastle	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Urban	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	22 Gault Park	Ballymoney	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Urban	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	11 Edenmore Crescent	Bendooragh	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Rural	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	35 Edenmore Crescent	Bendooragh	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Rural	1	2015/16	2016/17
Triangle	5 Millicent Avenue	Balnamore	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Rural	1	2015/16	2016/17
Choice	St Mary's PS, Larne Road	Ballymena	New Build	General Needs	Urban	65	2016/17	2018/19
Choice	St Mary's PS, Larne Road	Ballymena	New Build	Active Elderly	Urban	9	2016/17	2018/19

Appendix 2: Social housing schemes programmed to start in the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency as part of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) 2016/17 – 2018/19 at 6th June 2016

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Strategic Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Apex Housing	Frail Elderly, Rathmoyle	Ballycastle	New Build	Elderly - Housing with Care	Supported	28	2016/17	2017/18
Ark	Burnside Park (Transfer)	Balnamore	New Build	General Needs	Rural	3	2016/17	2017/18
Clanmil	PSNI, Charlotte Street	Ballymoney	Rehabilitation	Active Elderly	Urban	8	2016/17	2017/18

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Strategic Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Clanmil	Station Road (Transfer)	Dunloy	New Build	General Needs	Rural	10	2016/17	2017/18
Fold	Ballymena Showgrounds Social Club	Ballymena	New Build	General Needs	Urban	18	2016/17	2017/18
Fold	Ballymena Showgrounds Social Club	Ballymena	New Build	Mental Health	Urban	2	2016/17	2017/18
Fold	19-21 Royal Court	Gracehill	New Build	General Needs	Urban	20	2016/17	2018/19
Habinteg	Straid Road	Ahoghill	New Build	Active Elderly	Rural	9	2016/17	2017/18
Helm Housing	Castle Street	Ballymena	New Build	General Needs	Urban	19	2016/17	2018/19
Helm Housing	21 Charles Street	Ballymoney	New Build	General Needs	Urban	7	2016/17	2018/19
Triangle	2A Garryduff Road (CAT 1)	Ballymoney	Re-improvement	Active Elderly	Urban	10	2016/17	2018/19
Triangle	Martinstown	Martinstown	Off-the-Shelf	General Needs	Rural	5	2016/17	2016/17
Triangle	Mill House Reprovision, Trostan Avenue	Ballymena	New Build	Single Homeless	Supported	21	2016/17	2017/18
Triangle	PSNI Site Broughshane	Broughshane	New Build	Active Elderly	Rural	7	2016/17	2017/18
Triangle	2A Garryduff Road	Ballymoney	Re-improvement	Learning Disabilities	Supported	9	2016/17	2017/18
Apex Housing	Garvaghy Avenue, Phase 2	Portglenone	New Build	General Needs	Rural	10	2017/18	2018/19
Choice	Ballymoney Road	Ballymena	New Build	Active Elderly	Urban	8	2017/18	2018/19
Choice	27 - 29 Church Street	Ahoghill	New Build	General Needs	Rural	13	2017/18	2018/19
Choice	Waveney Road	Ballymena	New Build	General Needs	Urban	14	2017/18	2018/19
Clanmil	125-127 Larne Road	Ballymena	New Build	General Needs	Urban	31	2017/18	2019/20
Rural	Cullybackey / Ahoghill	Cullybackey	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Rural	5	2017/18	2018/19
Triangle	Kilnadore Road	Ballycastle	New Build	General Needs	Urban	14	2017/18	2018/19
Triangle	Main Street	Broughshane	New Build	Active Elderly	Rural	20	2017/18	2018/19
Triangle	New Street	Armoy	New Build	General Needs	Rural	6	2017/18	2018/19
Fold	Leyland Road Phase 2	Ballycastle	New Build	General Needs	Urban	20	2018/19	2019/20

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Strategic Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Helm Housing	23-27 Main Street	Ballymoney	New Build	General Needs	Urban	20	2018/19	2019/20
South Ulster	Ballymena ESPs	Ballymena	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	Urban	10	2018/19	2019/20
South Ulster	Raceview Road	Cullybackey	New Build	General Needs	Rural	18	2018/19	2019/20

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities to detail all capital projects that are (i) currently being completed; and (ii) expected to be completed in the next three years in West Tyrone.

(AQW 539/16-21)

Mr Givan: Please find below a table outlining the Departments capital projects currently being completed and expected to be completed within the next three years in West Tyrone.

Project and Location	2015/16 Current	2016/17 expected to be completed	2017/18 expected to be completed	2018/19 expected to be completed
Omagh – replacement of the Benefit Appeals IT processing system.	Commenced Dec 15			To be introduced 2018

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) the number of employed staff in each of the eleven council areas; (ii) the equivalent number prior to local government reform; and (iii) council payments in respect of staff costs for the years ended 31st March 2015 and 31st March 2016.

(AQW 554/16-21)

Mr Givan: The number of employed staff and associated salary costs as supplied by each of the 11 councils as of 31 March 2016 and the equivalent number for 31 March 2015 (when there were 26 District Councils and 11 Councils operating in shadow mode) are detailed in the attached table. Please note the 2015/16 figures are unaudited, currently in draft form and are subject to review and change as they are not due to be finalised by councils until 30 June 2016. Comparisons between the two years are also complicated by various boundary changes and the transfer of Central Government Planners and NIEA Minerals Unit staff to councils.

Council	No of employees 2014/15	No of employees 2015/16	Staff Costs 2014/15 £	Staff Costs 2015/16 £
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council	1,021	1,001	21,176,489	22,906,002
Ards & North Down Borough Council	737	728	22,666,210	23,526,631
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council	1,448	1,328	36,025,435	38,833,452
Belfast City Council	2,321	2,444	87,050,818	86,639,559
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council	750	751	26,205,392	27,494,562
Derry City & Strabane District Council	881	942	30,434,674	31,171,758
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	645	675	19,515,772	21,922,788
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council	1,062	828	27,948,954	27,071,080
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council	699	756	21,927,506	22,411,632
Mid Ulster District Council	923	979	20,771,730	21,496,746
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council	898	954	27,625,195	29,487,396
TOTAL	11,385	11,386	341,348,175	352,961,606

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Communities what support has been put in place for victims of rape that have a third child as a result of the crime claiming Tax Credits or Work Allowance.

(AQW 571/16-21)

Mr Givan: Under the Fresh Start Agreement a Welfare Reform and Work (Northern Ireland) Order 2016 will be taken forward at Westminster which will contain provision that the child element of Universal Credit will no longer be awarded for third and subsequent children born after 6 April 2017. However the Government has recognised that there needs to be exemptions for women who have a third child born as a result of rape or other exceptional circumstances.

Similar provision has already been made in the Welfare Reform and Work Act (GB) 2016.

Work is ongoing to ensure that women who have a third child born as a result of rape will receive the help they need at the time they need it. Details of how the exemption will be applied in cases where a woman has a third child born as a result of rape or other exceptional circumstances will be detailed in the Welfare Reform and Work (Northern Ireland) Order 2016 regulations.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Communities how many new claimants of Work Allowances under Universal Credit (i) are expected to receive support from the “top-up” arrangements under the Fresh Start Agreement; and (ii) have children.
(AQW 573/16-21)

Mr Givan: In some cases, Universal Credit claimants may be eligible for a Work Allowance (or earnings disregard) which is the amount of net earnings a household can have before their Universal Credit award is affected (reduced).

Once Universal Credit has been fully implemented in Northern Ireland, it is estimated that 89,000 households may be eligible for a Work Allowance. Within the 89,000 households, there are an estimated 74,000 households with children.

Following the Fresh Start Agreement, the Executive asked Professor Evason to lead a Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group and to provide the Executive with a set of recommendations on how best to use the available funding detailed in the Fresh Start Agreement to mitigate the worst aspects of Welfare Reform. The Executive accepted her report in full and my Department is currently implementing those recommendations in full.

The Working Group recommended a range of mitigations. To date, all the individual pieces of analysis in respect of the mitigations have been independent of Universal Credit and were not linked to any Universal Credit analysis. Hence, it is not currently possible to provide estimates for the projected number of Universal Credit claimants who may be in receipt of a Work Allowance and may also receive support from the “top-up” arrangements under the Fresh Start Agreement.

The Working Group also recommended that families and others, depending on the resources available, claiming Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit should be entitled to supplementary payments in recognition of the expenses that those in employment incur, with a special weighting for lone parents, taking account of the cost of childcare. These payments are to be known as ‘Cost of Working Allowance’. As officials are currently developing the detail of this scheme, it is not yet possible to estimate the number of households which may receive support from this scheme.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) how many families are expected to be affected by the cuts to Work Allowances under Universal Credit; and (ii) how much each household is expected to lose under the cuts, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 574/16-21)

Mr Givan:

- (i) It is estimated that 97,000 households will see a change in their Universal Credit award due to changes in the Work Allowances. Within this group of 97,000 households there are an estimated 82,000 households with children.
- (ii) The average change in Universal Credit award (comparing the original Universal Credit award with the Universal Credit award with the new Work Allowances) is a reduction of £18.41 per week.

It should be noted that all figures presented are at steady state which is when the Universal Credit has been fully implemented. In reality it will take a number of years for all cases to move over to Universal Credit.

It is not possible to provide a breakdown of these figures by constituency.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Communities for a breakdown of the allocation from the “top-up” arrangements in the Fresh Start Agreement for claimants affected by the new sanctions regime.

(AQW 575/16-21)

Mr Givan: The member will be aware that the Executive asked Professor Evason to lead a Working Group and to provide the Executive with a set of recommendations on how best to use the available funding detailed in the Fresh Start Agreement to mitigate the worst aspects of Welfare Reform. The Executive accepted her report in full and my Department is currently implementing those recommendations in full.

One of the recommendations in the report was the provision of independent advice services to be put in place to help and support people through the welfare changes, including those who may be impacted by the new sanctions regime. My Department are currently finalising arrangements with the advice organisations to have those additional services in place by August 2016.

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Communities what action is being taken to reduce the waiting list for social housing in Newtownabbey and Antrim.

(AQW 614/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has projected a 5 year housing need (2015- 20) of approximately 800 units for the Antrim and Newtownabbey area. 153 units were completed in 2015/16 and there are currently 180 new build units on site with a further 489 units on the current 3 year Social Housing Development Programme (including 290 for 2016/17).

The Housing Executive will be welcoming bids from Housing Associations over the coming months which have the potential to further increase this gross programme. In addition, the Housing Executive will be working closely with Antrim and Newtownabbey Council on the proposed local development plan. It is hoped additional sites will be identified as suitable for social housing which will fulfil the need for new build over a longer term.

Schemes on the programme are detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Schemes on site at 31st March 2016

Scheme	No of units	Client group	Housing association	Policy theme
Felden Surplus Site, Phase 2	55	General Needs	Clanmil	Urban Need
Deerfin Park/Derrycoole Way Phase 1	12	General Needs	Helm	Urban Need
Deerfin Park/Derrycoole Way Phase 2	18	General Needs	Helm	Urban Need
Iniscarn Way, Rathcoole	6	General Needs	Apex	Urban Need
Loughmoney Park, Rathcoole	8	General Needs	Apex	Urban Need
Derrycoole Park, Rathcoole	25	General Needs	Apex	Urban Need
Northern Trust Mental Health Resettlement, Abbots Road, Rathcoole	24	Mental Health	Choice	Supported
Newtownabbey ESPs	11	General Needs	Connswater	Urban Need
Chaine Court, Antrim	14	General Needs	Fold	Urban Need
Roguary Road, Toomebridge	7	General Needs	Clanmil	Rural Need
Total	180			

Appendix 2: Schemes programmed 2016/19

Scheme	No of units	Client Group	Year	Housing association
Rathmullan Drive, Rathcoole	20	General Needs	2016/17	Apex
Donegore Drive, Antrim	15	General Needs	2016/17	Apex
Fennel Road, Antrim	15	General Needs	2016/17	Apex
The Square, Ballyclare	39	General Needs	2016/17	Choice
Massareene Gardens, Antrim	1	General Needs	2016/17	Choice
Doagh Road, Rushpark	28	General Needs	2016/17	Choice
Devenish Drive, Monkstown	17	General Needs	2016/17	Choice
Lands to rear of Riverside, Antrim	6	General Needs	2016/17	Choice
Nellisbrook Park (17-19 Portglenone Road), Randalstown	13	General Needs	2016/17	Choice
Former Tesco Site, Carnmoney Road, Glengormley	56	General Needs	2016/17	Clanmil
Old Irish Highway, Rathcoole	18	General Needs	2016/17	Helm
Rear of Oriel Road, Antrim	2	General Needs	2016/17	Helm
Crumlin	7	General Needs	2016/17	Rural
Crumlin ESPs	5	General Needs	2016/17	Triangle
Ballyduff Road, Carnmoney	6	General Needs	2017/18	Apex

Scheme	No of units	Client Group	Year	Housing association
The Old Mill, Mill Road, Crumlin	32	General Needs	2017/18	Clanmil
53 Mill Road, Crumlin	11	General Needs	2017/18	Clanmil
Ballycraig Way, New Mossley	4	General Needs	2017/18	Connswater
Campbell Road, New Mossley	20	General Needs	2017/18	Connswater
Lynwood House, Ballyfore Park, Ballyduff	6	General Needs	2017/18	Helm
Crumlin ESPs	5	General Needs	2017/18	Triangle
15 Glenavy Road, Crumlin	55	General Needs	2018/19	Apex
Willowbrook, 401 Shore Road	50	General Needs	2018/19	Apex
Lands to the rear of 47 Main Street, Crumlin	5	General Needs	2018/19	Helm
Crumlin ESPs	5	General Needs	2018/19	Triangle
Total	489			

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the progression of the Queens Parade development in Bangor; and why the process is taking so long.

(AQW 621/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Queen's Parade development is a major comprehensive development scheme and significant progress has been made since my Department stepped in and took direct control of the scheme. My Department obtained planning approval in March 2015 for a mixed use scheme that would provide for in excess of 25,000 square metres of floor space. A Public Enquiry in the Development Scheme and use of vesting powers reported in April 2016 that there should be no change to the development scheme and that vesting should be confirmed. My officials are currently working with officers from Ards and North Down Borough Council to finalise the development brief and this will be presented to Council members in September for their endorsement on the way ahead.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the disposal of the residual land within the Village Urban Renewal Area, Belfast to a property developer.

(AQW 627/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive in March agreed to the conditional leasehold sale of the Village residual lands on the open market for the development of affordable homes. It is envisaged the land will be developed for residential use in line with the 'Village Regeneration Masterplan' providing a minimum of 60 homes and not more than 90.

The Housing Executive is currently working with Land and Property Services to develop a marketing plan to sell the site on the open market. The purchaser will be expected to comply with a number of conditions including the completion of development within five years. It is anticipated this marketing plan will be completed shortly and the site placed on the open market before the end of June.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Communities (i) how many people are on the housing waiting list in North Belfast; (ii) how many are on thirty points and below; and (iii) how many of those are living in temporary accommodation.

(AQW 689/16-21)

Mr Givan: As of March 2016 Housing waiting list figures for North Belfast are as follows:

- i) There are 2,332 people on the housing waiting list in North Belfast;
- ii) 727 applicants have 30 points and below;
- iii) There are currently 132 applicants living in temporary accommodation of which 92 have been accepted as homeless. None of these applicants have less than 30 points

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the towers conditions survey for the seven towers in the New Lodge area of North Belfast.

(AQW 692/16-21)

Mr Givan: The seven tower blocks in the New Lodge area were inspected as part of the Stock Condition Survey of the Housing Executive's properties undertaken as part of the Joint DSD / NIHE Asset Commission. A summary of the findings for the Housing Executive's tower block portfolio is included in the Stock Condition Report that was published on the Department's and the Housing Executive's websites in March of this year.

As I mentioned in my reply to your other written question (Ref AQW 691/16-21) the Housing Executive has now developed a Tower Block Strategy to determine the long term future of its tower blocks and are now in the process of considering the options for all its tower blocks, however this will not be completed until towards the end of this year.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Communities whether he has plans to reform alcohol licensing.
(AQW 714/16-21)

Mr Givan: Alcohol is not an ordinary product and the sale of it must be regulated to ensure the protection of public health and the preservation of public order.

I recognise that certain aspects of liquor licensing law in Northern Ireland are in need of reform and I have sent a paper to my Executive colleagues seeking agreement to introduce a Licensing Bill.

Provisions in the draft Bill mainly flow from the consultation carried out by one of my predecessors in 2012.

The Bill includes a number of measures to tackle practices which may encourage alcohol misuse, safeguards for children and young people and some minor changes to opening hours.

In recent years, drinking patterns in Northern Ireland have changed. 70% of drink is now sold for consumption at home rather than in the relatively controlled environment of a public house. It is important that our legislation is updated to take account of these changes.

When I have received comments from my Executive colleagues and agreement to the introduction of the Bill I will publish full details of the measures contained in the Bill.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for Communities how many people are on the housing waiting list for each electoral ward in Upper Bann; and how many of these people (i) are under 30 years old; and (ii) have dependants.
(AQW 729/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive does not collate the housing waiting list by electoral ward nor by applicants under 30 years old. The information requested for all of Upper Bann therefore is as follows:

Parliamentary Constituency	Total Applicants on Waiting List	Total Applicants with Dependants
Upper Bann	2,098	692

The age of applicants on the housing waiting list can only be provided within age bandings for specific household types, e.g. single person, small families, large families. If there is specific information within these parameters that you would have an interest in then please let me know.

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Communities to list the tree planting schemes that the Housing Executive has planned for North Antrim.
(AQW 730/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive has advised that the new Grounds Contracts commenced in the first week of May 2016 and as such the planning of landscaping works for the incoming year is at an early stage and has yet to complete.

Currently the only large landscaping scheme, which was identified last year, is Carnany estate in Ballymoney which is due to begin in Spring 2017.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Communities if he plans to extend emergency flood payments to businesses impacted by flooding, including coastal flooding, particularly where building/contents insurance can no longer provide cover.
(AQW 758/16-21)

Mr Givan: The current scheme of emergency financial assistance to district councils covers council costs incurred when responding to the needs of householders across Northern Ireland in the event of any flooding following Rainfall or Tidal Surge. In addition it also includes an immediate payment of £1,000 to householders as practical assistance; to those who have suffered severe inconvenience, to help make homes habitable as quickly as possible. It is not a compensation payment and is available to households with or without insurance.

On the 10 March 2016, the Executive agreed that a one-off extension to the existing Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme be established for non-domestic properties, including small businesses and farm businesses to cover the period 7 November 2015 until 31 January 2016. The estimated number of successful claimants is projected to be between 350 – 400.

I do not intend, at this time, to seek any extension of the Scheme of Emergency Financial assistance beyond that which currently exists.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Communities what further action his Department will take to promote the Ulster-Scots culture and language.
(AQW 761/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department currently promotes Ulster-Scots through its joint sponsorship of the Ulster-Scots Agency as part of the North South Language Body. The Ulster-Scots Agency at community level provides funding to promote Ulster-Scots language, heritage and cultural projects and programmes.

In addition, my Department, through the former Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster-Scots, recently funded a programme of one hour taster sessions - "A wee taste O Ulster-Scots" in venues across the province on Ulster-Scots. These sessions provided attendees with an initial experience of the study of Ulster-Scots language and culture. In addition to this, the course sought to identify which aspects of Ulster-Scots people wished to learn more about.

These taster sessions are an Ulster-Scots initiative and, following evaluation, further development and roll out of the initiative is planned.

Further, on 15 March 2016, my predecessor announced the intention to establish an Ulster-Scots Institute and my officials are working closely with the Ulster-Scots Agency, to have this Institute in place before the end of this year. The Ulster-Scots Institute will be a not-for-profit company with charitable status and will become part of the Ulster-Scots Hub located at the Corn Exchange in the Cathedral Quarter of Belfast.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Communities, pursuant to AQW 52523/11-16, (i) how many complaints relating to misconduct or dishonesty by staff of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland were received in each of the last three financial years and in this financial year to date; and (ii) in how many of those cases was a formal investigation (a) carried out; and (b) completed.

(AQW 805/16-21)

Mr Givan:

- (i) There were no complaints relating to misconduct or dishonesty by staff of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland in the financial years 2013/14 or 2014/15. One complaint was received in the financial year 2015/16 by the former Department for Social Development and one complaint has been received in this financial year by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.
- (ii) A formal investigation was carried out in respect of one of these complaints and this has been completed. In line with procedures the other complaint did not proceed to a formal investigation.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities (i) when the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) will publish the final report of its investigation into the affairs of the Disabled Police Officers Association Northern Ireland (DPOANI); (ii) how many Directors or Trustees resigned from DPOANI during this inquiry; (iii) on how many occasions CCNI staff attended DPOANI board meetings between August 2014 and July 2015; (iv) how many of those affected by suspensions were consulted prior to the interim report being written; (v) if they were not consulted, to outline the reasons why; (vi) on how many occasions the CCNI met with the DPOA NI Directors before the initiation of their statutory enquiry; and (vii) to outline the extensive engagement that took place prior to the statutory inquiry.

(AQW 821/16-21)

Mr Givan:

- (i) The timetable for the publication of the final report of the investigation of the DPOANI has not yet been confirmed;
- (ii) Seven Directors or Trustees resigned from DPOANI during the course of the inquiry;
- (iii) Records indicate that five DPOANI Board meetings were attended by CCNI staff between August 2014 and July 2015;
- (iv) None of those affected by suspensions were consulted prior to the interim report being written;
- (v) All of the information contained in the interim report was factual and already within the public domain and CCNI considered there was no need to consult;
- (vi) CCNI met with DPOANI Directors (both former and present) on two occasions before the initiation of the statutory inquiry;
- (vii) On receipt of concerns, supported by documentary evidence, on 8 November 2016 CCNI contacted the charity and requested information in order to negate or confirm the concerns received. CCNI held meetings with concerned parties and there was extensive correspondence between CCNI and the charity following which a risk assessment was presented to CCNI Commissioners who approved the opening of the inquiry on 14 February 2014.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Communities how his Department is promoting cross-community art projects in East Derry.
(AQW 824/16-21)

Mr Givan: Funding for the arts is disbursed in the main through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) and this includes funding for cross community arts. Relevant funding streams are open to all eligible groups regardless of location.

In addition, ACNI has built into its decision-making processes a range of mechanisms which aim to ensure the needs of rural communities are considered when developing new policy or programme interventions.

In terms of promotion, ACNI participates in roadshows to raise awareness of funding opportunities and examines any local authority areas which do not appear to be making applications or receiving grants and prioritises these when promoting funding opportunities.

The Community Festivals Fund supports community festivals to celebrate and positively promote what the community represents. Each district council match funds the allocation provided by my Department for festivals in its council area. Each council is required to be robust in marketing the fund and encouraging applications from those in poverty or social exclusion in that council area.

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Communities what penalty clauses exist on the public realm contracts in Ballymena and Portstewart.

(AQW 848/16-21)

Mr Givan: The work contracts for the Ballymena and Portstewart public realm schemes were procured by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council respectively. The Department for Communities has provided grant funding to both schemes.

The Department is not party to either of the contracts, but both Councils have advised that the consultants they appointed to procure and manage the works have utilised a NEC3 standard form of works contract which includes a delay damage clause in the event that the contractor does not complete the works by the agreed date.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Communities how much funding will the North Down Community Network receive from his Department; and how the funding is to be used.

(AQW 883/16-21)

Mr Givan: In the 2016/17 financial year the North Down Community Network will receive:

- £46,611.40 from the Department's Community Investment Fund. Of this £45,971.56 will be used for salaries and £639.84 will be used for running costs; and
- £28,550 from the NIHE's Community Involvement budget. This will be used for a community development worker.

The network may wish to consider the following funding opportunities:

- The NIHE's Social Housing Enterprise Award Scheme will open for applications on 27 June 2016: and
- Sport NI's Active Awards Programme opened on 2 June 2016.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Communities how his Department will support the proposal for a new boxing club at Ballymena North Centre, Cushendall Road.

(AQW 891/16-21)

Mr Givan: I can advise that Sport NI, an Arms Length Body of my Department, is supporting the All Saints Amateur Boxing Club to develop a business case for a new build boxing facility at the site of Ballymena North Business and Recreation Centre.

The Club submitted a funding application through Sport NI's Single Facility Fund and were placed on a reserve list pending funding becoming available.

In April 2016, Sport NI wrote to the Club to ask them to progress to the next Stage of the Single Facility Fund and the Club duly accepted a progression letter "At Risk."

As a result of the Club accepting this, Sport NI and the Irish Athletic Boxing Association Club Development Manager are assisting the Club with the development of a business case for the project.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Communities to list any planned capital investment for sports clubs in North Antrim over the next five years.

(AQW 892/16-21)

Mr Givan: I will be bidding for funds to continue to invest in sport across Northern Ireland given its significant impact on Programme for Government outcomes associated with increasing healthy life expectancy and improved mental health amongst others.

Future investments in significant regional facilities will be informed by the Sport NI Regional Facilities Strategy and the associated eleven District Council Area Reports which are currently in development with an anticipated completion date of Autumn 2016. Programmes such as the Sub-Regional Programme for Soccer which the Department will seek to continue with a further phase for investment in rugby, Gaelic games and soccer, will also inform future investments, subject to Executive agreement and available budgets.

My Department has committed to secure funding to provide up to £350,000 to the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council in the current financial year for the development of a multi-sport facility in the Borough.

Sport NI is currently working with St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena through the Single Facility Fund with a view to providing funding towards an extension to current fitness suite and provision of equipment.

In addition, Sport NI is in the process of finalising plans to launch the Multi Facility Fund, expected to launch in the Autumn. This investment will fund sites that provide a minimum of four different sports facilities. An important component of the multi facility fund is the development of District Council area reports, which include Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid and East Antrim, that will identify shortfalls in sports facility provision. Sport NI expects organisations from each constituency to apply for funding.

Furthermore, Sport NI plans to launch funding for outdoor areas through Everybody Active 2020 Strand 3: Outdoor Spaces in the Autumn. This funding will be aimed at outdoor areas such as mountain bike trails and walking trails. It is anticipated that organisations from each constituency will apply for funding.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Communities to list his Department's capital investment in sports clubs in North Antrim in each of the last five years.

(AQW 893/16-21)

Mr Givan: I can advise that in the last five years, Sport NI, an Arms Length Body of my Department, invested a total of £78,219.75 directly to Sports Clubs in North Antrim for capital projects as detailed in Annex A.

In addition, Sport NI invested a further £385,530 in sport for capital works to other organisations in North Antrim including, Ballymoney Borough Council, Community Development Associations, Schools and the North West Mountain Rescue Team.

Annex A

Club Name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Ballymena United FC			£15,307.69			£15,307.69
Structural refurbishment of the Warden Street Stand and replacement of old and defective seating						
Dunloy GAC	£3,562.50					£3,562.50
Construction of new 2 room changing facility						
Loughgiel Shamrocks GAC	£29,966.06					£29,966.06
Safety Equipment from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme.						
Loughgiel Shamrocks GAC	£29,383.50					£29,383.50
Infrastructure Works from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme.						
Grand Total	£62,912.06	-	£15,307.69	-	-	£78,219.75

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Communities (i) how much funding was provided to the Irish Football Association between 2011 and 2016; (ii) how the money was spent; and (iii) the amount received by clubs in Upper Bann.

(AQW 910/16-21)

Mr Givan: I can advise that in the last five financial years up to 31 March 2016, Sport NI, an Arms Length Body of my Department, provided a total of £1,869,813 funding to the Irish Football Association.

This money was spent on facilities, training and coach and player development programmes which have been detailed at Annex A.

In addition, during the same period, Sport NI provided £376,930 funding directly to football clubs in the Upper Bann constituency as detailed at Annex B.

Annex A

Funding Provided to the Irish Football Association 2011 – 2016

Year	Programme	Project Type	Project Title	Grant Amount
2011	Awards For Sport	Coaching Development	Girls Allowed - Coach Education	£7,861

Year	Programme	Project Type	Project Title	Grant Amount
2011	Overseeing Function	Steward Training	Overseeing Function Steward Training Programme (Phase 3)	£7,150
2012	Stadia Development Programme	National/ Elite Facility	Development costs associated with the redevelopment of Windsor Park.	£861,052
2012	Overseeing Function	Steward Training	Overseeing Function Steward Training Programme (Phase 4)	£7,800
2012	Overseeing Function	Steward Training	Overseeing function Steward training programme (Phase 5)	£7,800
2013	PerformanceFocus	High Performance	PerformanceFocus Year 1 (2013/2014)	£240,000
2013	Equality Standard	Exchequer	Funding to support an Equality Training Conference	£3,750
2014	PerformanceFocus	High Performance	PerformanceFocus Year 2 (2014/2015)	£240,000
2014	Active Awards for Sport	Coaching Development	Community Futsal	£8,800
2014	Overseeing Function	Steward Training	Overseeing Function Steward Training Programme (Phase 6)	£2,600
2015	PerformanceFocus	High Performance	PerformanceFocus Year 3 (2015/2016)	£230,000
2015	Athlete Investment Programme	Squad Development	Athlete Investment Programme 2015-16	£20,000
2015	Safe Sports Ground Programme	Steward Training	Overseeing Function (Overseeing Body) Phase 7 Steward Training	£3,000
2016	PerformanceFocus	High Performance	PerformanceFocus Year 4 (2016/2017)	£230,000
Total				£1,869,813

Annex B

Funding Provided to Football Clubs in Upper Bann 2011 – 2016

Year	Organisation	Programme/Reason	Grant Amount
2011	Annagh United FC	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities Programme	£10,198
2011	Glenavon FC	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities Programme	£94,598
2011	Glenavon FC	Infrastructure Works from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	£6,760
2011	Glenavon FC	Safety Equipment from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	£5,341
2012	Glenavon FC	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities Programme	£7,677
2012	Portadown FC	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities Programme	£7,356
2013	Annagh United FC	3G Pitch with Floodlighting	£238,875
2014	Annagh United FC	3G Pitch with Floodlighting	£6,125
Total			£376,930

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Communities to list the projects in Upper Bann awaiting Neighbourhood Renewal funding. (AQW 911/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department is currently providing funding to 14 projects with a total value of £1.56m in the three Neighbourhood Renewal areas in Upper Bann. There are an additional 15 projects identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans. These projects are at various stages of development and the projects which proceed will be determined by the

economic appraisal and prioritisation process and the availability of funding. Some of the projects will need to secure funding from a number of sources in order to proceed. The projects are:

Brownlow	Drumgor & Tullygally Revitalisation
Brownlow	Installation of Play Areas
Brownlow	Installation of play area and provision of outdoor gym equipment
Lurgan	Mount Zion - Community Hub Space Refurbishment
Lurgan	Mount Zion: Refurbishment of 5 Flats
Lurgan	Oxford Sunnyside FC: Development of 4G soccer pitch
Lurgan	Taghnevan Allotments: The Trim Trail walking track
Portadown	Bannfields Garvaghy Road: New Fencing
Portadown	Churchill Environmental Improvements: Fencing & Car-parking
Portadown	Epworth Play Group - Outdoor Play Area
Portadown	Montague Street Improvements
Portadown	Parkside Flats Improvements
Portadown	Parkside Footway Improvements
Portadown	St John the Baptist Primary School - New Play Area
Portadown	St Malachy's Hurling Club Redevelopment

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Communities whether the recent announcement from the European Investment Bank on funding for social housing will benefit areas outside of Belfast, such as Upper Bann.

(AQW 912/16-21)

Mr Givan: This financing package shows the confidence that the European Investment Bank (EIB) has in the work of our local housing associations.

My Department already provides significant funding for social housing and this combination of public and private financing will enable Choice Housing and Apex, two of our leading providers of social housing, to build more social housing for those in most need across all of Northern Ireland. The EIB funding, alongside statutory support from my Department of £106m Housing Association Grant to support the delivery of 1,600 new social housing units during 2016/17, will enable the associations involved to potentially begin construction on over 4,000 new social homes over the next five years as well as retro-fit many existing units. Ultimately this will mean building more social homes in the areas where they are needed most across Northern Ireland.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Communities what funding or programmes are available through his Department for town centre regeneration.

(AQW 920/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department funds a number of regeneration programmes in town centres, these include; Public Realm schemes, Revitalisation projects, Urban Development Grants and Comprehensive Development Schemes. In addition the Department has also provided support for the establishment of Business Improvement Districts in six pilot locations.

The regeneration programmes are delivered mainly by the Department but can also be in partnership with Local Councils, particularly Public Realm schemes. The Urban Development Grants scheme is through an open public call for applications. The last call was from 4 April 2016 to 13 May 2016. Applications received are currently being assessed by the Department.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities how many Fixed Odds Betting Terminals are in operation locally.

(AQW 967/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department does not hold information, in respect of the number of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) operating in Northern Ireland.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister for Communities how much of the £36.5 million in Housing Grants to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the 2016-17 budget will be used to build new social housing; and how many new houses will these funds help build.

(AQW 982/16-21)

Mr Givan: The £36.5 million you have referred to in your question relates to the total grant paid to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to support landlord functions.

Funding for the provision of social housing in Northern Ireland falls within the Housing Executives Regional Services. I can therefore advise you that I have made available a total capital allocation of £106 million to support the provision of 1600 new social housing starts for 2016/17 Social Housing Development Programme.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Communities to detail the number of Housing Benefit claimants that have had their benefit reduced since the introduction of the Living Wage.

(AQW 1002/16-21)

Mr Givan: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive is unable to identify Housing Benefit cases affected by the introduction of the Living Wage. This is because the information held regarding claimants' earnings is shown as a weekly or monthly amount and may increase/decrease due to the number of hours worked. It is therefore not possible to produce data on those cases where an increase in income is as a result of the introduction of the Living Wage.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities when he plans to introduce a sexual orientation strategy.

(AQW 1010/16-21)

Mr Givan: The good relations strategy, Together: Building a United Community, gives a commitment to publishing a Sexual Orientation strategy. The Stormont House Agreement and the Fresh Start document both state that the Together: Building a United Community will be implemented in full.

The Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21, which included 14 outcomes supported by 42 indicators for change. Included within the outcomes are references to 'a more equal society' and 'a shared society that respects diversity'. These are very high level outcomes that we need to develop supporting actions to deliver against. Detailed work has started with the launch of the Framework for public consultation and I would welcome the views of everyone as part of that consultation process.

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Communities what information exchange mechanisms exist to ensure that legitimately disregarded income or capital, particularly that derived as arrears of benefits, is in practice disregarded when required.

(AQW 1045/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department has robust mechanisms in place which ensure that information provided by claimants on income or capital is properly scrutinised and assessed. These mechanisms are in the form of IT software which applies the correct disregards and tariffs and instructions which reflect current legislation. The latter is used by specially trained Decision Makers in determining the appropriate treatment of arrears, income and capital.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities, given the last Gambling Prevalence survey reported higher gambling prevalence figures for Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK, whether his Department has made any assessment of these figures; and to detail any steps taken to address this issue.

(AQW 1052/16-21)

Mr Givan: In 2010, as part of a review into gambling in Northern Ireland, the first comprehensive Gambling Prevalence Survey was carried out. The survey considered participation, attitudes and the rate of problem gambling in Northern Ireland.

The results showed clear differences in the gambling habits of Northern Ireland consumers in comparison to those of GB consumers;

- 75.3% of respondents had taken part in some form of gambling within the past 12 months.
- The most popular form of gambling in Northern Ireland was The National Lottery, 51.0% of people had participated in this form of gambling within the past 12 months.
- The average weekly spend was £5.60.
- The survey found a problem gambling rate of 2.2% of the NI population; this compared to 0.6% in Great Britain in the 2007 GB Gambling Prevalence Survey.

Given the changing gambling environment, it is important to qualify the findings of the 2010 survey; the Department is, therefore, currently undertaking a second Gambling Prevalence Survey. The results of this survey will provide an updated view of the gambling environment within Northern Ireland and a valuable comparison in respect of changing gambling habits.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities to detail the number of people that have had a reduction in Housing Benefit as a result of the introduction of the Living Wage.

(AQW 1102/16-21)

Mr Givan: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive is unable to identify Housing Benefit cases affected by the introduction of the Living Wage. This is because the information held regarding claimants' earnings is shown as a weekly or monthly amount and may increase/decrease due to the number of hours worked. It is therefore not possible to produce data on those cases where an increase in income is as a result of the introduction of the Living Wage.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Communities to detail the options available for an individual that is unable to work due to poor mental health and has not yet started a programme of treatment due to delays in provision; has been unsuccessful in applying for Employment Support Allowance and has been advised by Social Security Agency staff to sign up for Jobseekers Allowance during an undefined period awaiting mandatory reconsideration on the basis they must actively seek employment, even though their own doctor continues to provide sick lines on the basis that their mental health condition would be further harmed by taking on employment at that stage.

(AQW 1110/16-21)

Mr Givan: Welfare Reform introduces a new appeal process where, for Employment and Support Allowance decisions notified on or after 23 May 2016, a claimant must ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration of a disputed decision before they can appeal. No payment will be made during the reconsideration process as there are no legal grounds to do so. Claimants may apply for Jobseeker's Allowance during this period. Provisions within the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 allow a claimant to restrict their availability in any way, provided these restrictions are reasonable in light of their physical or mental condition. Where the claimant imposes these restrictions, they do not have to show they have reasonable prospects of getting a job. However, they must show all the restrictions are reasonable and are connected with their health. If a claimant with a mental health condition requires additional help or advice, they will be directed to a Pathways Adviser who will provide the appropriate assistance and support.

Dr Farry asked the Minister for Communities for an update on his Department's work on Queen's Parade, Bangor.

(AQW 1114/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Queen's Parade development is a major comprehensive development scheme and significant progress has been made since my Department stepped in and took direct control of the scheme. My Department obtained planning approval in March 2015 for a mixed use scheme that would provide for in excess of 25,000 square metres of floor space. A Public Enquiry into the Development Scheme and use of vesting powers reported in April 2016 that there should be no change to the development scheme and that vesting should be confirmed. My officials are currently working with officers from Ards and North Down Borough Council to finalise the development brief and this will be presented to Council members in September for their endorsement on the way ahead.

Dr Farry asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the revised timescale for the transfer of regeneration powers to district councils

(AQW 1115/16-21)

Mr Givan: The extension of Regeneration and Community Development powers to Local Government did not proceed under the last mandate. The new Department for Communities (DfC) has now been established with a much wider range of responsibilities, including responsibility for local government and it will be in that context that I will wish to consider the options for going forward. Ultimately, any decision to extend powers to local government is a matter for the Executive. The timing of extension would be subject to the successful completion of the legislative process.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Communities to outline the possible sources of funding that community groups in North Down could use to make up the shortfall in funding to run community houses after funding was cut by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

(AQW 1135/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Department does not have any sources of funding specifically to make up the shortfall in funding to run community houses. Sources of funding which are open for application can be identified through:

- i) The NICVA Grant Tracker, which can be found at: <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>
- ii) The Government Funding Database, which can be found at: <https://govfunding.nics.gov.uk/>

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) how many licences to operate a betting shop have been granted; broken down by constituency; and (ii) whether the addresses of all premises which have been granted betting licences can be provided to Members or placed in the Assembly Library.

(AQW 1212/16-21)

Mr Givan: Licensing of bookmaking offices is the responsibility of the Courts.

My Department does not hold information, in the format requested, regarding licences issued by Courts.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities to detail the number of social housing new builds planned for West Tyrone.

(AQW 1218/16-21)

Mr Givan: There are currently 113 new social units planned to start onsite in West Tyrone as part of the Social Housing Development Programme. Details of the planned schemes are listed below:

Housing Association	Scheme	Settlement	Units	Estimated Year on Site
Apex Housing	Omagh 16/17 Homeless/Care Leavers (Woodside Avenue)	Omagh	8	2016/17
Habinteg	84 Bridge Street	Strabane	4	2016/17
Habinteg	Adria Factory, Strabane Phase 1	Strabane	30	2016/17
Habinteg	Newton Lane	Strabane	25	2016/17
Triangle	Douglas Bridge ESP's	Douglas Bridge	4	2016/17
Rural	Sion Mills ESPs	Sion Mills	5	2017/18
Triangle	Ballymagorry ESPs	Ballymagorry	5	2017/18
Triangle	Lismore Park	Sion Mills	4	2017/18
Apex Housing	Bradley Way	Strabane	28	2018/19

You may however, wish to note that programmed schemes may be lost or slip to future programme years for a variety of reasons relating to e.g. site acquisition / achieving Planning Permission. Additional schemes may also be added to the SHDP through the purchase of Existing Satisfactory / Off-the-shelf properties in-year, and through the annual housing association bidding round / programme formulation (which is currently underway).

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities to detail all new social housing improvement schemes (i) completed; and (ii) scheduled in West Tyrone.

(AQW 1219/16-21)

Mr Givan: The detail of current and planned social housing improvement schemes are as follows:

(i) Schemes completed/Onsite

Work Type	Scheme	Dwellings	Start Date	Scheme Status
Ext Cyclic Maintainece	Lisnafin pk/lawson pk	264	29/02/16	On going
Heating Installation	Strabane	53	31/08/15	Complete
Heating Installation	Omagh	115	05/05/15	Complete
Incremental Improvement	Brookmount lodge roofs/doors/ insulation	11	19/10/15	On going
Kitchen Replacement	Fairmount/Beltrim/ Ashfield	103	28/03/16	On going
Kitchen Replacement	Lisnafin Park Phase 2 /Glebe	74	24/08/15	Complete
Kitchen Replacement	Ballycolman phase 1	67	16/11/15	Complete
Smoke Alarm Installation	Strabane	260	09/11/15	On going

(ii) Schemes scheduled to start 2016/17

Work Type	Scheme	Dwellings	Start Date
Double glazing	Castlederg	402	9/01/17
Double glazing	Ballycolman etc	378	0/01/17
External cyclical maintenance	Strule Park /Starrs cres etc	140	7/06/16
Health & safety schemes	Lisnafin flats privatisation blocks 1,3,5	18	8/11/16
Heating installation	Strabane	49	5/08/16
Multi element	330a-F lisnafin Park refurbishment	6	3/10/16
Multi element	West aluminium bungalows	42	6/03/17

Work Type	Scheme	Dwellings	Start Date
Kitchen replacement	Ballycolman ph 2 no's 171-340	68	3/05/16
Kitchen replacement	Drumrallagh/Innisgree Gardens	140	9/01/17
Kitchen replacement	Strule/Summerhill/Watson Park etc	139	1/08/16
Smoke alarm installation	Omagh	506	4/04/16
Smoke alarm installation	Strabane	242	1/08/16
Special schemes	Omagh aluminium bungalows	33	6/03/17

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister for Communities how many Employment Support Allowance cases have resulted in appeal but were conceded by the Social Security Agency (i) prior to hearing; and (ii) at hearing; broken down per appeal district, in last twelve months.

(AQW 1221/16-21)

Mr Givan: The requested information is not available. The Department does not record information on the number of Employment and Support Allowance claimants whose cases have resulted in appeal but were conceded by the Social Security Agency (i) prior to hearing; and (ii) at hearing; broken down per appeal district, in last twelve months.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Communities (i) for an update on the sexual orientation strategy; and (ii) when it will be published.

(AQW 1224/16-21)

Mr Givan: The good relations strategy, Together: Building a United Community, gives a commitment to publishing a Sexual Orientation strategy. The Stormont House Agreement and the Fresh Start document both state that the Together: Building a United Community will be implemented in full.

The Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21, which included 14 outcomes supported by 42 indicators for change. Included within the outcomes are references to 'a more equal society' and 'a shared society that respects diversity'. These are very high level outcomes that we need to develop supporting actions to deliver against. Detailed work has started with the launch of the Framework for public consultation and I would welcome the views of everyone as part of that consultation process.

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) the number; and (ii) property type of homes that are heated by electricity as a primary or secondary source, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 1256/16-21)

Mr Givan: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive has advised that the details of properties which are heated by electricity as a secondary heat source are not readily available.

However, the Housing Executive currently has 4,325 properties that are heated by electricity as the primary heat source. The property types by electoral ward are shown in the table below.

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Abbey	0	6	0	10	0	0
Aghagallon	0	1	0	0	0	0
Andersonstown	0	1	0	5	2	0
Antrim Centre	0	1	0	3	0	1
Ardoyne	0	0	0	1	0	0
Atlantic	0	1	0	45	3	0
Augher & Clogher	0	0	0	9	0	0
Ballee & Harryville	0	14	0	12	2	0
Ballinderry	0	2	0	0	0	0
Ballybay	0	10	0	16	1	0
Ballybot	0	0	0	4	2	0
Ballycarry & Glynn	0	1	0	0	1	0
Ballyclare East	0	1	0	6	1	1

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Ballyclare West	0	2	0	7	0	0
Ballyduff	0	1	0	2	0	0
Ballygawley	0	3	0	0	0	0
Ballygomartin	0	0	0	3	6	0
Ballygrainey	0	8	0	14	0	0
Ballyhanwood	0	4	0	0	0	0
Ballyholme	0	0	0	4	2	0
Ballykeel	0	0	0	17	4	5
Ballymacarrett	0	0	0	19	0	0
Ballymacash	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ballymacoss	0	6	0	10	0	0
Ballymoney East	0	1	0	6	0	0
Ballymoney North	0	2	0	22	1	0
Ballymoney South	0	4	0	3	1	0
Ballymurphy	0	1	0	0	0	0
Ballynahinch	0	8	0	46	1	8
Ballysaggart	0	0	0	8	0	0
Ballysillan	0	0	0	0	3	0
Ballywalter	0	5	0	3	1	0
Banbridge North	0	5	0	4	0	0
Banbridge South	0	4	0	1	0	0
Banbridge West	0	1	0	6	0	2
Beechill	0	5	0	3	0	0
Beechmount	0	0	0	0	1	0
Beersbridge	0	0	0	20	0	0
Bellaghy	0	1	0	0	0	0
Bellevue	0	2	0	9	1	0
Belmont	1	1	0	1	1	0
Belvoir	11	18	0	34	2	20
Bessbrook	0	2	0	0	0	0
Blackstaff	0	1	0	5	3	0
Blaris	0	0	0	2	0	0
Bloomfield	0	0	0	1	3	0
Brandywell	0	0	0	4	2	0
Broughshane	0	0	0	4	0	0
Brownlow	0	0	0	10	0	1
Burnthill	0	0	0	1	3	0
Cairncastle	0	0	0	3	0	0
Camowen	0	1	0	2	0	0
Carn Hill	0	0	0	1	0	0
Carnlough & Glenarm	0	0	0	4	0	0

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Carnmoney Hill	0	2	0	2	0	0
Carrowdore	0	1	0	4	0	0
Carrowreagh	0	0	0	11	3	0
Carryduff East	0	12	0	5	0	0
Castle	0	7	0	9	0	0
Castle Demesne	0	4	0	5	4	0
Castlecaulfield	0	0	0	2	0	0
Castlecoole	0	5	0	1	0	0
Castledawson	0	0	0	0	1	0
Castlerock	0	1	0	4	0	0
Castlewellan	0	0	0	2	0	0
Cathedral	0	15	0	70	1	2
Cavehill	0	0	0	1	0	0
Central	0	1	0	4	2	0
Chichester Park	0	0	0	2	1	9
Churchland	0	0	0	4	0	0
City Walls	0	0	0	5	2	1
Clandeboyne	0	4	0	6	1	0
Cliftonville	0	10	0	0	1	0
Clonard	0	2	0	1	0	0
Clondermot	0	4	0	0	0	0
Coalisland South	0	1	0	0	0	0
Collin Glen	2	0	0	64	0	27
Comber North	0	13	0	3	0	0
Connswater	0	0	0	1	2	0
Conway Square	0	1	0	17	1	0
Cookstown East	0	0	0	15	0	8
Cookstown South	0	1	0	0	0	0
Cookstown West	0	0	0	1	0	0
Coolessan	0	4	0	6	0	0
Coolnagard	0	0	0	2	0	1
Corcrain	0	8	0	0	1	2
Craigavon Centre	0	3	0	0	1	0
Craigyhill	0	0	0	2	1	0
Cregagh	14	2	0	194	8	0
Creggan South	0	0	0	1	0	0
Crossgar & Killyleagh	0	2	0	25	0	0
Crumlin	0	0	0	2	0	0
Cullybackey	0	0	0	0	1	0
Curran & Inver	0	2	0	95	0	2
Damolly	0	1	0	2	0	0

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Demesne	0	7	0	0	1	0
Derryaghy	0	4	0	180	0	0
Derryboy	0	0	0	10	0	0
Doagh	0	0	0	0	2	0
Donaghadee	0	0	0	6	0	0
Donard	0	0	0	5	0	16
Dromore	0	0	0	4	1	0
Drumahoe	0	1	0	0	0	0
Drumalane	0	1	0	0	2	0
Drumbo	0	2	0	0	0	0
Drumnakilly	0	1	0	0	0	0
Duncairn	0	0	0	12	4	0
Dundrum	0	2	0	2	0	0
Dunmurry	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ebrington	0	0	0	18	0	2
Eglinton	0	2	0	0	0	0
Enagh	0	0	0	0	2	0
Enler	0	10	0	13	4	0
Erne	3	0	0	21	0	21
Fair Green	1	1	0	16	6	0
Falls	17	0	0	71	3	0
Finaghy	0	0	0	5	0	0
Fivemiletown	0	2	0	0	0	0
Forth River	0	0	0	2	5	0
Fortwilliam	0	0	0	5	1	0
Fountain Hill	0	1	0	0	0	0
Galgorm	0	1	0	1	0	0
Galliagh	0	5	0	0	0	0
Garnerville	0	0	0	4	0	0
Garvagh	0	2	0	5	0	0
Giant's Causeway	0	0	0	1	0	0
Gilford	0	1	0	1	2	0
Gilnahirk	2	0	0	19	2	0
Glebe	0	2	0	13	0	0
Glen	0	1	0	0	1	0
Glengormley	0	0	0	2	0	0
Glenwhirry	0	0	0	0	2	0
Gortalee	0	0	0	5	1	1
Gortin	0	0	0	0	1	0
Gortrush	0	0	0	2	0	0
Graham's Bridge	0	3	0	8	2	9

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Greenisland	1	0	0	0	0	0
Gregstown	0	0	0	3	0	0
Greysteel	0	0	0	1	0	0
Greystone	0	0	0	2	0	0
Groomsport	0	4	0	0	0	0
Harmony Hill	0	0	0	2	0	0
Helen's Bay	0	2	0	0	0	0
Hightown	0	0	0	0	1	0
Hilden	0	2	0	31	0	1
Hillfoot	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hillhall	0	3	0	12	1	0
Hillsborough	0	1	0	8	0	0
Hollywood	0	0	0	2	0	1
Hopefield	0	3	0	16	0	0
Innisfayle	0	2	0	92	0	0
Irvinestown	0	1	0	0	0	0
Islandmagee	0	4	0	0	0	0
Keady	0	4	0	2	0	0
Kells	0	1	0	0	1	0
Kernan	0	6	0	0	3	0
Kilcooley	0	15	0	31	3	0
Kilkeel	0	2	0	0	0	0
Killinchy	0	0	1	0	0	0
Killyclogher	0	0	0	0	1	0
Killycomain	10	3	0	9	1	0
Killymeal	0	3	0	14	0	0
Kilrea	0	3	0	24	0	0
Kinbane	0	0	0	0	1	0
Knock	0	0	0	0	1	0
Knockmore	0	0	0	1	0	0
Knocknashane	0	2	0	0	0	0
Knocknashinna	0	0	0	20	0	0
Lagan	0	1	0	3	0	0
Lagan Valley	0	5	0	1	1	0
Lagmore	0	3	0	0	0	0
Lambeg	0	4	0	12	2	1
Lecale	0	2	0	0	0	0
Legoniel	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lisnagarvey	0	1	0	0	0	0
Lisnagelvin	0	9	0	1	0	0
Lisnarrick	0	0	0	7	0	0

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Lisnaskea	0	5	0	0	0	0
Loughbrickland	0	0	0	0	2	0
Loughgall	0	0	0	0	1	0
Loughry	0	0	0	1	1	0
Loughview	0	5	0	6	2	0
Maghaberry	0	1	0	0	0	0
Maghera	0	1	0	1	1	0
Mahon	0	0	0	2	0	0
Maine	0	1	0	0	1	0
Markethill	0	1	0	1	0	0
Maze	0	0	0	1	0	0
Merok	0	1	0	18	3	0
Moirá	0	0	0	1	0	0
Moneyreagh	0	2	0	2	0	0
Monkstown	0	2	0	1	3	0
Mossley	0	1	0	1	1	0
Mountsandel	0	13	0	0	0	0
Mourneview	0	5	0	8	5	0
Movilla	0	1	0	0	0	0
Mullaghmore	0	1	0	4	0	0
Murlough	0	0	0	6	0	0
Musgrave	0	1	0	82	1	0
New Buildings	0	0	0	0	1	0
New Lodge	0	0	0	366	1	6
Newtownbreda	0	0	0	0	1	0
Newtownstewart	0	3	0	0	0	0
Northland	0	3	0	0	0	0
Old Warren	0	1	0	5	0	0
O'Neill	14	2	0	201	1	0
Ormeau	0	0	0	2	2	0
Parklake	0	0	0	4	0	0
Portaferry	0	5	0	1	0	0
Portavogie	0	2	0	0	1	0
Portglenone	0	1	0	0	0	0
Portora	0	5	0	1	0	0
Portrush & Dunluce	4	0	0	13	0	10
Portstewart	0	14	0	21	0	0
Quarry	0	9	0	64	3	4
Quilly	0	2	0	0	0	0
Randalstown	0	5	0	8	1	0
Rathcoole	0	1	0	15	3	1

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
Ravenhill	0	0	0	1	1	5
Richhill	0	2	0	0	0	0
Roeside	0	1	0	1	0	0
Rosetta	0	3	0	10	1	0
Saintfield	0	2	0	1	0	0
Sandown	0	2	0	50	1	12
Scrabo	0	1	0	2	0	0
Shandon	0	7	0	62	3	13
Shankill	0	24	0	29	11	0
Shantallow	0	0	0	1	0	0
Shantallow East	0	1	0	0	0	0
Shaw's Road	3	2	0	8	1	10
Skeoge	0	0	0	1	0	0
Slievekirk	0	0	0	0	1	0
Springfarm	0	1	0	1	1	0
St. Patrick's	0	0	0	1	0	1
Steeple	0	0	0	4	1	0
Stewartstown	0	1	0	1	0	0
Stiles	0	0	0	3	3	0
Stormont	14	0	0	53	3	0
Strabane West	0	3	0	0	0	0
Strangford	0	1	0	0	0	0
Strule	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sunnylands	0	0	0	2	0	0
Sydenham	0	4	0	2	3	0
Tandragee	0	1	0	1	0	0
The Maidens	0	1	0	1	0	0
The Mall	0	7	0	6	1	0
Tollymore	0	1	0	2	0	0
Town Parks East	0	2	0	0	0	0
Turf Lodge	0	2	0	0	1	0
Twinbrook	0	2	0	5	0	0
University	0	4	0	54	0	0
Upper Malone	0	1	0	27	0	18
Valley	0	0	0	2	2	0
Victoria	0	0	0	4	0	0
Waringstown	0	1	0	0	0	0
Warren	0	1	0	8	0	0
Warrenpoint	0	0	0	3	0	0
Water Works	1	1	0	3	1	0
Waterside	0	0	0	8	0	0

	Bedsit	Bungalows	Cottages	Flats	Houses	Maisonettes
West Winds	0	1	0	22	6	0
Whitehead South	0	6	0	38	0	0
Whitehouse	0	1	0	43	0	0
Windsor	0	0	0	11	1	0
Woodstock	0	0	0	9	0	0
Woodvale	0	11	0	1	1	0
Dwellings Not Attributed To A Ward	1	15	0	183	10	19
Total	99	573	1	3,185	226	241

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities whether he plans to introduce a developers' contribution requiring new private housing developments to contain a social and affordable housing component.

(AQW 1336/16-21)

Mr Givan: Independent research, published by the then Department for Social Development in February 2016, highlights that most housing markets in Northern Ireland could not sustain a scheme of developer contributions at present. The report also highlights that there are key data and evidence gaps on issues pertinent to housing supply and the NI housing market more generally. My officials are working with officials in the Department for Infrastructure on these issues.

Department of Education

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many children in North Down have yet to receive a pre-school place.

(AQW 80/16-21)

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): The Education Authority (EA) has advised that there are fewer than five children residing in North Down, whose parents fully engaged with the pre-school admissions process to the end, that are currently unplaced.

Due to small numbers and the risk of potentially identifying individuals, the exact number has been redacted.

The EA has advised that pre-school places remain available in North Down and that parents have been made aware of these and can apply to those settings directly.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of children in each region who require bus escorts; (ii) the anticipated number of children in each region requiring bus escorts from September 2016; (iii) the number expected for Omagh and Strabane; (iv) the number of temporary staff currently employed in this role in each region; (v) the total cost of the provision of this service for the year ended 31 March 2016.

(AQW 640/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has informed me that in relation to the information requested in part (i) of your question, it is not held in a readily accessible format and an exercise to produce it would result in disproportionate cost. Allocation of escort supervision is not provided on a per pupil basis unless the pupil's statement of special educational need explicitly states that this is required.

In relation to future requirement for bus escorts, including those specifically in Omagh and Strabane, the level of provision has not yet been established. It is however, anticipated that the level of service provision will not change significantly.

The number of temporary staff currently employed as Bus Escorts in each region is as follows:

Belfast Region	41
South Eastern Region	23
North Eastern Region	34
Southern Region	36
Western Region	9
Total	143

The total cost of the bus escort provision of this service for the year ended 31 March 2016 was £4,233,272.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Education how many children are waiting for assessments during the statementing process.
(AQW 688/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has advised that 1162 children are waiting for assessments as part of the statutory statementing process as at 31 May 2016.

You may wish to note that the number above refers to children for whom a decision has been made to carry out a statutory assessment and who were within the ten week period, allowed by statute, to complete the assessment as at 31 May 2016.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the integrated schools that received applications for more pupils than could be accommodated for the September intake in each year from 2006 until 2016; (ii) how many places were available per primary and post-primary school; (iii) how many first preference applications were received; (iv) how many children were not able to be accommodated per school; and (v) how many of those children were allocated schools outside the integrated sector.
(AQW 757/16-21)

Mr Weir: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail how many children are currently awaiting a place in a Social Communication Unit.
(AQW 832/16-21)

Mr Weir: For the purposes of this response, the Education Authority (EA) has interpreted the term 'Social Communication Unit' to include Autism Specific Classes (ASCs) attached to mainstream primary schools and mainstream post-primary schools.

Across the EA 15 pupils are currently awaiting a place in an ASC. Discussions are ongoing in relation to potential placements or alternative arrangements for mainstream with adult support.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to outline what is the criteria for placing a child into a Social Communication Unit.
(AQW 833/16-21)

Mr Weir: For the purposes of this response, the Education Authority (EA) has interpreted the term 'Social Communication Unit' to include Autism Specific Classes (ASCs) attached to mainstream primary schools and mainstream post-primary schools.

The access criteria to ASCs across the EA is still subject to variation and will need to be harmonised as the EA moves forward with a focus on enhanced consistency and common criteria.

At this stage across the EA offices placement is based on professional advice as part of the statutory assessment process and is managed by special education administration.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education how he will ensure that funding allocated to schools to address social deprivation is not used for other purposes.
(AQW 899/16-21)

Mr Weir: The application of formula funding, and the delegation of financial and managerial responsibilities to Boards of Governors, are key elements in the Department's overall policy to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements, every grant-aided school receives a fully delegated budget. It is then the responsibility of the Board of Governors and Principal of individual schools to determine spend, planning and the use of the available delegated funding to maximum effect in accordance with their school's own needs and relative priorities.

As part of the School Development Planning Process, schools are required to produce a School Development Plan (SDP), a strategic plan for improvement.

As part of that plan schools in receipt of Targeting Social Need (TSN) funding complete a template to provide information on how the funds have been deployed to tackle educational underachievement and to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. These School Development Plans are developed by the school's Board of Governors and monitored by the Education Authority and, in the case of Catholic maintained schools, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

The process for the collection of information about the use of TSN funding has been reviewed and a revised mechanism for generating a system-wide report on the use of TSN funding is under development.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education to detail the average budgetary allocation made per primary school child under Targeting Social Need including any additional funding, broken down by band.
(AQW 900/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Targeting Social Need factor within the Common Funding Formula for primary schools includes elements for primary-age pupils and pupils in nursery classes within primary schools. For primary-age pupils, the measure used is Free

School Meal Entitlement (FSME). In the 2016-17 financial year, the overall average level of funding per FSME primary pupil, by social deprivation band, for the initial and additional social deprivation elements of the formula, is:

2016-17 CFS

	Average funding per FSME pupil
BAND 1	£641
BAND 2	£747
BAND 3	£949

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education for a breakdown, by band, of the number of primary schools in each constituency receiving funding for targeting social need.

(AQW 901/16-21)

Mr Weir: The number of primary schools within each constituency, by free school meal band (as used within the Targeting Social Need element of the Common Funding Formula), in the 2016-17 financial year, is:

2016-17 Common Funding Scheme (CFS)

Number of primary schools by FSME Band			
Constituency	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
Belfast East	10	2	7
Belfast North	9	3	24
Belfast South	13	3	10
Belfast West	1	3	25
East Antrim	25	8	5
East Londonderry	23	18	9
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	50	17	5
Foyle	8	7	24
Lagan Valley	23	2	6
Mid Ulster	53	15	3
Newry and Armagh	39	19	13
North Antrim	40	12	5
North Down	14	3	3
South Antrim	36	2	4
South Down	42	16	6
Strangford	27	7	3
Upper Bann	26	12	5
West Tyrone	35	20	12
Totals	474	169	169

Note: two primary schools had no FSME pupils, and therefore no TSN band.

Figures from 2016-17 CFS, for primary pupils only - excludes nursery-age pupils

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown, by band, of the number of post primary schools in each constituency receiving funding for targeting social need.

(AQW 902/16-21)

Mr Weir: The number of post-primary schools within each constituency, by free school meal band (as used within the Targeting Social Need element of the Common Funding Formula), in the 2016-17 financial year, is:

2016-17 Common Funding Scheme (CFS)

Number of post-primary schools by FSME Band			
Constituency	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
Belfast East	5	1	2
Belfast North	3	1	7
Belfast South	7	0	3
Belfast West	0	2	8
East Antrim	5	3	1
East Londonderry	6	1	6
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	9	8	4
Foyle	3	1	6
Lagan Valley	4	3	0
Mid Ulster	9	1	2
Newry and Armagh	6	6	3
North Antrim	6	5	2
North Down	3	3	0
South Antrim	3	3	0
South Down	7	6	2
Strangford	5	5	1
Upper Bann	7	5	2
West Tyrone	3	2	6
Totals	91	56	55

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education what is the enrolment figure for Brookeborough Shared campus.
(AQW 959/16-21)

Mr Weir: There is no enrolment figure for Brookeborough Shared Education Campus.

For the 2015/16 academic year, St. Mary's Primary School, Brookeborough has an enrolment figure of 51 and Brookeborough Primary School, an enrolment figure of 69.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education whether there is an enrolment threshold for a viable shared campus.
(AQW 960/16-21)

Mr Weir: There is no enrolment threshold for a viable Shared Education Campus. The Protocol Document for Expressions of Interest to the Shared Education Campuses Programme, as published on the Department's website, lists all the criteria against which projects applying to the Programme are assessed.

One of these criterion is 'Planning Authority endorsement'. The relevant Planning Authority, i.e. the Education Authority and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, must provide assurance that applicant schools meets the criteria in my Department's Sustainable Schools' policy, or where this is not the case, provide a rationale for their endorsement, including an explanation as to how the proposal will contribute to the delivery of sustainable provision in the area going forward.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Education how much a pre-school nursery place for a child with learning disabilities costs for (i) 4.5 hours; and (ii) 2.5 hours a day.
(AQW 980/16-21)

Mr Weir: Special educational needs provision is based on the individual needs of the child.

The Education Authority has advised that the cost of a school place is therefore dependent on the size and complexities of the class, in addition to the staffing allocation to the class. Accurate costs cannot therefore be calculated.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education to detail any departmental regulations or limitations placed on how funding allocated via Targeting Social Need can be spent.
(AQW 986/16-21)

Mr Weir: Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements, every grant-aided school receives a fully delegated budget. It is then the responsibility of the Board of Governors and Principal of individual schools to determine spend, planning and the use of the available delegated funding to maximum effect in accordance with their school's own needs and relative priorities.

Article 13(3) of the 1998 Education Order places a duty on Boards of Governors, through the scheme of management, to prepare, and periodically revise, a School Development Plan. As part of that plan schools in receipt of Targeting Social Need (TSN) funding complete a template to provide information on how the funds have been deployed to tackle educational underachievement and to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister of Education whether he intends to review the criteria for pre-school places.
(AQW 1057/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Pre-school Education Programme, whilst non-compulsory, is an important phase of education and priority is currently given to children from socially disadvantaged circumstances as part of wider efforts to tackle educational underachievement.

The current priority criterion that applies to children from socially disadvantaged circumstances will be reviewed to reflect changes as a result of Welfare Reform and the introduction of Universal Credit. The criteria for allocation of pre-school places will be an issue that I will give some detailed consideration before reaching any conclusions. Any proposed change to the definition will be subject to consultation.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail how much has been spent on School Enhancement Programmes in North Antrim.
(AQW 1083/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department's School Enhancement Programme (SEP) for school refurbishment or extension schemes costing between £0.5 - £4m represents a significant investment in the schools estate. There are currently 4 SEP schemes in North Antrim and to date £4,449,098 has been spent, with a further £3,161,377 in FY 16/17, £1,925,000 in FY 17/18 and £52,000 in FY 18/19. The breakdown of these figures is as below:

- 1 A two-storey extension for Ballymoney High School is being managed by the Education Authority (EA) and has an approved cost of £3.8m. This scheme is almost complete with £3,353,000 spent to date. Total remaining spend in FY 16/17 is estimated to be £618,000 with a further £6,000 in F/Y 17/18.
- 2 The provision of new sports facilities for Dalriada School in Ballymoney, has an approved cost of £2.2m. This scheme is at an advanced stage with current cash expenditure to date of £922,075. The remaining spend in FY 16/17 is estimated to be £1,142,377 with a further £27,000 in F/Y 17/18.
- 3 A scheme to extend and refurbish the old convent building at St Louis Grammar School in Ballymena was released to construction in February this year and is expected to be on site in the coming weeks. With an approved cost of £4m the current cash expenditure to date on this scheme is £90,699. The remaining spend in FY 16/17 is estimated to be £1,360,000 with a further £1,892,000 in F/Y 17/18 and £52,000 in F/Y 18/19.
- 4 A scheme for Slemish College in Ballymena will provide a new sports hall and 3G pitch at an approved cost of £3.8m. The final designs for this project are almost complete and once they are agreed this scheme will be held until funding for construction becomes available. Current cash expenditure to date on this project is £83,324. Remaining spend in FY 16/17 is currently estimated to be £41,000 and any additional spend will depend on future Capital funding being made available to the School enhancement Programme.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to outline the projected spend on North Antrim School Enhancement Programme projects over the next three financial years.
(AQW 1111/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department's School Enhancement Programme (SEP) for school refurbishment or extension schemes costing between £0.5 - £4m represents a significant investment in the schools estate. There are currently 4 SEP schemes in North Antrim and to date £4,449,098 has been spent, with a further £3,161,377 in FY 16/17, £1,925,000 in FY 17/18 and £52,000 in FY 18/19. The breakdown of these figures is as below:

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- 8 A scheme for Slemish College in Ballymena will provide a new sports hall and 3G pitch at an approved cost of £3.8m. The final designs for this project are almost complete and once they are agreed this scheme will be held until funding for construction becomes available. Current cash expenditure to date on this project is £83,324. Remaining spend in FY 16/17 is currently estimated to be £41,000 and any additional spend will depend on future Capital funding being made available to the School enhancement Programme.

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Education to outline his plans to develop a 14-19 statement or strategy with the Minister for the Economy in order to better co-ordinate the strengths of school, further education and other youth training to provide a wider range of options for young people.

(AQW 1116/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Minister for the Economy and I will work together to ensure a coherent and sufficiently broad range of subject choices and pathways are available to meet the needs and aspirations of every young person as well as the needs of the economy.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Education how many classroom assistants are currently working under emergency status.
(AQW 1120/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has advised that it is not possible to determine this information as the data is not collected or recorded across the organisation.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Education to outline the expenditure on School Enhancement Programmes in Foyle.
(AQW 1121/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department's School Enhancement Programme (SEP) for school refurbishment or extension schemes costing between £0.5 - 4m represents a significant investment in the schools estate. There are currently 3 SEP schemes in Foyle as follows;

- 9 A scheme for Newbuildings Primary School will see the major refurbishment of ageing school buildings and services to provide an environment that meets the current standards of the Building Handbook. The scheme has an approved cost of £1.923m and is being managed by the Education Authority. Work has commenced on site and is expected to be complete in September 2016.
10. A new 10 classroom extension will provide permanent accommodation for Broadbridge Primary School replacing existing mobiles. The scheme has an approved cost of £2.63m and construction is due to begin in July.
11. A scheme at St Columb's Grammar School for a new sports hall and associated ancillary accommodation along with refurbishment to provide a Drama suite is expected to be on site by the end of June 2016. The scheme has an approved cost of £2.669m.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Education to detail how many classroom assistants are working in schools, broken down by (i) permanent; and (ii) temporary positions.

(AQW 1122/16-21)

Mr Weir: The number of classroom assistants working in schools, broken down by (i) permanent; and (ii) temporary positions is as outlined in the table below.

Number of Classroom Assistants working in Schools

Number of Permanent Classroom Assistants	4,256
Number of Temporary Classroom Assistants	6,114

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Education to detail how many classroom assistants are contracted for less than 32.5 hours per week.

(AQW 1123/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has advised that the number of Classroom Assistants contracted to work for less than 32.5 hours per week is 9,257.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how his Department can mitigate the pressures on school budgets as a result of increased National Insurance and Pension costs.

(AQW 1137/16-21)

Mr Weir: I welcome the additional £30m of funding added to the 2016-17 Education Budget by the Executive, as part of the June Monitoring process.

Of this total, £20m has already been allocated with £15m going to the Aggregated Schools Budget and the remaining £5m allocated to the Education Authority for Special Education Needs pressures. A further £5m has been allocated to enable controlled and maintained schools to draw down on surpluses that they have built up previously. The final £5m will be used to fund additional costs arising from the increasing demands for Special Education Needs, and is in addition to the £5m allocated previously - to support this vulnerable group to allow them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

I fully recognise the pressures that schools are facing. It is my intention to give further consideration to the overall budget position with a view to identifying what, if any, additional funding can be made available to schools this year.

Mr Smith asked the Minister of Education whether the procurement of the construction element of the Strule/Lisanelly Shared Education Campus will proceed in lots or as a single construction contract.

(AQW 1159/16-21)

Mr Weir: Arvalee School and Resource Centre is currently being delivered as the first phase of the Strule Shared Education Campus (SSEC) Programme. A number of contracts, associated with demolition work and the construction of Arvalee School, have been awarded to local businesses.

The remainder of the SSEC Programme will be tendered as three separate contracts which are:

- (i) Site Preparation Works;
- (ii) Main Building Works; and
- (iii) Grass Pitches.

This approach has been endorsed by the SSEC Programme Board.

The procurement process for (i) Site Preparation Works commenced on 7 June 2016.

A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 10 June 2016 which provides further details on (ii) Main Building Works. In response to the PIN, interested parties within the construction industry have been given the opportunity to return a questionnaire which will be used to ascertain market interest.

My officials will use this information to inform the development of prequalification requirements that are proportionate and which allow firms, with the required capacity and capability, to apply on their own but will also allow smaller firms to come together and apply as part of a joint venture.

Full details of all tender opportunities are available from the central government procurement portal, which may be accessed via the following link <https://etendersni.gov.uk>

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to outline the members of the project board for the Moy Shared Education Campus.

(AQW 1169/16-21)

Mr Weir: The members of the Project Board for the Moy Shared Education Campus are detailed below:

Name of Board Member	
Mr M Graham – Joint Senior Responsible Officer	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Mrs M Maguire – Joint Senior Responsible Officer	Education Authority
Mrs M Hampsey	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Mr. P Crooks	Education Authority
Ms R Lilley	Department of Education
Mr P Irwin	Department of Education
Mr C Hamill	Board of Governors, St John's Primary School (PS), Moy
Ms S McLaughlin	Board of Governor, St John's PS
Fr. J M Connolly	Board of Governor, St John's PS
Mr J Kilpatrick	Principal, St John's PS
Mr A Chambers	Board of Governors, Moy Regional Primary School (PS), Moy
Rev A Mayes	Board of Governors, Moy Regional PS
Mr D Armstrong	Board of Governors, Moy Regional PS
Mrs J Little	Principal, Moy Regional PS

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education when the home to school transport review will be put out to consultation.
(AQW 1170/16-21)

Mr Weir: No decision has been taken at this time regarding a revision to the Home to School Transport policy. Any decision to review or amend the current policy in light of the recommendations from the Review team would be subject to full public consultation.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 54340/11-16, to outline any differences in the constitutions of Boards of Governors between the various school sectors.

(AQW 1171/16-21)

Mr Weir: The differences between the constitutions of Boards of Governors in the various school sectors are outlined in the table below and overleaf.

Controlled Sector	Governor Numbers	Foundation Governors	EA or DE Governors	Parent Governors	Teacher Governors
Primary & Secondary schools	9, 16 or 24 members	4/9ths or 3/8ths Transferors	2/9ths or 1/4qtr EA	2/9ths or 1/4qtr	1/9th or 1/8th
Nursery, Grammar or Special schools	8,16 or 24 members		3/8ths EA and 1/4qtr DE	1/4qtr	1/8th
Integrated Primary & Secondary schools ¹	14 or 21 members	1/7th Transferors & 1/7th Trustees	2/7ths EA	2/7ths	1/7th
Integrated Grammar or other integrated school ²	14 or 21 members		2/7ths EA and 2/7ths DE	2/7ths	1/7th
Maintained Sector	Governor Numbers	Foundation Governors	EA or DE Governors	Parent Governors	Teacher Governors
Primary & Secondary schools (in receipt of 85% capital grant)	10, 18 or 27 members	3/5ths or 5/9ths Trustees (and must include one parent)	1/5th or 2/9ths EA	1/10th or 1/9th	1/10th or 1/9th
Primary & Secondary schools (in receipt of 100% capital grant)	9, 18 or 27 members	4/9ths Trustees (and must include one parent)	2/9ths EA and 1/9th DE	1/9th	1/9th
Voluntary Grammar Sector	Governor Numbers	Foundation Governors	EA or DE Governors	Parent Governors	Teacher Governors
Voluntary Grammar (in receipt of 85% Capital grant)	10, 18,27, or 36	3/5ths or 5/9ths Trustees (and must include one parent)	1/5th or 2/9ths DE	1/10th or 1/9th	1/10th or 1/9th.
Voluntary Grammar (in receipt of 100% Capital grant)	9,18,27 or 36	4/9ths Trustees (and must include one parent)	1/3rd DE	1/9th	1/9th
Voluntary Grammar (not in receipt of capital grant)	13 or fewer 14 or more	Not regulated but must include one parent	0 0	1 2	1 2
Grant Maintained Integrated Sector	Governor Numbers	Foundation Governors	EA or DE Governors	Parent Governors	Teacher Governors
Primary & Secondary schools	16 or 24	3/8ths	1/4qtr DE	1/4qtr	1/8th

Notes:

- 1 The Principal is additional to the membership shown above.
- 2 Co-opted Governors are additional to the membership shown above.

1. Applies to a school, which before transformation to controlled integrated status, was a controlled or a Catholic Maintained School.
2. Applies to a school, which before transformation to controlled integrated status, was a voluntary school other than a Catholic Maintained School.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 54287/11-16, for a breakdown of the number of places allocated between the different teacher training providers in (i) 2014-15; (ii) 2015-16; and (iii) 2016-17.

(AQW 1172/16-21)

Mr Weir: Data on the breakdown of the number of teacher training places allocated between the teacher training providers is routinely published and is available on the Department's website at the following web link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/approved-intakes-initial-teacher-education-courses>

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Education to outline the action he plans to take in response to the recent report from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, which condemns academic selection in Northern Ireland and calls for the Executive to actively promote a fully integrated education system.

(AQW 1175/16-21)

Mr Weir: I am committed to respecting and progressing the rights of children and young people and it is important that a collective approach across Executive Departments is taken when considering UNCRC recommendations.

On the issue of selection, I have made it clear that I support the right of schools to select on the basis of academic ability. I will be discussing this issue with a wide range of stakeholders and will want to consider very carefully how any changes might be taken forward. Shared education policy sits within a broader education policy framework designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and this will be given due regard.

I am also awaiting receipt of a detailed report on Integrated Education, which I will also be considering.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education (i) how the additional £5m for Special Educational Needs allocated to his Department in the June Monitoring Round will be used; (ii) whether funding will be made available to maintain Full-Time Special Educational Needs nursery provision; and (iii) how specifically it will be made available to maintain Full-Time Special Educational Needs nursery provision.

(AQW 1182/16-21)

Mr Weir: The additional £5m for Special Educational Needs allocated to my Department in the June Monitoring Round will be used to address in-year pressures in the provision of Special Education Needs in both mainstream and special schools. In relation to parts (ii) & (iii) the Education Authority have advised that:

- A decision on the enduring model of provision for pre-school aged children in special schools has not yet been made. This is dependent on the outcome of an ongoing review;
- As an interim measure, arrangements have been put in place to cope with an estimated 20% increase in demand for places in September 2016; and
- In addition to creating some new provision, on an interim basis, 6 out of the 14 special schools who currently operate one full time pre-school class per day will offer two part time classes per day from September. This will enable them to increase the number of places available for children who need them.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education which schools in North Down are being considered for the Schools Enhancement Programme.

(AQW 1184/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department's School Enhancement Programme (SEP), which provides between £0.5 - £4m for school refurbishments or extensions, is delivering significant investment in the schools estate with positive impacts for both pupils and staff.

Currently one school within North Down, Sullivan Upper School, is being supported under SEP.

The Department does not hold a list of schools being considered for future funding under SEP, however I am reviewing the need for a second Call under the programme. At that time all schools, including those in North Down, will be invited to submit an application for SEP support.

I expect to make an announcement on this later this year, subject to the availability of capital funds.

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the Initial Teacher Education enrolments for the 2016-17 academic year at each of the teacher training providers suggested by the teacher demand model; and (ii) the final figures provided to each of the institutions.

(AQW 1225/16-21)

Mr Weir: The teacher demand model does not predict intake figures broken down by provider; rather it predicts the demand for places broken down between primary and post-primary schools and Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses. It is one of a number of factors which informs decisions on intakes. The model which informed the decision on intakes for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 years predicted a demand for 227 BEd places and 155 PGCE places.

Data on the number of teacher training places allocated between the teacher training providers is routinely published and is available on the Department's website at the following web link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/approved-intakes-initial-teacher-education-courses>

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education to detail how many children in the Western Education and Library Board region are awaiting support from the Language Communication Team following educational psychology assessments.

(AQW 1239/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Table below shows the current Language Communication Services waiting list for the Education Authority's western region.

Length of Waiting Time	4 Terms	3 Terms	2 Terms	1 Term	<1 Term	Total
From date of Educational Psychologist Assessment	5	17	7	35	29	93
From date of Receipt of Educational Psychologist Referral	None	12	16	24	41	93

These figures will be adjusted when children are offered support for September.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 244/16-21, for a breakdown of the number of children who have been waiting (i) one term; (ii) two terms; (iii) three terms; and (iv) four terms or more for support from the Language Communication Team following educational psychology assessments.

(AQW 1241/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Table below shows the current Language Communication Services waiting list for the Education Authority's western region.

Length of Waiting Time	4 Terms	3 Terms	2 Terms	1 Term	<1 Term	Total
From date of Educational Psychologist Assessment	5	17	7	35	29	93
From date of Receipt of Educational Psychologist Referral	None	12	16	24	41	93

These figures will be adjusted when children are offered support for September.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 146/16-21, what work is being undertaken with other Departments and their agencies to develop the Executive Strategy for Children and Young People.

(AQW 1282/16-21)

Mr Weir: As outlined in my response to AQW 146/16-21, the new Executive Strategy for Children and Young People is currently being developed through a co-design process with stakeholders, including Departments; their agencies; non-government organisations; children and young people; and parents.

In terms of engagement with Departments and their agencies, the development of the Strategy is being overseen by a programme board led by my Department and including senior representatives from Department of Health, Department of Communities, Department of Justice and Department of Economy. Representatives from the NI Statistical and Research Agency and the office of the Children's Commissioner also attend and give advice. The development of the Strategy is also a standing agenda item at meetings of the Children's Champions (a cross departmental forum represented by all Departments).

In addition, my officials have held a number of bilateral meetings with other Departments and agencies to discuss specific policy issues which affect the well-being of children and young people these have included the Health and Social Care Board, the Education Authority the Youth Justice Agency, Allied Health Professionals and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Further to this, the Children's Commissioner hosted workshops over two days with over 80 stakeholders from a range of different organisations, both government and non-government. These workshops were used to explore and discuss the key issues within each of the eight core areas relating to well-being as defined by the Children's Services Co-operation Act. The sessions were also used as an opportunity to discuss how the Strategy could secure better outcomes, better co-operation and better delivery for our children and young people.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Education to detail where the extra £30 million allocated to his Department in the June Monitoring Round will be spent.

(AQW 1302/16-21)

Mr Weir: Of the £30m allocated to my Department in the June Monitoring Round £20m addressed the funding commitment as published in the DE Budget 2016-17 document. As part of the opening budget, £15m of this was allocated to the Aggregated Schools Budget and the remaining £5m allocated to the Education Authority to address Special Education Needs. A further £5m was secured for drawdown of school surpluses under the Schools EYF Scheme and £5m to fund additional costs arising from the increasing demands for Special Education Needs.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the services provided in the Foyle constituency under the Sure Start initiative; and (ii) the eligibility criteria for families that wish to access these services.

(AQW 1327/16-21)

Mr Weir: Sure Start programmes have been designed specifically to reflect and respond to local needs. For that reason, each Sure Start project determines the services it provides and the manner in which it provides them. There are however, six core elements which must feature in any Sure Start programme, namely:

- Outreach and home visiting services;
- Family support including befriending, social support and parenting information;
- Good quality play, learning and childcare experiences for children;
- Primary and community healthcare and advice;
- Speech language and communication support; and
- Support for all children in the community recognising their different needs.

Services are provided by Little Hands, Edenballymore Shantallow and Waterside Sure Start projects, within the Foyle constituency.

All children aged under four and their families, within the catchment areas of each Sure Start can access services, as provision is universal within the targeted areas.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Education to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through his Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1355/16-21)

Mr Weir:

- (i) The table below shows Major Capital Investment projects, with a combined value of £55.6 million, which have been completed, in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, during the last ten years:

School	Date Work Completed	Total Cost (£ million)
Coranny/Cornagague Primary School (PS)	February 2012	2.4
Lisbellaw PS	August 2010	3.1
Mount Lourdes Grammar	August 2010	5.4
St Patrick's College	May 2008	13.2
Enniskillen Integrated PS	July 2007	2.6
Fivemiletown High School	August 2006	10.6
Kesh PS	June 2006	1.5
Mount Lourdes Grammar	June 2006	4.7
Maguiresbridge PS	March 2006	1.3
Windmill Integrated PS	March 2006	1.8
St Franchea's College	January 2006	9.0

- (ii) & (iii) In relation to projects in progress and future capital projects, the Department's Major Capital Investment Programme currently includes a large number of new build and School Enhancement projects representing significant investment in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency, detailed below:

Major Capital Investment Projects announced since June 2012:

School	Current position	Total Estimated Cost (£ million)
Enniskillen Model PS	Announced June 2012 – In design	6.0
St Patrick's Academy	Announced January 2013 – Anticipated to start on site July 2016	28.7
Devenish College	Announced January 2013 – In design	23.2
Enniskillen Royal Grammar School	Announced January 2013 – Business case under development	17.0
Moy Shared Education Campus (SEC)	Announced July 2014 (first tranche of SEC projects) – Business Case under development	6.4
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	Announced 15 March 2016 – Very early stages of planning	2.5
Enniskillen Integrated PS	Announced 23 March 2016 (Fresh Start Agreement (FSA) Funding Package) – Very early stages of planning	Unknown
Brookeborough SEC	Announced 23 March 2016 (FSA) – Very early stages of planning	Unknown

School Enhancement Programme (SEP) Projects announced March 2014:

School	Current position	Total Estimated Cost (£ million)
Willowbridge PS	On site	3.9
Erne Integrated College	Phase 1 complete. Phase 2 at construction tender stage	4.0
Mount Lourdes Grammar	At tender construction stage	1.1
Integrated College Dungannon	Anticipated to start on site July 2016	3.1
St Michael's College	In design	1.1

All projects that are not contractually committed will be subject to funding being available at the time to permit the project to proceed to tender stage.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Education to outline the provisions in place to fill the gap between Mild Learning Difficulties education and Severe Learning Difficulties education to allow schools designated MLD to apply for additional funding for teaching assistants where there is a proven need.

(AQW 1385/16-21)

Mr Weir: The statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) rests with schools and the Education Authority (EA) who are responsible for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making provision for children with SEN. This legislation does not give the Department of Education (DE) any role in the identification and assessment of children's SEN or any power to intervene in the process, which is intended to be conducted between parents, schools and the EA.

The Education Authority has confirmed that the staffing for all special schools is awarded based on identified needs and following discussions between the school and EA officers, irrespective of the current designation of the school.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) his capital plan for replacement premises for Craigavon senior high schools in Portadown and Lurgan; and (ii) whether he will be visiting both schools in the near future.

(AQW 1387/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department's Major Capital Investment Programme currently includes a large number of new build and School Enhancement Projects representing a significant investment of circa £95m in the Upper Bann Constituency. All projects that are not contractually committed will be subject to funding being available at the time to permit the project to proceed to tender stage. The current Programme does not include a project for Craigavon Senior High School.

I am currently considering the merits of making a call for new projects to proceed under the School Enhancement Programme (SEP). The SEP provides extension and/or refurbishment projects ranging from £0.5m to £4m. The Education Authority, the Managing Authority, may wish to consider the programme when it is announced for these schools.

Diary permitting, I would consider visiting any school to which I am invited.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department will take account of its statutory obligations towards shared education when dealing with temporary variation requests from schools, including schools in Omagh.
(AQW 1392/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 places a duty on the Department of Education to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education. It also places a duty on my Department to consider shared education when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans.

My Department is currently considering the implications of these duties in applying the Temporary Variation policy for all schools.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department provides support to help meet the educational and developmental needs of children that require speech, language and occupational therapy in nursery.
(AQW 1394/16-21)

Mr Weir: The statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) rests with schools, and the Education Authority (EA) which is responsible for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making provision for children with SEN.

As outlined in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, prime responsibility for the provision of therapeutic services, following the issue of a statement of SEN, rests with health and social services. Where a statement specifies such therapy as educational provision and this is not provided by a health authority, ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the provision is made rests with the EA.

Agencies work together so that this support is provided as soon as possible following the issue of a statement of SEN.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Education how many Year 7 pupils have not received offers of placement in a post-primary school for September 2016.
(AQW 1449/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has confirmed that, as of 20 June 2016, there are 46 Year 7 children who remain unplaced. The Education Authority's Transfer Officers are working with families to secure suitable places for all children due to begin post-primary education in September 2016.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Education how he will address the issue of Year 8 oversubscription in individual post-primary schools, such as Lisnagarvey High School.
(AQW 1450/16-21)

Mr Weir: Open Enrolment policy allows parents to state their preference for the school they wish their child to attend. There will always be schools that are more popular than others; however this does not necessarily mean that there is a shortage of places in an area. For example, while Lisnagarvey High School is oversubscribed for Year 8 admission in September, there remain places available in the non-denominational sector in Lisburn.

Where there is pressure in an area, schools can apply for a Temporary Variation (TV) to their approved numbers. TVs can address short-term pressure in an area but are not about granting places to one school while places remain at others. TVs will only be granted for those children who are next in line for a place, and who have no alternative school with places available within a reasonable distance of their home address. For post-primary children reasonable distance is considered to be a journey time of no more than one hour by public transport and no more than 15 miles.

Turning to the longer-term position, the Education Authority, working in conjunction with CCMS and the sectoral bodies, is preparing the draft Area Plans for primary, post-primary and special provision. These will be submitted to the Department in July 2016. It is expected that Area Planning Local Groups will identify any issues of shortfall in provision which will be reflected in the Area Plan for 2017-2020 and action to address issues will be outlined in the supporting Annual Action Plan.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education to detail the financial support his Department provides to help parents meet the cost of school uniforms for the 2016-17 academic year.
(AQW 1475/16-21)

Mr Weir: Financial assistance is available for parents through the Education Authority's (EA) School Uniform/Physical Education Clothing Scheme. Parents may apply through the EA for assistance under the Scheme provided they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

The levels of assistance in 2015/16 were:

- primary school - £35.75
- post-primary/special school (under 15) - £51
- post-primary/special school (over 15) - £56
- post-primary/special school PE - £22

The levels of assistance for 2016/17 are currently being considered.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education whether he will ask the Education Authority to convene a meeting of the proposed practitioners group and parents group to consider alternative solutions to the reduction in hours proposed in response to the increased demand in Special Educational Needs nursery places.

(AQW 1555/16-21)

Mr Weir: You will be aware that I have emphasised the need for meaningful engagement with those directly affected by this issue. The Chair of the Education Authority has assured me that the review will involve the establishment of a professional practitioner group and a parent stakeholder group.

It will be for the Education Authority to put in place the arrangements for the establishment of the necessary groups and to convene meetings as appropriate.

Department of Finance

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Finance what plans he has to give commercial rates relief to businesses faced with closure under the current system.

(AQW 172/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir (The Minister of Finance): As the new Minister I would like to lighten the burden of rates on struggling local businesses through a more selective use of reliefs and exemptions. The outcome of the recent consultation undertaken as part of the Review of the Non Domestic lends support to this approach.

Clearly a range of factors may lead to a business closing, and it will not necessarily be the rates bill that causes it. By the same token it does not make sense to render some businesses unviable by the imposition of excessive rates.

I will be looking at a range of options over the coming months for reforming the system and distributing the rating burden in a fairer and more acceptable way.

On the face of it, however, devising a special relief scheme that targets business facing closure would be challenging given the level of investigation that would be needed to identify genuinely worthy cases (particularly given the variety of reasons that lie behind business closures) and the difficulty of devising a scheme that provides real value for money for the public purse.

As matters stand, businesses facing closure should approach Land & Property Services to discuss the options that are available to them in terms of coming to a suitable payment arrangement. It is also worth mentioning that there is a hardship relief scheme already in place, though this is confined to businesses that can prove they have suffered from a temporary external crisis, as a result of exceptional circumstances.

More detailed guidance on what businesses should do if they are struggling to pay their bill, can be accessed at the official link: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/business-rates>

In closing I would thank you for your question. As the Minister in charge of this area I am certainly not complacent about the issue, nor the current arrangements within the rating system. It is a matter I will consider as part of my Department's ongoing review and at an Executive level in the wider context of potential actions arising from the new Programme for Government. I would be happy to visit your constituency with you to review this issue.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance what plans he has to make Stormont estate more welcoming to people from all community backgrounds.

(AQW 261/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Stormont Estate comprises 407 acres of parkland with conserved woodlands, wetlands and shrub areas. As well as the Assembly, it houses a castle, the headquarters for four government departments and accommodates over 2,000 civil servants. The site also includes the Mo Mowlam Children's Play Park and the Pavilion sports facilities.

The publicly accessible parkland areas are open 365 days of the year and welcome people from all community backgrounds. The Estate is enjoyed every day by families, walkers, joggers and cyclists. The Estate management team facilitates approximately 40 events each year, ranging from large scale events such as the 'Race for Life', held on 29 May 2016 and which attracted over 4,000 participants, to smaller events organised by schools, youth groups and local organisations. The Estate hosts a weekly 5k Parkrun, attracting approximately 150 runners each Saturday morning. The Estate is also a popular stop on Belfast sightseeing tours drawing around four tour buses an hour.

My officials continually seek opportunities to enhance the Estate and I recently have asked them to develop options on how the facilities on the Estate can be further developed to encourage greater community use.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance for his assessment of the impact that an United Kingdom exit from the European Union would have on PEACE IV funding.

(AQW 331/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: In the event of a vote to leave the European Union, negotiations on the terms of exit would be led by the UK Government in consultation with devolved administrations, including the Executive. Pending the outcome of any such negotiations, it is not possible to assess the impact on PEACE IV, or other EU funded programmes.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance how he will ensure that the Executive receive secondary taxation benefits from the Treasury in relation to any future changes to the rate of corporation tax.

(AQW 333/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: In terms of Corporation Tax devolution, the Stormont House Agreement states that the local Block Grant will be adjusted to reflect the Corporation Tax revenues foregone by the British Government, but that it will not take into account second round effects on other taxes.

The precise mechanism for the Block Grant adjustment has yet to be agreed and my Department continues to engage with the British Treasury on this. As we take forward this work, and consider our approach to devolution more generally, I am committed to securing a settlement which is both fair and proportionate, and which also enables the Executive to make decisions that are in the best interests of our economy, our budget and our people.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Finance to detail the NAMA property portfolio that has been sold (i) regionally; and (ii) within West Tyrone, since it was first acquired by Cerberus in April 2014.

(AQW 362/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department does not hold this information.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Finance to detail the NAMA property portfolio located in West Tyrone that was purchased by Cerberus in April 2014.

(AQW 363/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department does not hold this information.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Finance to detail the NAMA property portfolio that was purchased by Cerberus in April 2014.

(AQW 365/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department does not hold this information.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance to detail the NAMA property portfolio in North Antrim which (i) has been sold; and (ii) is still held.

(AQW 426/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department does not hold this information.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance whether all relevant documentation held by his Department and relating to NAMA has been released to the Committee for Finance.

(AQW 428/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department shared all of the documentation it held relating to the Project Eagle sale with the previous Committee for Finance and Personnel during the last mandate. I am advised that some of those papers also contained information either not related to the NAMA sale, or of a personal or commercially sensitive nature. As such, the Department redacted this information at that time as it was either not relevant to the Committee inquiry, or in order to comply with data protection obligations.

Subsequently departmental officials sought to engage with the individuals referred to in those documents to agree the release of this personal information as per legal advice in this regard. Where such agreement was reached, the Department provided the Committee with further unredacted versions of those documents in March 2016.

Transparency and public confidence is of the utmost importance to me as Minister of Finance. I can assure you that I will be reviewing all of this material, the level of redaction applied, to ascertain if further information can be released.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Finance whether he has any plans to alleviate rates pressure on small and medium sized enterprises.

(AQW 431/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: In terms of the future of rates support for businesses, it should be noted that it is unlikely to be feasible for support to be targeted at one particular group, such as SMEs. Almost 98% of businesses in NI are SMEs and it would be unaffordable to reduce everyone's bill and maintain funding for the range of essential services that rates help pay for.

I am however very keen to look at ways of targeting business rate support. My Department has recently concluded a consultation on alternatives to the small business rate relief scheme. That scheme was introduced during the downturn and although it served a useful purpose at the time, an independent evaluation undertaken by the Economic Policy Centre at the University of Ulster concluded that it was not an effective long term measure and recommended a more targeted approach.

It is my intention to present a range of options to the Executive in the coming weeks, when I have considered the views of stakeholders who responded to the recent consultation. I will, of course, keep the Assembly advised as matters develop.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Finance whether he will hold discussions with the UK Treasury to ensure that MLAs have equal accesses to the Child Tax Credit MPs Hotline which can be accessed by AMs, MSPs, MPs and MEPs.

(AQW 496/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My officials have confirmed with their counterparts in HMRC that MLAs have equal access to the MP Helpline at Revenue and Customs, including advice and guidance on Child Tax Credit. HMRC have also advised that Members can raise tax queries via a dedicated email address (correspondence-team.mincom@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk). I understand HMRC will shortly be writing to newly elected Members to advise them of this.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance, since the Northern Ireland Civil Service recruitment and promotion embargo was put in place in 2014 with staff waiting to be posted from Executive Officer II to Executive Officer I and from Executive Officer I to Staff Officer following internal promotion boards, how many staff at each grade in each Department (i) were offered a post but are not yet posted; and (ii) are yet to be offered a post.

(AQW 499/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Since the Northern Ireland Civil Service recruitment and promotion embargo was put in place in 2014, in relation to the

EO1 competition

- 0 candidates were offered a post but are not yet posted.
- 50 candidates yet to be offered a post in the following departments:

DAERA – 1

- DE – 1
- DfI – 3
- DfC – 45

SO competition

- 0 candidates were offered a post but are not yet posted.
- 141 candidates yet to be offered a post in the following departments:
 - DAERA – 14
 - DE – 4
 - DfC – 46
 - DfE – 9
 - DfI – 16
 - DoF – 23
 - DoH – 2
 - DOJ – 27

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance to detail the National Asset Management Agency property portfolio in West Tyrone which (i) has been sold; and (ii) is still held

(AQW 533/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department does not hold this information.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Finance for an update on the business rates review.

(AQW 544/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The latest update on the Review of the Non-Domestic Rating System can be found on the Department's website at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/review-non-domestic-rating-system>.

You will also find the consultation report and all the responses.

As the new Minister I would like to lighten the burden of rates on struggling local businesses through a more selective use of reliefs and exemptions. The outcome of the recent consultation undertaken as part of the Review of the Non Domestic Rating lends support to this approach.

I will be looking at a range of options over the coming months for reforming the system and distributing the rating burden in a fairer and more acceptable way. I will, of course, keep the Assembly informed as matters progress.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance what steps will be taken by the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to address the lack of representation of women at Permanent Secretary level.

(AQW 551/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is the responsibility of the Department of Finance and all such recruitment must be made on the basis of merit in fair and open competition. My Department is committed to addressing areas of underrepresentation at all levels within the NICS, including senior management levels. The main driver for effecting change within any group of staff is recruitment, therefore positions at this level are externally advertised and all advertisements include a statement encouraging applications from women. There are currently no vacancies at Permanent Secretary level.

The Senior Women's Network (SWN) was launched by the Head of the Civil Service Malcolm McKibbin in late 2014. The aim of this group is to support the leadership development of senior women in the NICS through positive role modelling and peer networking and to determine how the SWN can contribute to the wider issue of addressing female talent management and addressing barriers to female progression in the NICS.

The Senior Women's Network (SWN) has commenced a range of events to identify and learn from positive role models and peer to peer learning and networking. An NICS Diversity Champion has been appointed at Permanent Secretary level, supported by Diversity Champions in every department as well as thematic leads working across departments. The SWN provide the Gender Champion within the NICS Diversity network and are working with this group to increase the recognition of the importance of diversity issues including the roll out of unconscious bias training within the NICS.

The SWN has made recommendations to Permanent Secretaries on issues to address evidenced barriers for females in progressing to higher levels within the service and received approval to take forward a number of actions designed to build on current progress of talent management in the NICS. SWN is in the process of taking these actions forward which include the introduction of mentoring circles and job shadowing opportunities.

Significant progress in the area of female representation at senior management grades in the NICS (Grade 5 and above) has been made in the last ten years, rising from 22.3% in 2005 to 34.9 % in 2015.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance to detail the number of manufacturing jobs (i) created; and (ii) lost in each year since May 2007.

(AQW 588/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency collects information on the number of employee jobs in the Quarterly Employment Survey. The Quarterly Employment Survey collects information on the total number of jobs, therefore statistics can only be provided on the net change in jobs between two points in time.

The table overleaf provides information on the net change in employee jobs in manufacturing in Northern Ireland, for the period requested.

Table: Northern Ireland manufacturing jobs June 2007 to June 2015

Period	Total manufacturing employee jobs	Annual net change
June 2007	84,330	410
June 2008	83,570	-770
June 2009	75,640	-7,930
June 2010	73,030	-2,610
June 2011	73,570	540
June 2012	74,680	1,110
June 2013	74,120	-560
June 2014	75,310	1,190
June 2015	79,180	3,870

* Figures are seasonally adjusted, rounded to the nearest 10 and subject to revision.

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Quarterly Employment Survey

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance what safeguards are in place to ensure that housing valuations offered under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme are fair and reflective of current market conditions.

(AQW 599/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Land & Property Services (LPS) takes instructions from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to agree the purchase of properties on its behalf under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED) scheme. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is in place between LPS and the NIHE detailing the service standards in the provision of professional valuation advice under the scheme. This requires that all valuations are carried out by Registered Valuers who are professionally qualified members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The valuation is made in accordance with the definition of purchase price outlined in the scheme and with reference to analysis of relevant market transactions in the locality.

The valuer will discuss the valuation with the property owner or their appointed agent in an effort to reach agreement at a suitable and fair figure. If agreement is not reached, the applicant may request a review of the original valuation reported by LPS, and this is carried out by a valuer who was not involved in the original assessment and is more senior to the original valuer.

A total of 86 owners received offers from LPS in respect of the SPED scheme in the period from January 2012 until end of May 2016. In respect of these cases, 13 were not agreed with the applicants.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance (i) how many applicants have received offers from Land and Property Services for their property under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme in the last five years; and (ii) how many of these offers were rejected by the applicants.

(AQW 600/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Land & Property Services (LPS) takes instructions from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to agree the purchase of properties on its behalf under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED) scheme. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is in place between LPS and the NIHE detailing the service standards in the provision of professional valuation advice under the scheme. This requires that all valuations are carried out by Registered Valuers who are professionally qualified members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The valuation is made in accordance with the definition of purchase price outlined in the scheme and with reference to analysis of relevant market transactions in the locality.

The valuer will discuss the valuation with the property owner or their appointed agent in an effort to reach agreement at a suitable and fair figure. If agreement is not reached, the applicant may request a review of the original valuation reported by LPS, and this is carried out by a valuer who was not involved in the original assessment and is more senior to the original valuer.

A total of 86 owners received offers from LPS in respect of the SPED scheme in the period from January 2012 until end of May 2016. In respect of these cases, 13 were not agreed with the applicants.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance whether he will review the extension of rate relief to clubs without licenced premises so that spectator stands are included.

(AQW 608/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I recall this was an issue that arose at the Finance Committee at the very end of the last mandate.

As you may be aware from your research on this policy, a change to rate relief of the type referred to would require changes to primary legislation. Such a change, therefore, cannot be made through the forthcoming statutory rules provided for under the Rates (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, which will give effect to the policy which provides enhanced relief to unlicensed community amateur sports clubs. Indeed, this would have still been the case under the Private Members Bills that you brought forward.

Looking ahead, however, I will also be asking my officials to look at more fundamental changes that could be made to the treatment of amateur sports clubs, as part of the wider review of rating policy, to ensure reliefs are better targeted.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Finance whether he has plans to introduce regulations for apartment management companies.

(AQW 665/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Northern Ireland Law Commission has considered property management in relation to apartments and has recommended the regulation of managing agents, rather than additional regulation for property management companies. Such companies are already subject to regulation under general company law and the issue of additional regulation would not be a matter for my Department.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Finance for his assessment of the benefits of removing Airport Passenger Duty for the City of Derry Airport.

(AQW 666/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Abolishing or significantly reducing Air Passenger Duty (APD) has the potential to encourage greater numbers of passengers travelling through airports in the North, which will in turn help to stimulate greater economic activity

locally. However, my Department has not undertaken specific analysis in relation to the potential impact on the City of Derry Airport.

Under EU rules, if the Executive were to devolve and then abolish short-haul APD, it could potentially face a significant annual Block Grant adjustment in relation to the tax revenues forgone by the British Exchequer. However, the precise costs in this regard have not yet been identified. We need to examine this further and that is why I have called for a review of the ongoing application of APD by London on all short haul routes across Britain and Europe.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Finance to detail the amount of funding required to remove Airport Passenger Duty for local passengers.

(AQW 668/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Abolishing or significantly reducing Air Passenger Duty (APD) has the potential to encourage greater numbers of passengers travelling through airports in the North, which will in turn help to stimulate greater economic activity locally. However, my Department has not undertaken specific analysis in relation to the potential impact on the City of Derry Airport.

Under EU rules, if the Executive were to devolve and then abolish short-haul APD, it could potentially face a significant annual Block Grant adjustment in relation to the tax revenues forgone by the British Exchequer. However, the precise costs in this regard have not yet been identified. We need to examine this further and that is why I have called for a review of the ongoing application of APD by London on all short haul routes across Britain and Europe.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance to detail (i) life expectancy; and (ii) healthy life expectancy rates, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 683/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir:

- i) The latest available figures for Life Expectancy at Birth by Constituency, which were derived using data for the three year period 2011 to 2013, are presented in Table 1, overleaf.

Table 1: Period Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex and Constituency, 2011-2013

Constituency	Number of years	
	Male	Female
Belfast East	77.5	81.5
Belfast North	74.9	80.7
Belfast South	78.4	82.4
Belfast West	73.9	79.8
East Antrim	78.7	82.6
East Londonderry	78.8	82.5
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	78.2	83.2
Foyle	76.5	80.7
Lagan Valley	79.5	83.5
Mid Ulster	79.3	83.8
Newry and Armagh	78.0	81.9
North Antrim	78.6	83.4
North Down	79.3	82.7
South Antrim	78.7	82.7
South Down	79.1	83.4
Strangford	79.5	83.0
Upper Bann	78.2	82.8
West Tyrone	78.8	83.3

- ii) Healthy life expectancy estimates are not available at constituency level.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Finance to detail (i) the total number of suicides in West Tyrone; and (ii) the number of suicides under the age of 18, over the last five years.

(AQW 777/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir:

- i) There were 51 deaths registered due to suicide¹ in West Tyrone Assembly Area between 2010 and 2014, the latest year for which figures are available.
- ii) Of the 51 deaths registered due to suicide¹ in West Tyrone Assembly Area during this period, 3 were of people aged under 18.

¹ In considering suicide events it is conventional to include cases where the cause of death is classified as either 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury' or 'Undetermined intent'. Since 2001, the ICD10 codes used for 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury' are X60-X84 and Y87.0 and the ICD10 codes used for 'Undetermined intent' are Y10-Y34 and Y87.2

Mr Smith asked the Minister of Finance, in relation to the 2014/15 Excess Vote, to detail how this will be funded and whether any other spending areas will be affected.

(AQW 802/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Excess Vote referenced in the question relates to the Estimate for the then Department of Finance & Personnel – Superannuation and Other Allowances Account. The incorrect rate was used to calculate the interest on scheme liabilities resulting in a £68.3million breach of the net resource limit. This is a technical excess and the cash controls were not exceeded.

Accordingly, the Excess Vote is purely to rectify the net resource requirement for 2014-15, no additional cash is required and the as the net resource excess is Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) there is no impact on other spending areas.

Mr Smith asked the Minister of Finance to detail (i) the current level of Executive debt; (ii) the level of Executive debt over each of the last ten years, broken down by source of debt; and (iii) the total level of interest paid on each type of debt in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 807/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The current level of outstanding Executive debt as shown in the PI&E account at the end of 2015-16 stands at £2,051 million. This is comprised of borrowing from the National Loans Fund, for both onward lending to councils etc and under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative, along with some historic borrowing related to Ulster Saving Certificates and Ulster Development Bonds. The attached table outlines the level of outstanding debt at the end of each financial year and the level of interest paid for each type of borrowing in the last ten years.

£000s

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Analysis of Public Debt										
Ulster Savings Certificates	2,228	2,156	2,027	1,930	1,822	1,749	1,702	1,682	1,663	1,650
Ulster Development Bonds	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
National Loans Fund	994,080	881,823	763,849	633,251	603,508	519,479	442,069	372,475	308,851	253,641
National Loans Fund iro RRI	614,203	707,300	721,955	816,028	798,912	1,149,344	1,254,161	1,392,482	1,582,208	1,796,302
Total	1,610,523	1,591,291	1,487,843	1,451,221	1,404,254	1,670,584	1,697,944	1,766,651	1,892,734	2,051,605
Analysis of Interest paid										
Ulster Savings Certificates	165	122	150	152	201	81	56	54	43	21
National Loans Fund	89,242	83,190	73,459	64,429	54,640	45,364	38,801	31,976	25,636	20,369
National Loans Fund iro RRI	26,578	31,109	32,775	33,343	36,396	40,291	45,440	47,246	51,038	55,077
Total	115,985	114,421	106,384	97,924	91,237	85,736	84,297	79,276	76,717	75,467

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance what plans he has to introduce measures within his Department's remit to benefit the LGBT community.
(AQW 814/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I am fully committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and will ensure that we fulfil the commitments laid out in the Department's Equality Scheme when considering any new policies or actions.

My Department has established a Diversity Advisory Group, which includes a LGBT representative. The group aims to increase awareness of diversity and identify opportunities for progress. Members are currently supporting wider NICS approaches through the Diversity Champions' Group and future work may include the establishment of an LGBT staff network.

In terms of our plans for the wider LGBT community, I am a long-term advocate of marriage equality and I would like to see the Assembly legislate in this respect. The requisite legislation will touch on matters that are not within the remit of my Department and will therefore require discussion and support from the Executive. I have asked my officials to start working on a draft Bill so that, as soon as the Executive and the Assembly signal their readiness, we will be able to move swiftly forwards with the legislative process.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to detail how many (i) civil servants; and (ii) public servants that left their employment under the Voluntary Exit Scheme were re-employed in the same or similar role as an agency worker within six months of initially leaving.
(AQW 840/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: In relation to civil servants the information requested is not held by my Department, as it is permissible under the rules of the NICS Compensation Scheme for a beneficiary of the Voluntary Exit Scheme to take up employment subsequently as an Agency Worker.

The Scheme's objective was to deliver NICS pay-bill savings, required by the Executive. Agency workers are not NICS employees and so, should an Employment Agency decide to use former NICS staff to fill temporary vacancies for work on an NICS contract, this does not undermine the objective of the Scheme, which is now closed, as the Executive's pay-bill reduction business objective will be met.

My Department does not hold any information relating to public servants.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Finance to detail the number of lone pensioners over the age of seventy five who are accessing Rate Relief.
(AQW 861/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Land & Property Services can only identify lone pensioners if they apply directly to LPS for a Lone Pensioner Allowance. As at 31st May 2016, there were 19,659 lone pensioners over the age of 75 who were in receipt of either a Lone Pensioner Allowance award administered by Land & Property Services or another rate relief.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance what work has been done with the Minister of Health to identify funding of sign language classes for parents of children who are born deaf.
(AQW 880/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Sign Language Roadmap Review report and associated action plan made a number of recommendations to build capacity to support British and Irish sign language as a minority language and improve access to services for deaf sign language users and their families.

It is for the Executive to consider the way forward in respect of this cross-cutting issue.

Mr Smith asked the Minister of Finance for his assessment of whether a reduction to a 12.5 per cent rate of Corporation Tax is affordable.
(AQW 885/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Executive has committed to set the North's Corporation Tax rate at 12.5% from April 2018. Real progress has already been made and my Department continues to work with the British Treasury and HMRC to take forward the necessary preparations.

While the precise costs and mechanism for adjusting the Block Grant have yet to be agreed, I will continue to work to secure an outcome that is both fair and proportionate and I am confident the reduced rate will be affordable.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance for an update on the reform of public sector exit payments.
(AQW 946/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As part of the Budget 2015-16 process and Stormont House Agreement, the Executive agreed to adopt a comprehensive programme of Public Sector Reform and Restructuring.

It is estimated that the Voluntary Exit Schemes in the public sector will exit approximately 4,300 full time equivalent staff in 2015-16 at a cost of £171.7m. This is estimated to generate in the region of approximately £43.7m paybill savings in the year

2015-16, with the full year savings expected to be around £158.9m. A more accurate picture will be known once all staff under the 2015-16 schemes has exited (expected by September 2016).

The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan confirmed the flexibility to use up to £200 million of borrowing in 2016-17 to fund voluntary exit schemes. Allocations of £117.6 million were made to departments in Budget 2016-17 in respect of their proposed schemes. The revised allocations of £97.3m were made as part of June Monitoring.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Finance what plans his Department has for Rathkeltair House in Downpatrick; and whether he plans to relocate any civil service jobs to this site.

(AQW 969/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department and the Department for Communities have agreed to co-fund renovation works at Rathkeltair House and the project should be awarded before the end of the year. These works will deliver a modern, fit for purpose building which will both provide a Jobs and Benefits Office and increase the number of staff that can work in the building.

This will facilitate the relocation of civil servants from two buildings in the Downpatrick area to the renovated Rathkeltair House, as part of the rationalisation of the government office estate. My Department has no current plans to relocate further staff to this site.

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Finance, given assurances provided in the 2011-2016 mandate, whether he will bring forward legislation to reform laws on multi-unit housing and their designated common areas.

(AQW 1046/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The issues which have arisen in relation to the management of common areas are of relevance to a number of departments. The Northern Ireland Law Commission has recommended the introduction of a register of managing agents, but that recommendation can only be implemented if the relevant departments agree the oversight arrangements for the register. I will do all that I can to secure the necessary agreement. I will also be asking if any additional legislative measures should be put in place with a view to driving up standards for service provision and providing adequate protections for homeowners.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance whether Ministers can appoint external advisers other than as Special Advisers.

(AQW 1084/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: It is for each Minister to decide, should a business need arise, whether to appoint external advisers other than as Special Advisers, and to ensure that such an appointment is in accordance with relevant legislation and NICS policy, where these apply.

The appointment of Special Advisers is covered by the Code Governing the Appointment of Special Advisers made under Section 8 (4) of Civil Service (Special Advisers) Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance whether the Budget Review Group within the Executive is defunct.

(AQW 1143/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The new Executive has not yet determined whether it will require a Budget Review Group type entity to support its deliberations.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 51284/11-16, for an update on the answer.

(AQW 1144/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Work is ongoing with Department of Finance, HM Treasury and the Northern Ireland Office engaged in identifying suitable individuals to take forward the work of the Independent Fiscal Council.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 53168/11-16, for an update on the answer.

(AQW 1145/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Funding for the Fiscal Council and Civic Advisory panel will not be determined until the bodies are formally established.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 36/16-21, for a breakdown of the structural funds figure.

(AQW 1146/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The breakdown of Structural Funds receipts is shown in the following table:

Programme and Fund	Receipts
2007-2013 Programmes	
Competitiveness and Employment Programme ERDF	£10,631,775.91

Programme and Fund	Receipts
Competitiveness and Employment Programme ESF	£15,814,172.99
PEACE III Programme ERDF	£11,984,254.01
INTERREG IVA Programme ERDF	£4,232,329.27
2014-2020 Programmes	
Investment for Growth and Jobs ERDF advances	£6,589,006.09
Investment for Growth and Jobs ESF advances	£5,903,073.98
Total Structural Funds Receipts in 2015-2016	£55,154,612.25

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Finance to detail all departmental bids for June Monitoring for both (i) Capital DEL; and (ii) Resource DEL.

(AQW 1153/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As I indicated in my June Monitoring statement, we are now in a radically different environment, particularly with the introduction of an official opposition. Therefore it is to be expected that processes will change. The more streamlined Executive, working to a common purpose, is able to determine relative priorities in departments and agree allocations on this basis.

The formal bidding process, which existed before, simply encouraged departments to submit 'wish lists' which had little grounding in reality. The new approach allows for an objective assessment of genuine pressures across departments. It is more appropriate that the focus should be on what the outcome of the monitoring round means for public services.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance to detail (i) how many Special Advisers have been appointed; (ii) of those appointed how many are new appointments; (iii) whether the new appointments are compliant with current guidelines; (iv) the salary that was agreed; (v) how many of the Special Advisers were given an increased salary on re-appointment; (vi) how many Special Advisers were made redundant following the election; and (vii) how much redundancy was paid.

(AQW 1208/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: This response is for the Department of Finance only.

- (i) One Special Adviser has been appointed to DoF.
- (ii) One.
- (iii) The new appointment is compliant with current guidelines.
- (iv) The agreed salary is within Pay Band A.
- (v) Not applicable.
- (vi) One Special Adviser had his contract terminated.
- (vii) Severance payment was limited to the total days between employment.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Finance to detail how much money would be payable to (i) the regional rate and; (ii) to the district rate should the £400,000 rates cap be removed.

(AQW 1226/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: If the maximum capital value threshold was removed completely an additional £7.6m would be raised by the domestic rate. Approximately £4.3m of this would be payable to the regional rate and the remaining £3.3m payable to the district rate.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Finance to detail where the £124.8 million allocated for Financial Transaction Capital in the June Monitoring Round will be spent.

(AQW 1255/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The ring-fenced Financial Transactions Capital allocations following the June Monitoring round are provided in the table overleaf. £55.8 million has been set aside for the Investment Fund and £17.2 million remains unallocated.

Department	Executive Allocation	Amount (£m)
Economy	Invest NI - Agri-Food Loan Scheme	2.0
Economy	Growth Loan Fund	4.0
Economy	Invest NI Projects	2.0

Department	Executive Allocation	Amount (£m)
Economy	Northern Ireland Science Park	6.5
Economy	Poultry Litter	4.5
Economy / TEO	Queen's University	11.2
Health	GP Loans	5.2
Communities	Affordable Home Loans	11.0
Communities	Co-ownership Housing	5.5
-	Investment Fund	55.8
-	Unallocated	17.2
Total Projects:		124.8

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Finance to detail where the £4.5 million for cross border projects, as announced in the June Monitoring Round, will be spent.

(AQW 1300/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The June Monitoring round included an allocation of £1.4 million Capital DEL for the cross-border body Waterways Ireland.

This will fund improvements to infrastructure on the Lower Bann and Erne waterways including improvements to jetties, moorings and access routes. This will provide a boost to the local tourist industry and the economy.

Mr Stalford asked the Minister of Finance to outline the value of the de-rating of Orange halls to the Orange Institution since this measure was introduced.

(AQO 79/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Rate relief for Orange Halls and other bodies is provided under Article 41A of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977. Article 41A was inserted into the Rates Order from April 2006. Since that date it is estimated that £8.12 million has been saved though exemption under the terms of Article 41A by the Orange Institution.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance for his assessment of the economic benefits of removing Air Passenger Duty.

(AQO 81/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Abolishing or significantly reducing Air Passenger Duty (APD) has the potential to encourage greater numbers of passengers travelling through airports in the North which will in turn help to stimulate greater economic activity locally.

An Ulster University report on this issue suggests that a 50 per cent reduction in APD would lead to an 8 per cent increase in passenger numbers over a 3 year period, while abolition would lead to a 12 per cent increase.

Of course it is also important to consider the costs of reducing APD. Latest HMRC estimates show that in 2014-15 the North raised £98 million in APD revenue. A reduction in APD would lead to a reduction in the block grant.

Both the costs and benefits are subject to a degree of uncertainty so we need to examine this further. That is why I have called for a review of the ongoing application of APD by London on all short haul routes across Britain and Europe.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance when he plans to introduce a civil marriage equality bill.

(AQO 82/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I am committed to the concept of equal marriage and I want this Assembly to legislate for such marriage as soon as possible. The Member and I are on the same page in that regard, but we have a little way to go in terms of bringing other Members with us and securing the necessary support from the floor. I believe we will be able to do that during this mandate and that Members will choose to legislate, rather than be forced to legislate on foot of an adverse judgment. We must do the groundwork now, so that, as soon as the Executive and the Assembly signal their readiness, we are able to move swiftly toward introduction. I have, therefore, asked my officials to start working on a draft Bill and to initiate discussions with other interested Departments, given that the Bill may touch on matters that are not within my Department's remit.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Finance if he has plans to review the small business rate relief system.

(AQO 83/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The scheme was evaluated by the Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy in 2014 which recommended that the scheme should be phased out and replaced by more targeted measures scheme focused on promoting economic growth.

The scheme was extended until 31 March 2017 to allow time to consider alternative policies.

My Department, along with the former DSD, sought views on the alternatives available, with a particular focus on measures for town centres. This consultation has recently ended and over the coming weeks I will be considering the responses to it and the options for change before presenting my proposals to the Executive.

Mr Lyons asked the Minister of Finance how he will address the issue of local businesses, involved in public contracts, that engage in false self-employment.

(AQO 84/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Public Contracts Regulations makes provision for the treatment of suppliers who fail to comply with their tax, social and labour obligations. The legislation enables public bodies to exclude a supplier from their procurements if it has failed to meet these obligations or been convicted of an offence relating to such issues.

In addition, the UK Finance Act 2014 includes measures to tackle false self employment. My Department has taken action to make local industry aware of the provisions of procurement and finance legislation and reinforce them in Government contracts. For example, CPD's standard Pre-Qualification Questionnaires and contract conditions require contractors bidding for Government contracts to confirm that they have not violated their obligations relating to the payment of taxes and social and labour laws.

CPD has also raised awareness of the issue of false self employment with the local construction industry through the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland. Through this and the Business Industry Forum for Northern Ireland, I have asked that CPD continues to highlight this issue, and its ramifications, to local businesses and suppliers.

However, it is important I explain that HM Revenue and Customs is the enforcement authority for the Act. Anyone with information or concerns that local businesses are engaging in false self employment should bring this to the attention of HMRC.

Mr Kelly asked the Minister of Finance for an update on his recent meeting with the New York State Comptroller.

(AQO 85/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I had useful discussions with the New York State and New York City Comptrollers in New York. I thanked them for their support for the peace process and their investments in the North of Ireland.

I discussed with them the need for strong support from the US for the Fresh Start Agreement.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister of Finance what additional funding he is proposing for the health service over the next five years.

(AQO 86/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The two Executive parties have stated their commitment to provide extra funding to the Health Service over this Mandate. However, this must go hand in hand with the restructuring and reforms required to ensure a high quality sustainable Health Service going forward.

It is vital therefore that any reforms identified as a result of the work led by Professor Raphael Bengoa are implemented with the full support of the Executive.

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance for an update on the Community Finance Fund.

(AQO 87/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Some £7.15m is available under the "Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Act 2008".

My Department, as required under the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Act 2008, is now engaging with the Big Lottery Fund and will direct that organisation to develop a Strategic Plan for the utilisation of the fund in Northern Ireland. This Strategic Plan will be laid before the Assembly and will include details of how the Fund will operate including eligibility criteria and the process for accessing the Fund.

Mrs Little Pengelly asked the Minister of Finance to outline his commitment to £1bn of extra funds for health by 2021.

(AQO 88/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The two Executive parties have stated their commitment to provide extra funding to the Health Service over this Mandate. However, this must go hand in hand with any restructuring and reform required to ensure a high quality sustainable Health Service going forward.

It is vital therefore, that any reforms identified as a result of the work led by Professor Raphael Bengoa are implemented with the support of the Executive.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance what steps he has taken to co-operate with the Finance Secretary in the Scottish Government and the Minister for Finance in the Welsh Government.

(AQO 89/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I have met with both my counterparts in the Scottish and Welsh Governments. Both Derek MacKay and Mark Drakeford are also newly appointed Finance Ministers.

We discussed many issues common to all devolved administrations and in particular the continued austerity agenda being pursued by the Chancellor, devolution of fiscal powers and public sector reform.

Both meetings were extremely useful and we have agreed to work together on issues where we have shared goals.

Department of Health

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Health when the proposed All-Ireland Children's Heart Surgery Centre in Dublin will be built and operational, as announced by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in March 2015.

(AQW 322/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Health): The All-island Congenital Heart Disease Network Board has submitted to the Health Departments north and south a detailed implementation plan for the transfer of elective surgery for patients of the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC), who are currently being treated in England, to Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin (OLCHC). The plan includes proposals to open additional paediatric intensive care beds in OLCHC, a new Cath Lab due to open in OLCHC soon.

It is anticipated the plan will be approved in the near future. In addition to maintaining the current transfer of emergency patients to OLCHC the plan envisages completing on a phased basis the transfer of all urgent patients to OLCHC by the end of 2017 and all elective patients by the end of 2018. In the interim the Belfast Trust continues to operate a service level agreement for the provision of emergency surgical treatment and follow up procedures in OLCHC. Under these arrangements 25 patients have been treated, and 45 patients have received catheterisation procedures in OLCHC since April 2015. The remainder of their care continues to be provided by the Belfast Trust. My overriding concern is to ensure that the Belfast Trust continues to provide a safe and sustainable service for these vulnerable children and their families by providing their treatment through specialist heart centres in England until the transfer of surgery to OLCHC is completed.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health how much departmental funding in 2015-16 was paid into private health care provision.

(AQW 425/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The HSC in Northern Ireland refers patients to the independent sector for a number of reasons. The reasons may include extra-contractual referrals, where a clinician can demonstrate an exceptional clinical need to do so or where it is not possible for clinical reasons to deliver a local service; or under a Waiting List Initiative, as was the case post the November 2015 monitoring round, where there was a gap between the demand for a service and the capacity the HSC could offer. £31.7 m has been paid to the Independent Sector in 2015/6.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health what actions the Health and Social Care Board is taking to consult with residents in South Belfast on the potential impact from the proposed relocation of numerous GP surgeries to the planned development on the former Kings Hall site.

(AQW 479/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health and Social Care Board is aware that a number of GP practices have been approached by a developer who intends to re-develop the King's Hall site. However, at this time, no GPs have submitted a request to the HSCB to relocate to this site.

If a GP wishes to re-locate to leased premises, they are required to firstly submit a proposal, including an options appraisal, which sets out their preferred way forward. This is then considered by the HSCB and the Local Commissioning Group in the context of its wider plans for primary care infrastructure development. Patients of the relevant GP practices and residents of the areas affected would be consulted as part of this process and their views taken into account in any final decision.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of times an Individual Funding Request for specialist drugs not routinely available on the Health Service has been (i) accepted; and (ii) rejected in each month of the last five years.

(AQW 593/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: A regional system for recording all data on Individual Funding Requests (IFR) was introduced on 1 January 2012 and therefore there is 4 years of data available. The following information applies to IFRs received between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2016. Given the relatively small numbers of IFRs that have not been supported during this period there is potential for identification of an individual patient and the data is provided on a yearly basis in order to protect patient confidentiality.

April 2012 – March 2013

Total IFRs approved	205
IFRs not supported	4

April 2013- March 2014

Total IFRs approved	318
IFRs not supported	9

April 2014 – March 2015

Total IFRs approved	144
IFRS not supported	2

April 2015 – March 2016

Total IFRs approved	141
IFRS not supported	10

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health what steps have been taken to establish a regional scrutiny committee on specialist drugs not routinely available on the Health Service to replace the current exceptionality criteria.

(AQW 596/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Task and Finish Group (T&FG) project board has been formed to take forward the establishment of a regional scrutiny committee. Two work streams reporting to the project board have been formed. The work is well advanced; both the project board and work streams have met a number of times and correspond regularly. The project has a finish date of summer 2016. The ultimate aim is to establish a clinically led regional scrutiny committee supported and informed by revised IFR process guidance which will include transparent and evidence based criteria upon which decisions on individual patient access to unapproved treatments can be made.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister of Health what consideration is being given to additional respite services for adults with learning disabilities.

(AQW 601/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Short breaks provision (formerly referred to as respite) for adults with learning disabilities has improved over the last few years under the auspices of the Bamford Action Plans 2009-2012 and 2012-2015.

However, despite these improvements, there remains a gap between demand and capacity in part due to the continuing rise in the number of adults with a learning disability and especially older adults whose parents face increasing challenges coping as they enter their later years.

Improvements made include increases in the number of hours allocated and changes in the range of short breaks offered, delivering more responsive and community based activities, alongside more traditional buildings based overnight breaks.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister of Health whether additional funding will be sought to increase staff recruitment to fill vacancies in Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 602/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The additional resources secured for my Department as a result of the June Monitoring Round will help to increase staff recruitment to fill vacancies in Health and Social Care.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health whether her Department has considered developing perinatal mental health services on a cross border basis.

(AQW 606/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: To date, my Department has not given consideration to developing perinatal mental health services on a cross border basis. However, it is widely recognised that whilst mothers with mental health needs can and do avail of core Community Mental Health and Psychological Therapy services, the provision of dedicated specialist and bespoke Perinatal Mental Health Services remains a significant gap across both jurisdictions. I am committed to exploring the best way to deal with this gap, including on a cross border basis.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health to detail how many children's cardiac surgery procedures have taken place in Dublin since the cross-border arrangements were introduced in October 2014; and what annual budget is allocated to pay for these procedures.

(AQW 628/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Belfast Trust operates a service level agreement for the provision of emergency surgical treatment and follow up procedures in Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin. Under these arrangements 25 procedures have taken place since

October 2014. Costs of these procedures vary depending on their nature and length of patient stay, and are fully funded on a cost per case basis from the Health and Social Care Board's overall budget allocation.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health (i) how much of the £70M allocated to ease waiting lists in the financial year 2015/16 was spent on its intended purpose; and (ii) how much was unable to be spent.

(AQW 629/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: An additional £40 million was allocated in the November 2015 monitoring round for use in 2015/16 to reduce waiting times with a further £30 million invested in 2016/17.

Of the £40 million, £21.5 million was utilised on additional waiting list activity which together with a further £3.4 million which we were able to allocate, brought total expenditure on waiting list activity to almost £25 million. The balance of £18.5 million was utilised on a range of pressures in 2015/16 including funding to support cost pressures within Independent Care Homes and Domiciliary Care providers and GP Out of Hours services, as well as pay related costs in respect of front line services.

Overall the November monitoring allocation has supported the delivery of a higher level of elective care services that would otherwise have been the case.

As part of the June Monitoring, I welcome the additional £67m made available to help address a range of pressures across health and social care.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health whether the whistle-blowing policy in place is the same across all Health and Social Care Trusts or each have their own policy; and in either event to have a copy of same placed in the Assembly Library.

(AQW 651/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Each Health and Social Care Trust has its own Whistle-blowing Policy.

A copy of each Policy has been made available to the NI Assembly Library.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health what discussions she has had, or plans to have, with the Minister for Communities and the Department for Work and Pensions on the new Green Paper on the Work and Health Programme.

(AQW 682/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department for Work and Pensions is due to publish a Green Paper on its proposed Work and Health Programme later this year.

I recognise the link between work and health and in particular the need for a cohesive approach to support people with ill health and disabilities to remain in or return to work.

I am aware of the very valuable work that is already being taken forward in this area, for example through the Department for Communities' Condition Management Programme. Health and social care professionals play a key role in delivering the programme which is aimed at supporting clients with long term conditions, or who have a disability, to return to and sustain employment, retrain, or participate in voluntary work by tackling some of the underlying health issues which are acting as barriers to this.

I will work closely with Executive colleagues, including the Minister for Communities, to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive approach to health, disability and work that will best meet the needs of and affect better outcomes for people with ill health or disabilities who need support to remain in or return to employment.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health if she is considering how healthcare provision can be provided in border areas.

(AQW 716/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I have been clear that as Minister of Health I want to ensure that everyone in the north has the same chance of living a long and healthy life, and I am committed to exploring opportunities to improve the provision of healthcare in border areas.

My Department has worked with colleagues in the south and Scotland in securing €53m European regional development funding under the cross-border Interreg VA programme, with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of people living in border regions by enabling them to access health and social care services in the most appropriate setting to their needs. I hope to see the first projects funded from the programme starting within the next 6 to 12 months.

I also look forward to the commencement of services at the new radiotherapy centre at Altnagelvin Hospital later this year, making world class cancer treatment accessible to patients living in the north west of Ireland. This will add to the successful 24/7 primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention service at Altnagelvin Hospital, expanded in May 2016 to make this life saving treatment available to a further 50-60 heart attack patients from County Donegal each year.

One of my priorities is the further development of all-island networks to tap into the benefits that cooperation on health and social care issues will bring to every part of this island. Good progress has been made on the establishment of the all-island Congenital Heart Disease Network, and I want to build on this. My Department will continue to explore opportunities for further cooperation in healthcare throughout the island, in areas such as organ transplantation, treatment of rare diseases, response to major trauma, alcohol and substance misuse, and mental health—in particular the prevention of suicide and self-harm.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Health when a consultant neurologist specialising in MS will be appointed to the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 727/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: A funding request has been developed regarding the provision of an additional Consultant Neurologist for the Southern Trust for consideration by the Health and Social Care Board. The particular specialism of the successful candidate will be dependent on the specialisms of potential applicants who apply for the position.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 129/16-21, (i) when the underspend commenced; (ii) the amount involved; (iii) whether anyone from the Western Health and Social Care Trust will be disciplined; (iv) to outline the full programme to correct the underspend; (v) whether other services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust will be penalised to correct this underspend; (vi) whether the commissioning body or her Department has any responsibility for the supervision and provision of services within the Trust.

(AQW 742/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: While I fully understand the concerns of families and others regarding the historic resourcing issue in the Western Trust's adult learning disability services, it is important that any spending gap is robustly and accurately quantified. As a matter of urgency, the Western Trust is currently developing a plan to do that, with the support of the Health and Social Care Board. The plan will also set out how the Trust will address any deficit. Families and carers will be fully engaged in this process. It is therefore too early to speculate about additional funding requirements.

Nor, in my view, would it be helpful or appropriate to speculate about any disciplinary action. I am, however, seeking an explanation from senior officials in the Western Trust of their handling of this issue in response to the level of concern among families.

Current funding arrangements are clear and reflect the fact that Trusts are best placed to determine the detail of local service provision, including how much is spent on individual programmes of care. These spending decisions are for Trusts to make in line with the needs of their local communities. It is not my role, nor the role of my Department to dictate from the centre how local services should be run. It is, however, right given the level of concern expressed that my Department seeks the necessary assurances that the Trust is focused on delivering a solution. I have been assured that this is the case and that urgent action is being taken to develop the plan to quantify and address any deficit.

I will be closely monitoring the Trust's progress on this particular issue.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health what plans or incentives are in place to attract GPs to practices in rural areas.

(AQW 743/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise that GPs working in rural areas can face particular challenges and a number of actions are already underway to address these issues.

The Health and Social Care Board is working with GPs to explore options to ensure the delivery of resilient and sustainable GP services in rural areas. The Board has also increased the rates that can be paid to secure locum cover. Support for practices working together as federations, along with significant investment in information technology, has meant that rural GPs are able to build professional networks, collaborate with colleagues and access specialist advice more quickly than would previously have been the case. In addition, new schemes have been introduced to encourage GPs who have left practice to return and to support those currently practising here to remain. While these schemes are open to GPs and practices across the north, they have the potential to act as an incentive to attract GPs to rural practices.

The recent review of GP-led services made a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the pressures on the GP workforce, including those GPs working in rural practices. I will carefully consider the findings of this review as I seek to ensure everyone here has access to sustainable, high quality GP services.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health to outline (i) details of the GP services available in (i) Newtownstewart, County Tyrone; (ii) Ederney, County Fermanagh; (iii) details of any discussions between the Western Health and Social Care Trust and GPs in relation to future provision; and (iv) any rural proofing measures that will be implemented.

(AQW 744/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The full range of GMS services continues to be available to patients in both Newtownstewart and Ederney, which combined with Castlederg Group Surgery to become the Western Rural Health Care partnership on 1 April 2016. Patients were advised of these new arrangements.

The Health and Social Care Board, which is responsible for the General Medical Services contract, held a number of meetings and workshops with GPs in the Fermanagh area in April and May to consider GP workforce issues. As well as examining alternative ways of working to minimise the impact of any recruitment difficulties following GP retirements, new schemes have also been introduced to encourage GPs who have left practice to return and to support those currently practising here to remain. While these schemes are open to GPs and practices across the north, they have the potential to make a particular impact on rural practices.

The recent review of GP-led services made a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the pressures on GPs, including those working in rural practices. I will carefully consider the findings of that review as I seek to ensure everyone here has access to sustainable, high quality GP services.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Directorate of Legal Services having to resort, as part of a High Court Order heard on 13 May 2016, to an internal report to be administratively provided from one part of the Directorate of Children and Young People's Services to another part of the same Directorate in the same Health and Social Care Trust, that had been asking for the internal report for several months.
(AQW 746/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: As this case is subject to ongoing legal proceedings, information cannot be disclosed to third parties.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, in relation to family case (ref 15/095107), for her assessment of whether the present Children (Northern Ireland) Order is fit for purpose.
(AQW 748/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: As this case is subject to ongoing legal proceedings, it is not possible, at this stage, to assess whether the law governing those proceedings, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, is fit for purpose.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health to outline why the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and the Directorate of Legal Services did not send a legally qualified representative to its Care Order application case reference 15/095107 in the High Court on 18 March 2016.
(AQW 750/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: As this case is subject to ongoing legal proceedings, information is not disclosable to third parties.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health to outline the treatment and care available to children suffering from Joint Hyper Mobility Syndrome and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.
(AQW 751/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Patients are referred for treatment to orthopaedics, paediatric and adult rheumatology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy services.

Depending on how the condition presents, a range of additional specialities including vascular surgery, cardiology, dermatology and analgesia may be involved in the treatment path. Where a major Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) case is suspected, a referral can be made to the Regional Genetics Service for further investigation. Where deemed clinically appropriate, a request for a referral to specialist GB centres is also available via the Individual Funding Request process. Specialist EDS diagnostic services for complex cases are available in both Sheffield and London.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the current GP provision in Upper Bann.
(AQW 760/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health and Social Care Board has contracts with 24 GP practices in the Upper Bann area. There are no vacant contracts and patients in the area receive the full range of general medical services.

GP out of hours services are provided to the population of Upper Bann by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, and I am aware that the Trust is experiencing ongoing challenges in recruiting GPs and other staff to work in the out of hours service. The Trust has taken a number of actions to address these difficulties. These include the introduction of nurse practitioners and clinical pharmacists to support GPs in managing the service; ongoing recruitment campaigns for GPs; and the provision of additional funding to boost capacity at busy times. To reduce the impact of workforce gaps, the Trust has also established a link with Dalriada Urgent Care to support call triage.

I recognise that GPs right across the north are under pressure. The recent review of GP-led services made a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges facing general practice both in hours and out of hours. I will give careful consideration to the findings of that review as I seek to ensure everyone here has access to sustainable, high quality GP services.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister of Health to detail the current cost per month for testing blood glucose levels for (i) a child; and (ii) an adult with Type 1 diabetes.
(AQW 763/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: It is not possible to provide this information as testing of blood glucose levels depends on individual clinical need.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of children being treated for Type 1 diabetes using (i) blood glucose testing strips; and (ii) patch-type blood glucose transmitters.
(AQW 764/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: There are circa 1,200 children being treated for Type 1 diabetes and they all use blood glucose testing strips. It is not possible to provide information on the number of children being treated with patch-type blood glucose transmitters.

Children being treated for Type 1 diabetes use blood glucose monitoring strips and measure their blood sugar up to eight times per day. Currently a small number of parents self fund continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) for their children. Several of the CGM systems e.g. DEXCOM also require blood glucose testing to ensure the accuracy of the CGM system.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister of Health what work her Department has carried out in supplying Health and Social Care Trusts with alternatives to blood glucose testing; specifically a patch-type blood glucose transmitter.

(AQW 765/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Patients with Type 1 Diabetes and a proportion of patients with Type 2 Diabetes are required to test their blood sugars on a regular basis to optimise the dosage of insulin and support the management of their condition. A 12-week public consultation on the Diabetes Strategic Framework closed on 31 May 2016 and responses are currently being analysed. One of the supporting principles of the Framework is that: "New interventions and technologies, where appropriate and effective, will be used to support treatment and care for people living with diabetes."

The introduction of any new intervention into the Health Service will follow formal mechanisms informed by national guidance such as that produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). That includes any new continuous glucose monitoring systems such as patch-type blood glucose transmitters.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) how many incidents of assault have been recorded in (a) Lime; (b) Elm; and (c) PIC wards of the Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital; (ii) how many staff have reported sick as a result of injury or assault on duty; (iii) how many working hours have been lost; (iv) how many working hours have been covered by bank staff; (v) the cost of lost and replaced working hours; and (vi) how many criminal prosecutions have resulted from these assaults, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 770/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: For each of the last five years:-

(i) The total number of assaults recorded in each ward is as follows:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (Jan to April)
Lime	4	10	8	7	6
Elm	5	14	3	21	4
PIC	1	0	0	0	2
Total	10	24	11	28	12

(ii) The number of staff that reported sick is as follows:

Staff Reported Sick

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (Jan to May)
0	0	0	2	5

(iii) The number of working hours lost is as follows:

Working Hours Lost

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (Jan to May)
0	0	0	1522.50	2227.50

(iv) The number of working hours covered by bank staff is as follows:

Working Hours Covered by Bank Staff

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (Jan to May)
0	0	0	1522.50	2227.50

- (v) The cost of lost and replaced working hours is as follows:

Cost of Lost and Replaced Working Hours

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (Jan to May)
0	0	0	£22,754	£26,695

- (vi) Incidents that are deemed to be 'serious' are reported to the PSNI for investigation. It is the responsibility of the PSNI to take forward any prosecutions based on the investigation undertaken. Staff who have been involved in an incident may also press charges with the PSNI directly.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health to detail the existing level of out-of-hours provision in West Tyrone; specifically in the towns of Omagh and Strabane.

(AQW 780/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The GP out of hours (OOH) service in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area is provided by Western Urgent Care across five bases - Altnagelvin, Enniskillen, Limavady, Omagh and Strabane. Out of hours services are available for the population of Omagh and Strabane from 6pm each weekday evening and 24 hours on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Although Western Urgent Care aims to provide a service at all bases seven days a week, like all OOH providers it faces challenges due to increasing demand and difficulty in filling shifts. At times therefore it may be necessary to consolidate and prioritise resources in the interests of patient and staff safety.

When a GP is unavailable at a local base, Western Urgent Care will seek to move a GP from another base to carry out a booked appointments session to ensure that patients can continue to be seen locally. When this occurs, all patients contacting the out of hours service continue to be triaged by and receive advice from an experienced nurse or GP, but may be asked to attend another base. Home visits continue to be carried out as normal where clinically necessary.

The Health and Social Care Board monitors the performance of out of hours service providers on an ongoing basis. Despite the pressures facing the out of hours service within the Trust area, in 2015, 92% of urgent calls to Western Urgent Care were triaged within 20 minutes, and 81% of routine calls were triaged within one hour.

Western Urgent Care and the Health and Social Care Board have taken steps to increase GP capacity and fill shifts.

A Local Enhanced Service (LES) is in place in the Western area whereby GP principals provide additional clinical time (via booked appointments) for a 2½ hour period for five evenings during the week. This service has been put in place in the Altnagelvin base as Western Urgent Care have identified this base as having the highest demand. Supporting GPs in the Altnagelvin base to address current demands helps minimise the number of times that GPs in the other four centres in the Western area are moved from their respective centres.

In 2016/17, in addition to core funding of almost £4.8 million for out of hours services, funding of £196,000 will also be available for Western Urgent Care to provide extra clinical capacity where it is needed most and additional bank holiday clinical capacity. £30,000 will also be available to provide training.

A further £50,000 is available to support greater skills mix within Western Urgent Care and up to £284,000 is available to fund a Localised Additional Costs Scheme to support and incentivise GPs to work additional hours, fill shifts and cover additional costs such as medical indemnity. Both these funding streams are subject to the Health and Social Care Board's agreement to the out of hours provider's expenditure plans.

Other actions taken to support GP out of hours services in the Western area have included actively seeking the support of GPs to work a number of sessions in their local out of hours centre, liaising with members of the Local Medical Committee to encourage GPs to work out of hours in their local centre and recruiting more nursing staff to ensure that the pool of Nurse Advisors is sufficient to fill all telephone triage shifts. In May this year, 2 GP engagement events were held within the Trust area (in Derry and Fermanagh) to encourage more GPs to work in out of hours.

My Department has recently led a review of GP out of hours services across the north of Ireland. The recommendations stemming from the out of hours review were incorporated into the report of the working group set up in October 2015 to review GP-led services. I will give careful consideration to the findings of that review as I seek to ensure that people here have access to sustainable, high quality GP services.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Health to detail on how many occasions in the last twelve months that calls made to the emergency services have been redirected to Scotland.

(AQW 803/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: In the 12 months from June 2015 to May 2016, 33 emergency calls made here were redirected to the Scottish Ambulance Service. No emergency calls have been redirected to Scotland in the last twelve months by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Health to detail how many paramedics in the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service are currently off work, including the reasons for absence.

(AQW 804/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: As at 10th June 2016, there were 57 paramedics in the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) absent. This total includes paramedics, rapid response vehicle paramedics and paramedic station supervisors.

The reasons for absence are summarised in the table below.

Reason	Total
Accident/Untoward incident at work/	5
Injury, fracture/Back/Musculoskeletal	20
Other Medical	32
Total	57

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 101/16-21, (i) whether there will be a full investigation; (ii) whether she will publish the Health and Social Care Board review; and (iii) whether her Department will ensure that previous recurring gaps in funding will be compensated for within the 2016-17 budget.

(AQW 818/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I understand fully the concerns of families and carers in the Western Trust and it is only right that they should seek assurance that the Trust is providing them with appropriate and effective services. In response to these concerns, I am seeking an explanation from senior Trust officials of their handling of the issue.

While it is clear to me that there is a historic issue in adult learning disability services in the Western Trust, it is also important that any gap is robustly and accurately quantified. This is why, as a matter of urgency, the Western Trust is currently developing a plan to do that, with the support of the Health and Social Care Board. The plan will also set out how the Trust will address any deficit. It is therefore too early to speculate about additional funding requirements.

The Health and Social Care Board report was drafted in December 2015 and informed ongoing discussions between the Board and the Trust on this issue. Its publication is ultimately a matter for the Board.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health what is the cost to date of the Childrens Order Private Law case (11/103100) and the related Southern Health and Social Care Trust Public Law Case 15/095107.

(AQW 820/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information about legal costs is 'privileged' information and is not therefore disclosable to third parties.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 54866/11-16, to outline (i) where additional parking places will be located on site at Craigavon Area Hospital; (ii) whether temporary parking arrangements will be considered whilst construction is underway; and (iii) what consideration has been given to the impact of parking difficulties on patients.

(AQW 841/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Additional car parking spaces have been provided with the creation of a new car park at the GP Out of Hours car park. As a result there has been no reduction in car parking spaces at the Hospital. Pedestrian routes have been redesigned and barriers are in place to protect the public from construction sites and traffic. Re-provided car parking spaces have been situated as close to the hospital as possible.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister of Health whether he plans to allocate targeted funding to improve specialist nurse provision in the Health Service.

(AQW 870/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is committed to improving specialist nurse provision and recently announced a £11.5million expansion to the specialist cancer nursing workforce, to create around 60 new specialist cancer nursing and support worker posts over the next five years.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health (i) to detail the current waiting period for a hip replacement in the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) whether there is an action plan in place to reduce this waiting time.

(AQW 881/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The most recent statistics in relation to the number of people waiting for hip replacement operations (including revisions), in the Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust, is set out below.

Table 1: Patients waiting for hip replacement operations (including revisions) at 31st March 2016

HSC Trust	Patients waiting, in weeks, at 31st March 2016					
	0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-52	>52
Western	66	78	68	48	177	171

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

It is not acceptable that any person should have to wait an excessive length of time for their appointment. I have made it clear that reducing the length of time patients have to wait for elective assessments, surgeries and treatments is a key priority for me. I welcome the additional £67m made available under June Monitoring to help address a range of pressures across health and social care.

The Health and Social Board (HSCB) continues to work with Trusts to address the increasing demand for orthopaedic procedures. To this end, the HSCB has recently agreed an additional investment of £1m in the Trauma and Orthopaedic service in the Western Trust which will increase capacity and help reduce waiting times. The HSCB is also working with Trusts to develop a regional plan for Trauma and Orthopaedics which will identify service improvement initiatives for improving capacity and reducing waiting times.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health for a comparison of the statistics collected by the Health and Social Care Board showing the cumulative number of hours of respite delivered for adult learning disability across the Health and Social Care Trusts for (i) the year ended 31 March 2015; and (ii) for each of the quarters ended 30 June 2015 and 30 September 2015. (AQW 884/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Adult Short Break Hours, in the Learning Disability Programme of Care, by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.

HSC Trust	Year ending Mar-15	Quarter ending Jun-15	Quarter ending Sep-15
Belfast	250,135	62,713	68,785
Northern	311,873	70,832	94,665
South Eastern	239,590	61,569	70,837
Southern	302,287	82,919	77,097
Western	130,972	29,518	24,869
Total	1,234,857	307,551	336,253

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health for a breakdown of the (i) expenditure; and (ii) results of the additional (a) £40 million; and (b) £7.6 million; announced by her predecessor in November 2015 and (c) the further £30 million announced in March 2016.

(AQW 898/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Of the £40 million allocated in the November 2015 monitoring round, £21.5 million was utilised on additional waiting list activity which together with a further £3.4 million which we were able to allocate, brought total expenditure on waiting list activity to almost £25 million.

The balance of £18.5 million was utilised on a range of pressures in 2015/16 including funding to support cost pressures within Independent Care Homes and Domiciliary Care providers and GP Out of Hours services, as well as pay related costs in respect of front line services.

Overall the £40 million has supported the delivery of a higher level of elective care services that would otherwise have been the case. Over 80,000 patients benefited, through the delivery of 54,000 additional outpatient assessments, 17,500 additional inpatient / daycase treatments and diagnostic assessments, over 11,000 additional Allied Health Professional and other assessments.

With regard to additional funds of £7.6m; £6 million was spent on meeting the care costs of people who were being resettled from long-stay hospitals into supported living schemes in the community; and £1.6 million used to fund a shortfall in funding for psychological therapies Directly Enhanced Services. The purpose of the Directly Enhanced Services is to help General Practitioners to avail of talking therapies for people with depression (equating to around 13,000 sessions of care).

The further £30 million allocated to tackle waiting lists in 2016/17 will support up to 25,000 additional assessments and some 12,000 additional treatments across a wide range of specialties including orthopaedics, gastroenterology, neurology and ENT. Importantly it will see a £10 million investment in diagnostic services, building capacity to support up to 50,000 additional tests to help meet increasing demands as well as supporting seven day services.

I also welcome the additional £67 million made available as part of June Monitoring to help address a range of pressures across health and social care.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) what percentage of people have been diagnosed with depression in each year since 2006, broken down by (a) age; (b) gender; and (c) Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) how these figures compare with England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland; and (iii) what action her Department is taking to address this issue. **(AQW 903/16-21)**

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Comparable data from the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) depression register is only available from 2012/13, and is not broken down by age or gender. Table 1 details the percentage of people on the QOF depression register, broken down by Local Commissioning Group (LCG) area.

Table 1

LCG	Percentage of people on the QOF depression register*		
	March 2013	March 2014	March 2015
Belfast	5.8 (7.3)	6.0 (7.6)	6.7 (8.5)
South Eastern	5.4 (6.9)	5.7 (7.3)	6.1 (7.8)
Northern	4.3 (5.6)	4.8 (6.2)	5.4 (7.0)
Southern	5.0 (6.6)	5.4 (7.2)	6.0 (7.9)
Western	4.8 (6.3)	5.5 (7.2)	6.2 (8.1)
North of Ireland	5.0 (6.5)	5.5 (7.1)	6.1 (7.8)

* The QOF depression register is age specific and can only include people aged 18 and over. North of Ireland presents prevalence rates for age specific registers based on the appropriate population denominator, meaning that the number of people on the register is given as a proportion of the population aged over 18 years, rather than as a proportion of the total population. These age specific prevalence rates for North of Ireland are the figures given in brackets. North of Ireland prevalence rates are also given using the total population to calculate the prevalence (the unbracketed figures).

- (ii) Table 2 shows a comparison of the percentage of people on the QOF depression register in the North of Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland. Equivalent figures are not available for the South of Ireland.

Table 2

Country	Percentage of people on the QOF depression register**		
	March 2013	March 2014	March 2015
England	(5.8)	(6.5)	(7.3)
Wales	4.5	5.0	5.8
Scotland	5.2	5.8	6.3
North of Ireland	5.0 (6.5)	5.5 (7.1)	6.1 (7.8)

** England and North of Ireland present prevalence rates for age specific registers based on the appropriate population denominator, meaning that the number of people on the register is given as a proportion of the population aged over 18 years, rather than as a proportion of the total population. These age specific prevalence rates for North of Ireland are the figures given in brackets. The England prevalence rates are only available using an age specific population and have been shown in brackets. The North's prevalence rates are also presented using the total population (unbracketed figures) to calculate the prevalence, to allow comparability with Scotland and Wales, for which QOF prevalence rates are calculated using the whole population, with no restriction for age, even if registers themselves are age-restricted.

- (iii) The Health and Social Care Board is currently establishing Primary Care Talking Therapy Hubs across all Trust areas to improve access to talking therapies and lifestyle support for people who have common mental health needs, for example, depression, anxiety, stress, etc. It is anticipated that when fully developed over the next three years, these Hubs will provide care for an additional 20,000 people per year.

The regional Mental Health Care Pathway, "You in Mind", was published in October 2014. It draws on the best available evidence and provides guidance for the implementation of evidence-based therapies in response to specific mental health needs, with a view to promoting a recovery-based approach. In addition the Health and Social Care Board has, over the last three years, provided additional funding to enable staff to train in a wide range of NICE-approved

psychological therapies with the aim of enhancing the range of psychological therapies available across mental health services, including the treatment of depression. To date over 300 staff have benefited from this training.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to outline what action will be taken to help the Health Service adapt to an ageing population.

(AQW 904/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise that the health and social care system is facing huge challenges due to an ageing population, increased demand and constrained resources, and it is important that we respond to these challenges to put the system on a more sustainable footing. The social care system will be particularly affected, which is why my Department is taking forward a programme to reform adult care and support, which will set the future strategic direction for adult social care services. It will consider how services are configured and funded, with the aim of ensuring the adult care and support system of the future is fit for purpose, efficient and sustainable for years to come.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health what is the average time following GP referral for an appointment with an Occupation Therapist in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust for a child with statemented special needs.

(AQW 913/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested is not available.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health for a breakdown of the costs associated with the expert panel considering the best configuration of Health and Social Care services.

(AQW 938/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The costs for the Expert Panel are: salary re-imbursement; travel and subsistence expenses; and, administrative costs associated with organising meetings and events. None of the panel members are taking a fee for this work.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health to detail each item of evidence, including the dates of receipt, which led to her decision to end the lifetime ban on blood donation by men who have had sex with men and the new policy commencing from September 2016.

(AQW 958/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The expert group on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) completed the Donor Selection Criteria Review in April 2011. This review examined the criteria for exclusion from blood donation based on sexual behaviour on the part of MSM and commercial sex workers. My Department received the report of this review on 18 April 2011.

On 31 December 2015 my Department received papers for a meeting of SaBTO. These included a paper on the Blood Donor Survey. This was the largest and most comprehensive survey of blood donors to date. The survey was distributed to all eligible new, and a sample of repeat blood donors who donated between October 2013 and September 2014.

On 27 April 2016 the secretariat of SaBTO sent my Department a link to the 2014 annual review from the joint NHS Blood and Transplant/Public Health England Epidemiology Unit, published by Public Health England in October 2015. This report included surveillance data based on the testing of all blood donations in England, Scotland and Wales.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health for an update on the implementation of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines on Motor Neurone Disease.

(AQW 963/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: NICE Clinical Guideline NG42 – Motor Neurone Disease: Assessment and Management was endorsed by the Department on 19 April 2016.

In accordance with the process outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 3/13 the Health and Social Care Board must seek a positive assurance from Trusts that the required initial actions have been undertaken within a three month period.

As this three month period is not yet complete, my officials have asked that the HSC Board contact you with an update once the assurances have been received.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health to detail the average time, following GP referral, for an appointment with an occupational therapist in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust for a child with statemented special needs.

(AQW 965/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested is not available.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health whether there will be any changes to the Meals on Wheels service provided by the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1097/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Western Trust's Community Meals Steering Group is working towards finalising a new service specification for the provision of community meals; however the current community meals service will continue to operate in its current format until any new service model is agreed.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health (i) how many patients are currently remaining in hospital despite being fit to go home but are unable to be discharged due to lack of a care package provision; and (ii) what is the (a) average; and (b) maximum time in weeks a patient has waited for an appropriate discharge care package; broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1129/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Information is not available on the number of patients currently remaining in hospital despite being fit to go home but are unable to be discharged due to lack of a care package provision
- (ii) My department has set a target that 90% of complex discharges from an acute hospital are discharged within 48 hours. A discharge is regarded as complex when it can only take place following the implementation of a significant home based or other community based service.

The following table details the average and maximum time in weeks for patients with complex discharges in 2015/16.

HSC Trust	Average Wait	Maximum Wait
Belfast	0.6	13.5
Northern	0.1	6.3
South Eastern	0.3	13.9
Southern	0.1	6.6
Western	0.3	12.1
Northern Ireland	0.3	13.9

Source: Admissions and Discharges Universe, BOXI

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to detail the average waiting time for a GP appointment at each surgery in Upper Bann.
(AQW 1201/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested is not available. As independent contractors, GP practices are responsible for managing their own appointment systems and waiting times.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health how many additional staff are required to reach optimal medical staffing levels at the South West Acute Hospital.
(AQO 99/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I want to be clear that sufficient medical staff are in place to ensure the delivery of safe patient services in the South West Acute Hospital – and recent figures show that performance levels are strong.

However, at regional level, recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge. Current international recruitment exercises are showing early signs of promise, but they can only be a short term measure and not a sustainable way forward.

I am already on record about the challenges facing our health and social care services: we cannot continue as we are. Our smaller hospitals have considerable recruitment challenges and a heavy reliance on locums across a number of medical grades and this is the case in the Western Trust, including at SWAH where we will shortly see some 6 additional new Foundation Year training posts from August 2016 and 4 new consultants starting later this year in the areas of cardiology; diabetes and endocrinology; and paediatrics, in order to support optimal staffing requirements.

We cannot stand still. We need to transform and I look forward to receiving and considering the report from the Bengoa expert panel. I will also look to Executive colleagues and Assembly Members for support in meeting the challenges ahead if we are to transform services and provide world class health and social care services that our population deserves.

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Health to outline the impact of the additional £2 million allocated to Health and Social Care Trusts in February 2016 to recruit more professionals to carry out autism diagnoses.
(AQO 94/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The additional £2m recurrent investment in children's autism services announced earlier this year has been available to Trusts from 1 April 2016 and is currently being applied to address waiting list pressures, pending the finalisation of a new regional service model required to meet current and future demand. The exact details of this model, including the required skill mix in each Trust, will be agreed over the next few months.

In the meantime, some HSC Trusts have commenced the process of appointing staff on a temporary basis and the HSC Board has recently confirmed that Trusts can make permanent appointments provided they can be utilised in line with the new model, once finalised. As with all HSC posts, Trusts are required to follow a robust recruitment process for permanent staff and this can take up to 9 months to complete.

My Department has also taken action to ensure that Trust plans are focused on the need for sustained, demonstrable improvements in waiting times and services for children with autism and their families, and that the robust monitoring of those plans is being prioritised. Alongside this, I plan to engage with my ministerial colleagues and other key stakeholders to build on the good work that has been done across Departments under the auspices of the current Autism Strategy and Action Plan and I am committed to ensuring that the views of people with autism and their families inform that work.

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Health for an update on the new paediatric facility at Craigavon Area Hospital.
(AQO 95/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The new £8.7 million paediatric facility at Craigavon Area Hospital is progressing well. Since its approval in August 2014 design stages have been completed and enabling works commenced on site in Craigavon in February 2016.

I visited the site myself on 27 May and was able to see the plans and meet the staff. It will have 19 inpatients beds, an outpatients department and an ambulatory care unit. The wards will be designed to provide the segregation of areas to nurse both adolescents and children with complex needs. The ward accommodation will provide single en-suite bedrooms with dedicated parent / carer accommodation in a child friendly environment with facilities suitable for adolescents.

Construction has now commenced on the new building with completion and handover expected in June 2017. It is planned that the centre will be fully operational by October 2017.

The Craigavon facility will be complemented by the Daisy Hill Centre of Excellence facility that is due for completion in October 2017 and to open in November 2017.

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Health how she will work with the Minister for Infrastructure to promote active travel to improve public health outcomes.
(AQO 96/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Programme for Government will further encourage cross-departmental working and aims to improve the health of everyone by providing the best opportunities to live longer and healthier lives. This links to one of the key objectives of the Executive's strategic framework for public health – "Making Life Better" – which is to improve health and reduce health inequalities by putting in place strengthened co-ordination and partnership working in a whole system approach. This will help create the conditions for individuals, families and communities to take greater control over their lives and be enabled and supported to lead healthy lives.

Increasing our levels of physical activity will improve our general health and help address the high levels of overweight and obesity in our population. We therefore need to work in collaboration with a range of Departments and agencies to address obesity in the population and prevent the subsequent implications for people's health associated with obesity.

My Department worked closely with the Department for Regional Development on Active Travel, and will continue to work with the new Department for Infrastructure and other Departments as appropriate. The Department for Infrastructure is a key delivery partner for my Department's current obesity prevention framework "A Fitter Future for All" and works with the Public Health Agency on a number of initiatives, such as the Active School Travel programme. The Public Health Agency is supporting and investing £200,000 per year in the second phase of this programme which will be delivered to 60 schools per annum.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister of Health whether she plans to allocate additional funding for out-of-hours GP services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQO 97/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The GP Out of Hours service in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area is provided by Western Urgent Care across five bases - Altnagelvin, Enniskillen, Limavady, Omagh and Strabane. Like other out of hours providers, Western Urgent Care faces challenges due to increasing demand and difficulty in filling shifts.

In 2016/17, in addition to core funding of almost £4.8 million for its out of hours services, funding of £196,000 will also be available for Western Urgent Care to provide extra clinical capacity where it is needed most and additional bank holiday clinical capacity. £30,000 will also be available to provide training.

A further £50,000 is available to support greater skills mix within Western Urgent Care and up to £284,000 is available to fund a Localised Additional Costs Scheme to support and incentivise GPs to work additional hours, fill shifts and cover additional costs such as medical indemnity. Both these funding streams are subject to the Health and Social Care Board's agreement to the out of hours provider's expenditure plans.

I can also advise that funding of £100,000 for a Local Enhanced Service will continue in the Western Trust area in 2016/17. Under this arrangement GP principals provide additional clinical time (via booked appointments) for a 2½ hour period for 5 evenings during the week. This service has been put in place in the Altnagelvin base as Western Urgent Care have identified this base as having the highest demand in the Western area. Supporting GPs in the Altnagelvin base to address current

demands helps minimise the number of times that GPs in the other 4 out of hours centres in the Western area are moved from their respective centres.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future provision of stroke services at Daisy Hill Hospital.
(AQO 98/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: In 2014, following public consultation, a decision was taken to create a single specialist stroke inpatient unit within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, at Craigavon Area Hospital. The Trust is proposing to provide a consistent and specialist service 24 hours a day, seven days a week in one centre rather than spreading the specialist team of staff across four sites. Daisy Hill will continue to provide ongoing rehabilitation and support through community stroke teams.

While it is true that this may mean travelling further for some people, clinical evidence shows that patients are 25% more likely to survive or recover from stroke if treated in a specialised centre.

The delivery of health and social care must be guided by the available clinical evidence on how to deliver services that are safe, high quality, sustainable, and, above all, which deliver the best outcomes for patients.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health what plans she has to address the health needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.
(AQO 100/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Making Life Better, the strategic public health framework, acknowledges that some population groups such as LGB&T face specific challenges to their health and wellbeing including vulnerability to certain conditions and to broader issues such as social exclusion. Programmes and services at regional and local level should be accessible and address specific needs and risk factors including those of vulnerable groups.

I recently met with The Rainbow Project to discuss specific issues experienced by LGB&T people. I will be considering these issues, and will take every opportunity to ensure that Health and Social Care tackles inequality related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of Health how she plans to address the high rate of suicide in local communities.
(AQO 101/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Those communities that experience high levels of social and economic deprivation are known to be at greater risk of suicide. The Public Health Agency delivers more intense and sustained interventions in the 20% most deprived wards, and to vulnerable population groups.

These services include: additional self harm intervention and family support; training for "gatekeepers" such as teachers, youth workers, and sports coaches; counselling and complementary therapies; drug and alcohol awareness; crisis response; and support programmes for rural communities, Travellers, prisoners and the LGB&T community.

At a whole population level, the Lifeline 24/7 crisis response service is available for anyone in distress or despair.

Officials have met with community representatives from Belfast who are concerned at increasing numbers of deaths by suicide over the last 18 months, particularly in North and West Belfast. Work is underway to explore a specific approach to suicide prevention in Belfast. This will include a major working conference in September to identify better ways of working together to improve resilience in Belfast communities affected by suicide and to improve the response to suicidal behaviour. This approach has my full support and I hope that all relevant agencies, services and political representatives commit to taking part in this event and in the action plan that will flow from it.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Health whether she has considered developing facilities at Level 2 hospitals to support Level 1 hospitals.
(AQO 102/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: In recent years the nature of the demands faced by the health service has changed. Changing demographics, increased sub-specialisation and new technologies mean that delivery of specialist services is increasingly concentrated on a smaller number of acute hospital sites with local hospitals playing an important role in delivering a range of services to their local communities and providing support to the larger acute units.

Health and care systems across the developed world are currently struggling with the question of how to adapt their services to deal with continuously rising and changing patterns of demand. We need new ways of working in health and social care to deliver better health outcomes for our population. The work of the expert panel holds the prospect for us to identify a better model for the delivery of health and social care and I eagerly await the panel's report this summer.

Mr Kelly asked the Minister of Health how her Department is addressing drug addiction.
(AQO 103/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department leads on the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2, which is the key cross-departmental strategy to prevent and address the harm related to substances misuse in the north of Ireland.

This strategy seeks to direct action across five pillars: prevention and early intervention; harm reduction; treatment and support; law and criminal justice; and monitoring, evaluation and research. Each year my Department invests approximately £8 million in support of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, and approximately a further £8 million is invested in statutory alcohol and drug treatment services through the mental health budget.

In addition, we work closely with the Department of Justice, the PSNI and the Organised Crime Taskforce to reduce the supply of illegal and illicit drugs in our communities. We also work with the Department for Communities in respect of alcohol licensing laws.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister of Health what services or groups her Department funds to fulfil National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines for the treatment of children and young people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, including psychological treatment and parent training and education programmes.

(AQO 104/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) services for children and young people under the age of 18 are provided by mainstream Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in line with current NICE clinical guidelines.

CAMHS teams liaise with other Health and Social Care services such as social services, as well as the education and youth justice services, and families and carers, to ensure that children with ADHD receive the most appropriate care, treatment and support.

CAMHS interventions for children with ADHD include psychological therapies, behaviour management strategies and, in some cases, medical intervention.

My Department also provides a core grant to ADD-NI. ADD-NI is a registered charity offering a support network for children, young people and families of those affected by ADHD.

Department for Infrastructure

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) what options were investigated in order to bring the St Lucia site in Omagh into public ownership; (ii) who was consulted with over the possible development of this site; (iii) whether consideration was given to making alterations to the housing on the St Lucia site to accommodate refugees in a controlled estate; (iv) what discussions have been held with Omagh District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to develop this site as outlined by the former Omagh District Council; (v) when a decision was made to offer the site to other public bodies, as per the LPS letter dated 4 February 2015; and (vi) when the ownership of the walled St Lucia Barracks site will be transferred to his Department.

(AQW 298/16-21)

Mr Hazzard (The Minister for Infrastructure): Officials from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) have held discussions with the Omagh District Council and with the Department for Social Development (DSD) Regional Development Office in relation to the site and the wider context of plans for Omagh town centre. These discussions were paused to enable the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to resolve the legal matters limiting the future regeneration of the site. MoD anticipates that the legal impediments should be resolved in the near future.

In order to expedite the future regeneration of the site OFMDFM with the agreement of MoD commissioned Land and Property Service (LPS) to undertake a public sector interest trawl earlier this year for St. Lucia, as required under public sector procedures for the disposal of assets.

Since the lands at St. Lucia transferred to OFMDFM in April 2011 officials have consulted with the Department for Social Development, Planning Service, Road Service, Omagh District Council, the Department for Education and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive about the potential development of the site. The LPS public sector interest notification for St. Lucia was circulated to relevant public sector property centres, including the above key stakeholders. Public sector protocols require all relevant public sector property centres to be notified of the intention to dispose of a public asset to enable the body to register an interest in acquiring the asset.

As the area of the site formerly owned by OFMDFM transferred to Department for Infrastructure on 8 May the new team are familiarising themselves on the background information prior to holding further discussions with interested stakeholders about options for the future of the site.

Consideration was given to the alteration of the housing on the St. Lucia site to make them suitable to accommodate refugees but officials were advised that other locations were considered to be more suitable for this purpose.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will consider extending the provision of free public transport to people who have been refused, or had their entitlement to, a driving licence removed on medical grounds.

(AQW 492/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Concessionary Fares Scheme provides free travel on both bus and rail public transport services for everyone aged 60 and over and people who are registered blind. Half-fare travel is also provided for people with certain categories of disability, including those who have been refused a driving licence on medical grounds.

There is currently no provision within the concessionary fares budget to support any further extension of the Scheme and there are no plans to further extend the Scheme at present.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether there will be cuts to rural transport services in East Derry.
(AQW 536/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Rural transport services for East Derry are delivered by North Coast Community Transport (NCCT). Specifically, NCCT deliver the Dial-A-Lift scheme in this area which is a transport option for individuals living in rural areas, who are members of NCCT, and are unable to, or have difficulty accessing local basic services due to a lack of public transport.

For the 2016/17 financial year, my Department issued a letter of offer to NCCT to contribute to the costs of delivering Dial-A-Lift services in their operational area. NCCT have indicated to my Department that there would be an increase in trips for the Dial-A-Lift scheme and that there are no plans to reduce services. I have no plans to reduce the level of grant allocated to NCCT or other Rural Community Transport Partnerships this year.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure what consideration his Department will give to providing secure cycling parking points at bus stops on key routes, such as the 212, 218 and 219.
(AQW 552/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Cycle parking is being considered at key bus stops on the 212, 218 and 219 Translink routes. On the 212 route between Belfast and Derry, cycle parking is being provided through the Toomebridge Park and Ride replacement project. On the 218 and 219 routes between Belfast and Coleraine, cycle parking will also be provided at the new bus stop facilities near Logans of Cloughmills.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the delivery of a footpath between Armoy and Lime Park.
(AQW 582/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As you will be aware my Department's TransportNI has a scheme proposal for a footway approximately 500 metres in length on Drones Road, to link from the existing footway provision to Limepark. This has been assessed and has met the criteria to progress for further more detailed appraisal. This proposal has been added to a very long list of similar worthwhile minor works schemes in Northern Division which are being developed.

As there is a finite amount of funding available for minor improvements to the roads infrastructure and the number of worthwhile schemes competing for inclusion in the Network Development Minor Works programme far exceeds the resources available, this proposal has not been included in the 2016/17 works programme.

Progress of this scheme through to prioritisation within a future works programme will be subject to funding availability, along with a number of other key issues including the successful acquisition of any land required. Unfortunately, therefore, I am unable to confirm when this scheme will commence.

I hope this reply clarifies the current position regarding this scheme.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the delivery of a footpath between Allison's Hill on Liminary Road in Kells and the primary school.
(AQW 583/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As you will be aware my Department's TransportNI has a scheme proposal listed for the provision of a footway from Allison's Hill along the Liminary Road for a distance of approximately 650m to link to the existing provision in the vicinity of Kells & Connor Primary School.

This proposal has been added to a very long list of similar worthwhile schemes in Northern Division which are being developed.

As there is a finite amount of funding available for minor improvements to the roads infrastructure and the number of worthwhile schemes competing for inclusion in the Network Development Minor Works programme far exceeds the resources available, this proposal has not been included in the 2016/17 works programme.

Progress of this scheme through to prioritisation within a future works programme will be subject to funding availability, along with a number of other key issues including the successful acquisition of any land required. Unfortunately, therefore, I am unable to confirm when this scheme will commence.

I hope this clarifies the current position regarding this scheme.

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much it would cost to reopen services on the Knockmore rail line.
(AQW 611/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: To re-open services on the Knockmore to Antrim line Translink would need to completely re-signal the line, re-rail it with continuous welded rail, upgrade 23 User Worked Crossings, completely refurbish the halts and, depending on the timetable operated, potentially reinstate a passing loop.

It is difficult to cost this work without undertaking a full feasibility study. Provisionally, Translink estimate those costs could be in the region of up to £100 million.

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans he has to establish a rail halt to serve Ballymartin Park and Ride, Templepatrick.

(AQW 613/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: After reviewing this matter Translink has concluded that it is not possible to create a rail halt serving the current bus-based Park and Ride facility at Ballymartin until after the additional network capacity, which will be provided by the new Belfast Transport Hub, has been established. This will be after 2021/22.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure how often Transport NI has been authorised to cut grass along main roads in 2016.

(AQW 618/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: With the available budget it is the intention of my Department's TransportNI to carry out one full cut of grass areas under its maintenance control, with additional cutting of sightlines carried out as required to ensure road safety is maintained.

Should the financial position improve following the outcome of subsequent monitoring rounds I will of course, review this position.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the plans to sell the former Translink bus depot in Donaghadee.

(AQW 620/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The site of Translink's former bus depot in Donaghadee is currently on the open market.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure how many road deaths have occurred since 1 January 2016; and what measures his Department will put in place to reduce road fatalities.

(AQW 673/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: At 13 June 2016, a total of 22 people have lost their lives on roads in the North of Ireland this year. This compares to 32 at the same time last year and 31 for 2014.

My Department continues to take a range of actions to reduce deaths and serious injuries on our roads. We focus on the key causes of road casualties, and on groups which are over-represented in the casualty figures.

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Act (NI) 2016 which completed its passage through the Assembly earlier this year makes provision for a new drink driving regime and a new Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Scheme. Work is already underway to develop the significant package of subordinate legislation now required to implement the new measures.

My Department has a statutory duty to promote road safety and, within the context of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy, does this through a wide range of rolling road safety education activities, including road safety public information campaigns and education programmes.

Through its current portfolio of awareness campaigns, my Department in 2016 will continue to focus on problem areas, such as drink driving, speeding, carelessness and inattention; and on groups which are over-represented in the casualty figures.

My Department also continues to provide a range of resources and schemes to be used by teachers to allow them to improve road safety behaviours in children and young people. Resources are also available to community organisations to aid them promote road safety in local areas and I am announcing this week that the 2016/17 road safety grant scheme is now open for applications.

I recognise the continuing challenges of preventing road deaths and serious injuries and as such my Department will continue to address the issues through various activities.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure how much of the Rural Transport Fund grant has been allocated to each of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships for 2016-2017; and how much grant money has been allocated to Disability Action for the Disability Action Travel Scheme. [R]

(AQW 674/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has allocated funding in 2016/17 of £2.43m to Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTPs) to support Dial a Lift services to members living in rural areas that are unable to, or have difficulty accessing local basic services due to having no access to a car or public transport, with the main users of the service being older and disabled people.

The table below shows amount to each partnership:

Rural Community Transport Partnerships	Grant Allocated £k
CDM Transport	443
Down District Accessible Transport	323
Easilink Community Transport	334
Fermanagh Community Transport	350
Lagan Valley	125
North Coast Community Transport	419
South Antrim Community Transport	128
Southern Area	310

Disability Action also received £2.3m for the Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS) which is a local urban transport service for people with disabilities or for those who find it difficult using mainstream public transport.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure to list the notifications for exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons which his Strategic Planning Division has (i) received; and (ii) granted for the licence area PL1/10 up until 31 March 2015.

(AQW 710/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Licence area PL1/10 is a reference used by the former Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, now Department for the Economy in relation to petroleum licences. The licence area relates to the Central Larne – Lough Neagh Basin and covers 2 Council areas, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim District Council.

Permitted Development Notifications were not historically logged on the planning system by the Department as they are not planning applications.

The Department is aware of the following Permitted Development Notification related to that licence area:

- V/2013/0127/Preapp – Woodburn Exploratory drill.

As you are aware, this notification is now a matter for Mid and East Antrim District Council.

Please be advised that the information provided is solely based on a text search of terms on the proposal descriptions, which excluded cases that didn't match the search criteria. This information does not form part of published and validated DFI Official Statistics and should be regarded as an estimate.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure how his Department is promoting active travel, including any funding that is available to promote cycling.

(AQW 771/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department promotes active travel through the 2013 Active Travel Strategy and specifically promotes cycling through the 2015 Bicycle Strategy.

In partnership with the Public Health Agency we have delivered the Active School Travel programme to 60 schools each year since 2013/14 and my Department has funded four active travel demonstration projects in the former Belfast, Craigavon, Derry and Strabane Councils.

Currently, my Department is developing a strategic plan for greenways which will provide a framework within which Councils can take forward their own greenway schemes. I am also providing assistance to Councils to fund the development of greenway feasibility studies.

Through the Travelwise initiative my Department continues to promote active travel through events such as Walk to School Week, Walk to School Month and Bike Week and by published material such as the recent commuting journey videos and the Sustrans Bike Life report.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether discussions have taken place between Translink and Iarnród Éireann to progress the co-ordination of timetables to allow passengers from Derry to link up with the Enterprise service at Belfast and passengers from Dublin to link up with the NIR service to Derry.

(AQW 786/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Connectivity between the NIR and Irish Rail network is under constant joint review and in particular the opportunity to improve links between major cities such as Derry and Dublin.

With the completion of the on-going track improvement work in the north-west later this year further opportunities to improve connections and timetables will be considered.

Both companies reached agreement on a new Enterprise timetable between Belfast and Dublin. A more frequent Enterprise service in the future will improve connections to all parts of the NI Rail network.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline his plans to provide a safe, modern cycle route from Bangor to Belfast. (AQW 878/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department is developing a strategic plan for greenways which I intend to publish later this year. This plan will provide a framework to assist local councils in the development of their own schemes in the form of greenways. It will include proposals for routes such as Bangor to Belfast.

My Department is also exploring routes from Belfast to Holywood as part of the draft Bicycle Network Plan for Belfast which I hope to consult on later this year.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure through what legislative authority a Mining Waste Management Plan can be sought retrospectively after development consent for the exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons at Woodburn Forest has already been granted.

(AQW 1339/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Department of the Environment confirmed in December 2013 that the InfraStrata proposals at Woodburn were permitted development in accordance with Part 16 Class A of the Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993.

Having assessed its position in July 2014, the Department of the Environment requested the submission of a waste management plan for the site. This information was submitted in March 2015 and subsequently assessed by the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council before the development was commenced. There is no legislative authority to require a Mining Waste Plan retrospectively after development consent has already been given.

You will be aware that I have decided to propose a change to the current legislation on permitted development rights for mineral exploration by removing such rights for oil and gas exploration. In the future, exploration for oil and gas will require the submission of a planning application and will be subject to the full rigors of the planning process, including Environmental Impact Assessment and public consultation. I intend to consult on the legislative change in due course.

Department of Justice

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Justice how she plans to enhance the health and wellbeing support services available for prison officers.

(AQW 835/16-21)

Ms Sugden (The Minister of Justice): The Department of Justice takes seriously the health and wellbeing of all staff, including Prison Officers, employed in what is a demanding and challenging environment. Available support mechanisms include a dedicated Staff Welfare Service, access to the Occupational Health Service and a confidential counselling service provided by Carecall. They are provided to staff to supplement the support and treatment available through the National Health Service.

In addition, my Department utilises, where appropriate, the services of the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) particularly where staff have been subject to assaults or have been witnesses of distressing scenes.

My officials will continue to seek to improve the working environment and support services which are available for staff within available resourcing constraints.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Justice to outline what resources are being made available by the Executive and the UK Government to support measures aimed at ending paramilitary activity; and how and what rules will be rigorously enforced to prevent funding from being misused.

(AQW 838/16-21)

Ms Sugden: In the Fresh Start Agreement, the Executive committed £25million over five years to tackling paramilitary activity. This was pledged as match funding to £25million being provided to the Executive by the UK Government for tackling paramilitary activity. In addition, the UK Government is providing an additional £160m over five years to PSNI to tackle the ongoing SEVERE national security threat.

Turning separately to the enforcement of rules regarding the use of funding, central guidance such as Managing Public Money and Central Procurement Directorate's Guide on Grant and Procurement provide the control framework that assists in preventing monies from being misused. Each Department is responsible for ensuring that monies are not misused.

The Department for Communities (DfC) discharges this responsibility through rigorous adherence and compliance with its Grant Administration Guide, which provides detailed guidance for activities including the application process, assessment appraisal and approval processes, rejections, contracts for funding, monitoring and evaluation, management checks and fraud and irregularity.

DfC also operates the Government Funders' Database on behalf of the NI Executive. DfC plans to review the operation of the Database as part of its commitment in Section A of the Fresh Start Agreement.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline (i) what discussions were held between Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) in relation to prison custody staff taking on the role of serving fine default summonses at courts; (ii) when a directive was issued in this respect by NIPS management to prison custody staff; (iii) what consultation was held with NIPS staff prior to the issuing of the directive; and (iv) where does this role fall within the job description of a prison officer or custody officer.

(AQW 845/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and Northern Ireland Prison Service discussed the issuing of Fine Default Notices in October 2015.
- (ii) As a result of discussions a Staff Notice was issued on 7 December 2015.
- (iii) Discussions with the Prison Officers Association at a local level within the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) took place prior to the launch.
- (iv) The core role of PECCS staff is to interact with the Court system. Within this role there are a number of occasions where paperwork is issued to those people who have come into contact with the Court. This is an extension of those duties.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many victims of trafficking have been provided with support for an extended period of time under section 18(9) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

(AQW 847/16-21)

Ms Sugden: My Department has supported 57 potential victims of trafficking since the commencement of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. Of those 57 individuals, 27 potential victims have received support for an extended period of time.

My Department supports potential victims, based on their assessed needs beyond the 45 day reflection and recovery period to meet the statutory requirements as laid out in the legislation detailed above.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 191/16-21, when the decision was taken that the entrance for staff and official visitors would be separate from the entrances for people not in either of these categories.

(AQW 915/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Maghaberry Prison has only one entrance, all persons entering the prison do so through the extern gate. In May arrangements were put in place for domestic and legal visitors to enter the visitor's car park from the Old Road, where they then proceed to the extern gate. Staff and official visitors continue to use the approach road to the extern gate.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 194/16-21 and in relation to case number 16/022994, (i) why David Thomas Page was in a position to breach a Sexual Offences Prevention Order whilst serving a custodial sentence in HMP Magilligan; (ii) what was the role of Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland in this case; (iii) whether she will instigate an investigation as to how this occurred in a prison facility; and (iv) to provide the Terms of Reference for any such investigation.

(AQW 916/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) Telephone calls and letters are monitored for prisoners in all NIPS establishments. Under Interception of Communications Commissioners Office regulations (IOCCO) correspondence should only be randomly censored unless there is intelligence that dictates otherwise. NIPS is subject to regular inspection by the IOCCO.

On 16 November 2014 a member of NIPS staff censored a letter from David Thomas Page. Following an investigation the prisoner was interviewed and the decision to monitor all correspondence was approved by a Governor on 20 November 14.
- (ii) Mr Page was subject to Public Protection Arrangements. Sex Offence Prevention Order conditions did not allow David Page to associate with a female, a child or a vulnerable adult without prior permission from the Risk Management Committee.
- (iii) I am satisfied that IOCCO monitoring regulations were followed by Magilligan staff and after the suspected breach of conditions was identified it was investigated and properly authorised monitoring arrangements were put in place. I am satisfied this was done within a reasonable timeframe and do not think an investigation will be of benefit.
- (iv) Terms of Reference are not required.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Justice whether she has any plans to create a domestic violence offenders register.
(AQW 942/16-21)

Ms Sugden: My Department launched a public consultation on 5 February 2016 on the introduction of a domestic abuse offence and a domestic violence disclosure scheme in Northern Ireland. The consultation closed on 29 April 2016 albeit a small number of respondents were granted further time to reply. Officials are currently analysing the responses received.

Although the consultation did not specifically seek views on a domestic violence offender register, respondents were given the opportunity to propose alternative models and practice that should be considered to improving current arrangements.

As Justice Minister, I want to ensure I am fully informed on the best way forward to support and empower potential victims and prevent abuse happening in the first place. Accordingly, I will carefully consider all options emerging through the consultation process and engage with the Justice Committee on the proposed way ahead.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Justice whether there are any plans to make domestic violence and domestic abuse specific criminal offences.
(AQW 943/16-21)

Ms Sugden: As the member will be aware my Department launched a public consultation on the introduction of a domestic abuse offence and a domestic violence disclosure scheme in Northern Ireland. Officials are currently analysing the responses received.

Naturally I will wish to consider carefully the views expressed through the consultation prior to engaging with the Justice Committee on the proposed way forward.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) when Serious Further Offence Reviews began; (ii) who conducts these reviews; and (iii) to outline the criteria.

(AQW 966/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) introduced Serious Further Offence Reviews in 2002, for offenders who, while under supervision, are charged with a serious offence.

A Serious Further Offence Review is conducted by either PBNI staff or a suitable qualified independent person appointed by PBNI.

Serious Offences are defined as either a serious violent or sexual offence, and may include:

- murder / attempted murder
- abduction / attempted abduction
- arson (where there is an intent to endanger life)
- manslaughter
- rape / serious sexual assault
- serious offences against children involving sexual and physical harm including neglect

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice for an update on Community Asset Transfer proposals for Bangor courthouse.
(AQW 1012/16-21)

Ms Sugden: My officials are currently engaging with Development Trusts Northern Ireland, North Down and Ards Borough Council, Bangor Open House Festival (BOHF), and Bangor Shared Space to consider the feasibility of transferring Bangor Courthouse to BOHF under the auspices of the Community Asset Transfer scheme.

As much of the BOHF proposed plans will be outside the remit of the Department of Justice no final decision will be made on the disposal of the Courthouse until the proposal has been properly assessed by my officials in conjunction with officials from the Department for Communities.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29/16-21 and AQW 73/16-21, (i) what consultation has taken place with G4S staff, as opposed to management only, and with the trade union(s) of staff members who are not represented by NIPSA; and whether all members of the judiciary were individually consulted.

(AQW 1015/16-21)

Ms Sugden: It would not be appropriate for the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) to consult with G4S Secure Solutions UK Ltd (G4S) staff or their trade union representatives as this is a matter for G4S as their employer. In line with normal procedure NICTS consulted with the Presiding District Judge (Magistrates' Courts). Any requirement for discussion with other members of the judiciary would be a matter for the Presiding District Judge.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of cases related to child cruelty, including assaults and neglect that are currently within the court system, broken down by (a) court division; and (b) either Magistrates or Crown court.
(AQW 1054/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The number of cases relating to child cruelty which are currently within the court system, broken down by court division and by magistrates' and Crown court are set out in the table below. These do not include offences of assault which

do not distinguish between adult and child victims. To do so would require a manual trawl of court records which would incur a disproportionate cost.

Court Division	Crown Court	Magistrates' Court	Total
Antrim	3	3	6
Ards	1	1	2
Armagh and South Down	1	0	1
Belfast	4	12	16
Craigavon	1	3	4
Fermanagh and Tyrone	1	1	2
Londonderry	2	1	3
Grand Total	13	21	34¹

1. There are also currently 3 appeals within the court system in addition to the 34 cases which are not restricted to either a Magistrates' or Crown Court.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 467/16-21, where the response refers to where the court directs, whether this is at the discretion of the District Judge or Deputy District Judge following a ruling and not solely at the behest of the defence.

(AQW 1055/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Court directions are given by the Judge dealing with the case taking account of all matters including any representations made on behalf of the prosecution and defence.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 71/16-21, in the absence of a Serious Case Review despite a third categorisation of dangerous, whether she will consider ordering a Serious Further Offence review into the case of Stephen Eugene McCourt.

(AQW 1056/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The purpose of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's Serious Further Offence review procedures is to examine risk management in cases where offenders have been charged with a serious violent or sexual offence whilst subject to statutory probation supervision. As Mr McCourt was not subject to supervision requirements at the time his most recent offences were committed there are no grounds for a Serious Further Offence Review to be conducted in this case.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Justice for her assessment of the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman's report on the Loughinisland Massacres.

(AQW 1079/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The findings of the Police Ombudsman's Report into the Loughinisland murders in 1994 raise difficult and disturbing issues about the conduct of some police officers, in relation to both investigative failings and collusion. The Chief Constable has rightly described this as totally unacceptable and has apologised on behalf of the PSNI.

My thoughts at this time are with the families who have had to endure such terrible heartache for so long. Those responsible for the attack, and anyone involved in collusive activity, should be held accountable. I welcome the Chief Constable's commitment to co-operate fully with any further action the Ombudsman decides to take in relation to the report.

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Justice when the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman started his investigation into the Loughinisland murders.

(AQW 1089/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The previous Police Ombudsman's report into the Loughinisland murders was quashed in the High Court in 2012. The current Ombudsman commenced his work on the Loughinisland investigation in May 2013.

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Justice whether the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman has sent any files to the Director of Public Prosecutions for potential prosecutions relating to the Loughinisland murders.

(AQW 1091/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Office of the Police Ombudsman is operationally independent of my Department. I have, however, been informed by the Ombudsman that, in 2015, he provided the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) with an investigation report in respect of his investigation of complaints relating to Loughinisland. This was not for the purposes of seeking a direction in relation to a specific police officer, but rather for confirmation that the PPS agreed with the Police Ombudsman's assessment

that the available evidence was insufficient to establish that an identifiable and surviving police officer may have committed a criminal offence.

The PPS considered the materials submitted by the Police Ombudsman and provided the confirmation sought. The Police Ombudsman also provided the PPS with a copy of his draft public statement prior to its publication.

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Justice (i) what representations she has made to the Home Secretary regarding the extension of the remit of the Undercover Policing Inquiry into actions carried out in Northern Ireland by those police officers in England and Wales under investigation by the Inquiry; and (ii) whether she has had contact with the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice on this matter.

(AQW 1118/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I have recently written to the Home Secretary on this matter and copied my correspondence to the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice. I am aware that there was previous correspondence from the Department on a similar vein.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many cases related to child cruelty including assaults and neglect have been successfully prosecuted in the last five calendar years to date shown per court division; (ii) whether at magistrates or crown courts; and (iii) the sentence in respect of each.

(AQW 1126/16-21)

Ms Sugden: During the years 2010 – 2014, the most recent five year period for which information is available, offences relating to child cruelty, child neglect and child assault were prosecuted under various pieces of legislation, including the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, the Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland) Act 1908 and the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968. Information, in an aggregated format, relating to convictions for those offences, has been provided in the following tables.

(i) & (ii) Convictions at court for at least one offence^{1,2} relating to child cruelty, child neglect or assault where the offence description specifies involvement of a child³, 2010 - 2014

2010

Court Division	Court Type	
	Crown	Magistrates'
Antrim	-	6
Ards	-	4
Armagh and South Down	-	3
Belfast	1	3
Craigavon		3
Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	-
Londonderry	-	2
Total	1	21

2011

Court Division	Court Type	
	Crown	Magistrates'
Antrim	1	2
Ards	-	4
Armagh and South Down	-	-
Belfast	1	7
Craigavon	-	2
Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	1
Londonderry	5	2
Total	7	18

2012

	Court Type	
Court Division	Crown	Magistrates'
Antrim	-	-
Ards	1	3
Armagh and South Down	-	4
Belfast	2	4
Craigavon	2	-
Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	2
Londonderry	3	1
Total	8	14

2013

	Court Type	
Court Division	Crown	Magistrates'
Antrim	3	1
Ards	1	-
Armagh and South Down	1	1
Belfast	2	4
Craigavon	1	4
Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	2
Londonderry	-	-
Total	8	12

2014

	Court Type	
Court Division	Crown	Magistrates'
Antrim	1	-
Ards	1	4
Armagh and South Down	2	3
Belfast	10	2
Craigavon	-	1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	-
Londonderry	-	-
Total	14	10

- (iii) Range of penalties handed down for convictions at courts for at least one offence 1,2 relating to child cruelty, child neglect or assault where the offence description specifies involvement of a child³, 2010 – 2014

Disposal Type

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Community sentence | ■ Monetary penalty |
| ■ Conditional/absolute discharge | ■ Sexual Offenders Registration required |
| ■ Disqualification from working with children | ■ Sexual Prevention Order |
| ■ Imprisonment | ■ Suspended imprisonment |

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to persons convicted for the offences in question, whether or not they were the primary offence at conviction.

- 2 Some individuals may have had more than one conviction for the offences in question and may have been convicted of more than one of the offences specified as part of the same conviction.
- 3 For assault offences, only those offences where the offence description solely specifies the involvement of a child have been included.
- 4 More than one type of disposal may have been handed down as part of any one conviction.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much funding her Department has provided to the Prison Officers Association in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 1127/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Prison Service has provided funding of £358,190 to the Prison Officers Association over the past five financial years. The funding for each year is shown in the table below.

Year	£
2011/12	64,273
2012/13	64,215
2013/14	67,783
2014/15	90,949
2015/16	70,970
Total	358,190

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what departmental grants are available for community organisations.

(AQW 1138/16-21)

Ms Sugden: My Department disburses approximately £8 million each year across the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector. This funding is provided in different forms ranging from grant to contract depending on the amount of funding and the nature of the service commissioned. My officials communicate funding opportunities as they arise.

Funding is provided to the sector to deliver the Department's objectives and is used to secure a wide range of services that provide support to victims and witnesses of crime and deliver programmes aimed at reducing offending. All funding of this nature is recorded in the Government Funding database, which is maintained centrally for all government departments by the Department for Communities.

My Department is currently reviewing its Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector funding system, to improve how it awards and disburses funding. New proposals will be consulted upon in the near future and a new system implemented to take effect in the new financial year.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice whether she has had any discussions with the Minister of Finance in relation to the issue of equal pay for PSNI, Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Office personnel.

(AQW 1148/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I have not had any such discussions to date, but I will be happy to work with the Minister of Finance and other Executive colleagues to resolve this issue. I am sympathetic to, and supportive of, the staff affected. However, any solution would have to be centrally-driven and centrally-funded. My Department does not have the resources, or the required approvals, to deal with it: it would be for the Executive as a whole to agree funding, if a suitable mechanism can be found.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether prison officers at HMP Maghaberry can decline to work on landings housing separated prisoners without disciplinary action being taken.

(AQW 1213/16-21)

Ms Sugden: All Prison Officers are required to undertake duties as required by the Governor. All staff are fully supported when issues specific to them arise. As no officer has refused to work in separated areas, disciplinary action has not been necessary.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how the funding provided by her Department to the Prison Officers Association is ear-marked to be spent; broken down by percentage spend per specific area of usage.

(AQW 1214/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Of funding provided by the Prison Service to the Prison Officers Association 100% is for salary costs.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Justice to outline (i) why Assembly Written Questions regarding the cost of policing, including the Woodburn Forest protest, are categorised as operational when the information can be received via a Freedom

of Information request to her Department; and (ii) why FoI requests from the public are treated differently to Assembly Written Questions.

(AQW 1243/16-21)

Ms Sugden: There is no policy distinction between the handling of responses to Assembly questions and responses to Freedom of Information (FoI) requests.

If either an Assembly question or a correspondence case relates to a matter which is the operational responsibility of the Chief Constable, the Department will respect his independence and refer the questioner or correspondent to the PSNI. The Department will first confirm with the PSNI that it is in a position to provide an answer before giving such a response so as not to mislead.

Requests to my Department for the release of information under the FoI Act 2000 apply solely to recorded information held by the Department. My Department does not routinely hold information relating to the cost of specific policing operations, and would not be in a position to answer questions in that regard without obtaining the information from the PSNI. The FoI Act does not require the Department to seek information that it does not have: whoever is making the FoI request should direct their request to whoever holds the information – in such a case, the PSNI.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether animal cruelty cases will be included in her review of sentencing guidelines; and (ii) if not, to outline the rationale for this decision.

(AQW 1281/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Sentencing guidelines for particular offences are a matter for the Lord Chief Justice's Sentencing Group and not for my Department.

I have announced a review of the sentencing framework to consider the extent to which current sentencing arrangements meet the objectives of an effective sentencing guidelines mechanism and to look at the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current legislative framework governing sentencing for particular categories of crime.

Within this context I will consider if there are issues relating to animal cruelty offences which the review needs to include, over and above the scope of the major joint review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which completed its work and reported in February 2016.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the renovation of Omagh Courthouse.

(AQW 1307/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service is undertaking some minor refurbishment work at Omagh Courthouse. The general office is being repainted and re-carpeted and desks and chairs are being replaced. Office storage will be enhanced by replacing existing storage facilities and adapting further rooms for storage use. Minor work will be carried out to update the electricity supply. Separately, Judicial and court clerk benches in Court 3 will be lowered.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of European Arrest Warrants issued by the PSNI since November 2001.

(AQW 1311/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The number of European Arrest Warrants issued by the PSNI is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice for her assessment of the discovery of 1.5kg of suspected Semtex explosive in Belfast.

(AQW 1505/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I welcome the fact that suspected explosives have been taken out of circulation. Those responsible have no regard for public safety; they do not care who they injure or kill. I find it incomprehensible that a residential building was used as a hiding place, potentially putting many lives at risk.

There can be no justification for this type of action and those responsible should face the consequences of their actions. I know that PSNI will do everything that they can to make that happen. I hope that PSNI will have the full support of the community as they carry out their investigation.

Department for the Economy

Mr McKee asked the Minister for the Economy what investment funds Invest NI provides to businesses in the hospitality sector that wish to grow and diversify their services and products.

(AQW 5/16-21)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister for the Economy): Subject to meeting Invest NI criteria for intervention, businesses in the hospitality sector may access the full range of Invest NI support.

Invest NI may offer support to help businesses with improving competitiveness, management development, people excellence, marketing, e-commerce and information communication technology. It also provides support by way of information and business advice.

Selective financial assistance by way of capital grant may also be available for the development of new or expansion of existing hotels and certain other accommodation businesses.

Invest NI also supports the provision of finance to growth potential SMEs through a range of debt and equity funds, in particular the Small Business Loan Fund and the Growth Loan Fund.

These funds do not have any specific sector bias or focus. However, businesses applying must be substantially based in Northern Ireland and with regard to the Small Business Loan Fund must provide evidence of funding decline from the private sector. The Growth Loan Fund also targets businesses that are currently exporting or can demonstrate export potential.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister for the Economy what plans he has to build a modern telecommunications network.
(AQW 90/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: To further extend the communications network, DfE is delivering two broadband projects which, by completion in December 2017, will have delivered access to fixed-line broadband services of at least 2 Megabits per second (Mbps) to around 92% of premises across Northern Ireland and superfast broadband services of at least 24 Mbps to 87%.

By 31 March 2016, it is reported that just over 49,000 premises have seen improvements from these latest updates. For premises that continue to have difficulty accessing services of 2Mbps or better, a basic broadband support scheme is available, that will offer a subsidy of around £350 towards the cost installing a satellite broadband service.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister for the Economy what plans he has to help rural businesses gain reasonable access to broadband and mobile phone signals.
(AQW 173/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: With regard to broadband, in February 2015, my Department awarded a contract to BT for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP). Under this contract, it is expected that, by 31 December 2017, access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), will have been provided to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland and, particularly in rural areas.

In addition, under the NI Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until Autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite, DfE has a scheme in place under the auspices of the NIBIP, which will subsidise the costs of installing a satellite broadband service from a list of registered providers. Subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria, customers with a broadband connection of less than 2 Mbps are able to apply for this service. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

As a reserved matter the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

In relation to mobile, I would advise that the UK Government has reached an agreement with the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) through which the mobile industry will invest £5 billion in UK infrastructure and increasing coverage by 2017. It is envisaged that mobile not-spots in Northern Ireland will be reduced to 0.3% of the land mass by the time this investment is completed.

These initiatives should go a long way towards ensuring that broadband and mobile coverage in Northern Ireland is significantly improved. However, DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for the Economy how many jobs his Department plans to create in Upper Bann over the next five years.
(AQW 225/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: The draft Programme for Government (PfG) does not have specific job targets, instead it recognises the importance of increasing the rate of employment right across Northern Ireland.

My Department is committed, through delivery of the new outcomes-based PfG and the upcoming refocused Economic Strategy, to increase the competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy and grow employment and prosperity for all.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for the Economy what discussions he plans to have with BT and other providers on broadband availability.

(AQW 295/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: I intend to meet with a range of telecoms stakeholders, including BT, to discuss current broadband availability and learn of future plans for improved connectivity.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister for the Economy what plans he has to help rural businesses that do not have reasonable access to broadband or phone signals.

(AQW 303/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: As per my response to AQW 173/16-21, I would re-iterate that my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland and primarily in rural areas.

Under the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until Autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

It should be recognised that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite, DfE has a scheme in place under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

As a reserved matter the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

In relation to mobile, the UK Government has also reached an agreement with the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) through which the mobile industry will invest £5 billion in UK infrastructure and increasing coverage by 2017. It is envisaged that mobile not-spots in Northern Ireland will be reduced to 0.3% of the land mass by the time this investment is completed.

Furthermore, under the 4G mobile licensing arrangements, 02 is obliged to provide coverage to areas where 95% of the population lives in the Devolved Administrations. These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband and mobile services across Northern Ireland. However, DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the number of jobs (i) created; and (ii) promoted in West Tyrone, in each of the past five years.

(AQW 364/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: It should be noted that 'jobs promoted' are those which supported businesses expect to create in future years, whereas 'jobs created' are jobs which have actually been filled at a particular point in time, and may relate to investments secured in earlier years. It is therefore not possible to directly compare the number of jobs promoted with those that have been created during the same period.

Table 1 below details the number of jobs that Invest NI has helped to create in the West Tyrone constituency in each of the last five financial years.

Table 1: Invest NI New Jobs Created in West Tyrone PCA

Year	New Jobs Created
2011-12	137
2012-13	165
2013-14	328
2014-15	297
2015-16	241

Table 2 below details the number of jobs that Invest NI has helped promote in the West Tyrone Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in each of the last five financial years.

Table 2: Invest NI New Jobs Promoted in West Tyrone PCA

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2011-12	188
2012-13	642
2013-14	359
2014-15	321
2015-16	103

Note: An additional 5 jobs were promoted through an External Delivery Organisation in 2011-12, the beneficiaries of which will not be restricted to West Tyrone but will benefit businesses throughout Northern Ireland.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the number of jobs (i) created; and (ii) promoted in East Derry in each of the last five years.

(AQW 370/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: It should be noted that 'jobs promoted' are those which supported businesses expect to create in future years, whereas 'jobs created' are jobs which have actually been filled at a particular point in time, and may relate to investments secured in earlier years. It is therefore not possible to directly compare the number of jobs promoted with those that have been created during the same period.

Table 1 below details the number of jobs that Invest NI has helped to create in the East Londonderry constituency in each of the last five financial years.

Table 1: Invest NI New Jobs Created in East Londonderry PCA

Year	New Jobs Created
2011-12	174
2012-13	141
2013-14	199
2014-15	251
2015-16	121

Table 2 below details the number of jobs that Invest NI has helped promote in the East Londonderry Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in each of the last five financial years.

Table 2: Invest NI New Jobs Promoted in East Londonderry PCA

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2011-12	158
2012-13	160
2013-14	253
2014-15	213
2015-16	163

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the number of jobs (i) created; and (ii) promoted within Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last five years.

(AQW 447/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: It should be noted that 'jobs promoted' are those which supported businesses expect to create in future years, whereas 'jobs created' are jobs which have actually been filled at a particular point in time, and may relate to investments secured in earlier years. It is therefore not possible to directly compare the number of jobs promoted with those that have been created during the same period.

Table 1 below details the number of jobs that Invest NI has helped to create in the Fermanagh & South Tyrone constituency in each of the last five financial years.

Table 1: Invest NI New Jobs Created in Fermanagh & South Tyrone PCA

Year	New Jobs Created
2011-12	261
2012-13	409
2013-14	640
2014-15	521
2015-16	374

Table 2 below details the number of jobs that Invest NI has helped promote in the Fermanagh & South Tyrone Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in each of the last five financial years.

Table 2: Invest NI New Jobs Promoted in Fermanagh & South Tyrone PCA

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2011-12	261
2012-13	476
2013-14	451
2014-15	1,023
2015-16	972

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy how he plans to increase broadband provision in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 507/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Under my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In the meantime, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

In addition to my Department's initiatives, at a national level and given that telecoms is a reserved matter, the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband services across Northern Ireland. The telecoms industry will also continue to make its own investment in infrastructure where it is economically viable for them, separate to these initiatives and DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for the Economy for an update on the new sports centre build at Ulster University in Coleraine, including whether work is progressing on time.

(AQW 508/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Ulster University has advised the Department that the construction works for the sports centre at Coleraine commenced on site in October 2015 with the building on programme to be fully operational in early Spring 2017.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for the Economy for his assessment of the proposal to close the crèche at the Ulster University campus in Coleraine; and whether his Department plans to intervene on the issue.

(AQW 510/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Ulster University has stated that the decision to move the crèche facility from the Coleraine campus was taken because the existing building is to be demolished due to health and safety concerns. The university has also pointed out that

childcare financial support is available to students to allow them to access childcare facilities of their choice, typically near to their home. This direct funding for students is sourced from my Department, and aligns with the Department's strategy to widen participation in Higher Education.

Whilst my Department separately provides funding to the higher education institutions for teaching, learning and research purposes, and for the provision of facilities to carry out these functions, our universities are autonomous bodies entirely responsible for their own policies and procedures. Decisions relating to the operation of student services at the Ulster University are a matter for the management of the university. Whilst the cessation of the crèche facility given the inability of its management body to secure premises is regrettable, it is not appropriate for the Department to intervene.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for the Economy what plans his Department has to improve broadband services in the Birches Ward of Portadown.

(AQW 521/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Under my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In addition, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including a number of postcodes in the Birches area.

Both projects seek to achieve the best and maximum coverage while ensuring that funding is used as efficiently as possible, taking account of the technical and financial constraints that exist. These constraints are generally based on the existing network and the limitations of the telecommunications equipment.

It is not possible to prioritise specific geographical areas or individual premises without impacting on the operational delivery of the projects.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

Mr Easton asked the Minister for the Economy how he plans to address the problems in the women's educational sector through European Social Fund financing for programmes delivered through the Kilcooley Women's Centre and which have yet to be paid by the previous Department for Education and Learning.

(AQW 556/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: The Department for the Economy has no direct funding relationship with Kilcooley Women's Centre. The Centre was funded indirectly by the previous Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) under the NI ESF 2007 – 2013 Programme, as a partner project of the Training for Women Network (TWN). The Kilcooley Women's Centre, as a partner of TWN, also received funding under DEL's Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF).

The table below sets out those elements of payments made by DEL to TWN under the 2007-2013 ESF Programme which relate to Kilcooley Women's Group activities:

Financial Year	TWN Claim Apportioned to Kilcooley Women's Group
2010/11	£36,095.46
2013/14	£105,098.32
2014/15	£103,782.42

Under CIF, DEL paid £61,310.23 to TWN in respect of the Kilcooley Women's Centre between April 2012 and March 2015.

Under the contract to deliver the ESF and CIF Programmes, TWN subcontracted a number of Women Centres, including Kilcooley Women's Centre, to assist with delivery. As the contract to deliver the Programmes was between TWN and Kilcooley Women's Centre, TWN is ultimately responsible for all subsequent payments to its various partner projects. There are no outstanding payments from the Department to TWN.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for the Economy how his Department is improving broadband provision in West Tyrone.

(AQW 631/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Under my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service

passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In addition, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including a number of postcodes in West Tyrone.

Both projects seek to achieve the best and maximum coverage while ensuring that funding is used as efficiently as possible, taking account of the technical and financial constraints that exist. These constraints are generally based on the existing network and the limitations of the telecommunications equipment.

It is not possible to prioritise specific geographical areas or individual premises without impacting on the operational delivery of the projects.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for the Economy what action his Department will take to enhance rural broadband provision in Upper Bann.

(AQW 693/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Under my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In addition, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including a number of postcodes in the Upper Bann constituency.

Both projects seek to achieve the best and maximum coverage while ensuring that funding is used as efficiently as possible, taking account of the technical and financial constraints that exist. These constraints are generally based on the existing network and the limitations of the telecommunications equipment.

It is not possible to prioritise specific geographical areas or individual premises without impacting on the operational delivery of the projects.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland
Broadband Connectivity in Rural Areas

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for the Economy what steps will be taken to improve broadband connectivity in rural areas, in particular the Craigantlet area of North Down.

(AQW 707/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Under my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In the meantime, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including North Down Constituency and parts of the townland of Craigantlet.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

In addition to my Department's initiatives, at a national level and given that telecoms is a reserved matter, the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband services across Northern Ireland. The telecoms industry will also continue to make its own investment in infrastructure where it is economically viable for them, separate to these initiatives and DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for the Economy why the roll out of 4G has resulted in slower download speeds in Bangor town centre; and what is being done to address this issue.

(AQW 709/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: I would remind the Member that the telecommunication market is fully privatised and independently regulated. It is not therefore within the gift of my Department to intervene where issues arise that are related to service standards.

Information on the quality of experience in relation to mobile services and networks is the subject of research conducted and published by Ofcom. There are four main Mobile Network Operators using different frequencies and equipment and therefore there could be numerous reasons why consumers have noticed a decline in mobile data speeds. The issue of slowing speeds is something that can only be addressed by the customer raising it directly with their respective network operator.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for the Economy why assessments for eligibility for student maintenance grants are assessed use gross rather than net incomes.

(AQW 895/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Gross income is considered to be the fairest method of comparing household earnings, this is because net pay can be affected by an individual's decision to have voluntary deductions taken from their salary, either before or after tax. These deductions may include: pension contributions; employee share schemes; charitable giving or purchasing additional holidays and would reduce net income. Therefore, an individual's net income is not necessarily directly comparable to any other individual.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for the Economy to outline his Department's assessment of the manufacturing sector in Upper Bann.

(AQW 906/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Manufacturing is a function within a broad range of sectors including engineering, pharma and agri-food and as such is hugely important to Upper Bann, and the Northern Ireland economy as a whole. My Department and Invest NI continue to work closely with manufacturing companies to help them grow and develop.

The latest NI Quarterly Employment Survey over the year to March 2016 showed increases across all sectors with jobs in manufacturing increasing by 2.5% (1,950 jobs) to 80,640 jobs.

Over the last five years, in Upper Bann, Invest NI has provided £31.51m of assistance to firms involved in manufacturing, across a range of sectors. This support has helped promote 1,800 new manufacturing jobs in the constituency.

For example, in August 2014 Upper Bann-based Almac Group, which operates in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors, announced a £54m investment which is planned to create 348 high quality jobs and generate salaries of over £9.4m per annum when fully implemented. Invest NI offered £5.5m of support towards the investment.

However, in view of a number of major redundancies announced recently, there is no room for complacency. My Department and Invest NI will continue to do all they can to support investment, job creation and competitiveness in the manufacturing base.

Mr Frew asked the Minister for the Economy to outline (i) if Renewables Obligation Certificate subsidies can be transferred in full if a windfarm is sold to a new owner; and (ii) whether an owner of a wind farm that has planning permission and grid connection approval, but is yet to be connected to the grid, sells the wind farm will the new owner receive the same subsidy or would the new owner have to reapply for the subsidy.

(AQW 937/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: The Renewables Obligation Order (Northern Ireland) 2009 specifies that Renewables Obligation Certificates (ROCs) are issued to the operator of the generating station, rather than the owner (although they are often the same entity). Ofgem (the scheme administrator) has advised that if the owner/operator was to change, ROCs would be issued to the new party (once this had been transferred on Ofgem's register). A definitive decision on an individual project application would be a matter for Ofgem.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for the Economy, given that self employed parents have full rights to statutory maternity pay, whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to grant the right to self employed individuals to access statutory adoption pay.

(AQW 1011/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Self employed parents do not have entitlement to statutory maternity pay. Depending on their circumstances, they may be entitled to maternity allowance, a social security benefit administered by the Department for Communities. There

is no equivalent to maternity allowance for self employed adopters. Means tested support is, however, available through Tax Credits and an adoption allowance may also be payable by an adoption agency in respect of a child's needs.

There are presently no plans to introduce a statutory adoption allowance.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy for an update on improving broadband speeds in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 1018/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Up to March 2016, the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) reported that it passed some 6,800 premises in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn, when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In the meantime, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite, DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP. This allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

In addition to my Department's initiatives, at a national level and given that telecoms is a reserved matter, the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband. This will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband services across Northern Ireland. The telecoms industry will also continue to make its own investment in infrastructure where it is economically viable for them separate to these initiatives and DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the level of funding spent on broadband improvement schemes over the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1019/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: From 2011/12 – 2015/16, my Department has invested just over £26m in projects aimed at enhancing access to telecommunications services across Northern Ireland and encouraging the use of those services for economic growth. It is not possible to disaggregate the expenditure to constituency level. A breakdown of the funding by year and scheme is as follows:

Year	Fund/Project	£
2011/12	NI Broadband Fund	129,259
	Next Generation Broadband Project	4,174,397
	Logon-ni Programme	660,166
	Remote Broadband Services Project	123,436
2012/13	Logon-ni Programme	709,385
	Remote Broadband Services Project	1
2013/14	Logon-ni Programme	397,324
	NI Broadband Improvement Project	4,500,000
2014/15	NI Broadband Improvement Project	6,000,000 ¹
	Superfast Roll-out Programme	5,000,000
	Remote Broadband Services Project	1
2015/16	NI Broadband Improvement Project	4,373,439
	NI Broadband Fund	18,370
Totals		26,085,778

1. Includes £5m contributed by DARD

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy to detail (i) the level of funding given by Invest NI and (ii) where that money was spent, broken down over the last five years.

(AQW 1020/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: During the last Programme for Government, 2011/12-2015/16, Invest NI offered a total of £527.9m of support to businesses, which has contributed to a total of £3,466.9m investment into the Northern Ireland economy.

Table 1 below details (ii) the breakdown of support offered by District Council Area in each of the 5 years between 2011-12 and 2015-16.

Table 1: Invest NI Support Offered (£M) by DCA (2011-12 to 2015-16)

DCA	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Antrim and Newtownabbey	4.8	6.6	18.3	15.0	2.6
Ards and North Down	3.1	3.8	3.4	3.3	1.9
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	7.6	12.8	8.2	24.8	6.5
Belfast	25.2	29.8	46.9	64.2	16.8
Causeway Coast and Glens	2.1	3.6	3.4	2.4	3.4
Derry City and Strabane	3.9	6.6	6.6	12.8	6.8
Fermanagh and Omagh	1.6	6.2	3.2	4.1	5.0
Lisburn and Castlereagh	5.0	4.4	5.9	4.3	10.6
Mid and East Antrim	2.6	9.6	7.8	5.7	3.6
Mid Ulster	8.0	12.8	10.5	18.6	9.6
Newry, Mourne and Down	3.5	4.1	4.8	11.1	3.7
Not Determined	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.0	3.1

Notes:

- 1 Not Determined refers to projects that cannot be allocated at this level, as a location may not yet be determined.
- 2 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

In addition to support offered direct to businesses, in the last five years an additional £163m was offered to External Delivery Organisations or universities, towards projects or initiatives that will benefit businesses across the whole of Northern Ireland.

Invest NI makes offers of support to companies based on business plans received. These offers are only paid to businesses once key milestones and targets have been met.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the total number of graduates from (i) Queen's University, Belfast; and (ii) Ulster University that gained full time employment within twelve months of finishing university, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1025/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Information on graduates gaining full-time employment comes from the UK Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE), which is carried out six months after students graduate.

The data for the last three academic years for graduates from Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, who indicated that their main activity six months after leaving university was full-time work, is set out in the table below. The information in previous years is not directly comparable due to changes in the survey methodology.

Academic Year	Institution	Number in Full-Time Work
2011/12	QUB	2,250
	UU	2,940
2012/13	QUB	2,100
	UU	3,230
2013/14	QUB	2,275
	UU	3,310

Notes:

- To prevent the identification of individuals figures have been rounded to the nearest 5, in line with HESA rounding strategy, with 0, 1 and 2 rounded to 0.

- More detailed information is available in the relevant statistical bulletin which can be found at – <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/destinations-leavers-uk-higher-education-institutions-northern-ireland-analysis-201314>
Broadband speeds in West Tyrone

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the action taken by his Department to improve broadband speeds in West Tyrone.
(AQW 1069/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Under my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn, when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In addition, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including a number of postcodes in West Tyrone.

Both projects seek to achieve the best and maximum coverage while ensuring that funding is used as efficiently as possible, taking account of the technical and financial constraints that exist. These constraints are generally based on the existing network and the limitations of the telecommunications equipment.

It is not possible to prioritise specific geographical areas or individual premises without impacting on the operational delivery of the projects.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP. This allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy to detail the number of businesses and households with a broadband speed of 1MB or less in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.
(AQW 1073/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: My Department does not hold or gather the information requested.

Data on fixed broadband network coverage is collected by Ofcom which makes the information available through its triennial infrastructure reports and subsequent annual updates. The latest report, 'Connected Nations 2015' and associated data downloads can be found at <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/infrastructure/connected-nations-2015/>.

This reports gathers data across the following categories: -

- Number of connections less than 2 Mbps;
- Number of connections 2-5 Mbps;
- Number of connections 5-10 Mbps;
- Number of connections 10-30 Mbps;
- Number of connections greater than 30 Mbps; and
- Number of connections greater than 300 Mbps

Data is not broken down by business or household.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for the Economy for an update on broadband speeds and service improvement in East Derry.
(AQW 1092/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Data published by the House of Commons Library and based on evidence gathered by Ofcom shows that at June 2015, 91% of premises in the East Londonderry constituency had access to basic broadband services of at least 2 Megabits per second (Mbps) and 74% of premises had access to superfast services of at least 30 Mbps. It is also reported that the average broadband download speed in the constituency stood at 24.3Mbps. These figures are slightly below the Northern Ireland averages of 94%, 77% and 28.3 Mbps respectively.

Up to March 2016, my Department's Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), which seeks primarily to provide improvements in access to basic broadband services, reported that it had passed some 3,400 premises in East Londonderry. The contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the specific thresholds. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In the meantime, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including East Londonderry. It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite broadband, DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

In addition to my Department's initiatives, at a national level and given that telecoms is a reserved matter, the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband services across Northern Ireland. The telecoms industry will also continue to make its own investment in infrastructure where it is economically viable for them separate to these initiatives and DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 1 July 2016

Written Answers to Questions

The Executive Office

Mr McGrath asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the grants previously offered by Education and Library Board youth services to youth groups for summer intervention programmes will be offered in 2016; (ii) how much funding will be available; and (iii) when groups will be advised of the scheme's availability.
(AQW 2/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): It has been agreed that Belfast City Council and the Education Authority will undertake the Planned Interventions Programme during 2016/17. Up to £500,000 will be available through the Programme which is funded by the Executive Office and administered by Belfast City Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the Department, throughout July and August.

We anticipate that groups will be advised of the scheme in the coming weeks.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, to list the dates when any Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation material, including any part of a report, in draft, preliminary or in any form was provided or shared with anyone by their Department.
(AQW 122/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation report material has not been shared by the Executive Office, formerly OFMDFM.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 52276/11-16, to list the dates of the seven stage payment plan; and identify the project deliverables and amounts paid on each date.
(AQW 167/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: Over the three year period in which the research was undertaken, the majority of the payments were linked to the provision of progress reports, outlining the work completed and any early analysis available at that point in time.

Date	Delivery	£ amount
March 2012	Secondary data analysis/geo-social mapping of target Wards	11,479
October 2012	Progress Report 1	46,514
March 2013	Progress Report 2	46,514
October 2013	Progress Report 3	46,514
March 2014	Progress Report 4	46,514
October 2014	Progress Report 5	46,514
August 2015 – June 2016	Draft research volumes & final summary report	46,514

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many complaints the Public Services Ombudsman has received about the Charity Commission NI since January 2015.
(AQW 822/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The statutory office of Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) was established on 1 April 2016, replacing and expanding on the former offices of Assembly Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints. The NIPSO is appointed on the recommendation of the Assembly, and the Assembly Commission oversees budgetary accountability for the office. We have no responsibilities in relation to the work of the NIPSO or the former offices of Assembly

Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints. You may wish to consider raising your query directly with the Public Services Ombudsman.

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether officials from the Good Relations Unit have been involved in any discussions in Castlederg following the erection of an illegal memorial to terrorists in the Hillview Estate, Castlederg.

(AQW 1080/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: Officials from the Good Relations Unit have not been involved in any discussions in relation to the memorial in Castlederg.

Mr Kearney asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their plans to establish a Civic Advisory Panel.
(AQO 10/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The participants to Stormont House Agreement agreed the importance of having civic voices heard and civic views considered in relation to key social, cultural and economic issues. Steps for the establishment of the panel were set out in the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan of 17 November 2015. It anticipates:

- A panel of six people being established by the Executive, with members, including the Chair, being identified and appointed by us;
- The Panel being tasked by the Executive with considering specific strategic issues relevant to the Programme for Government and reporting to the Executive although it may also propose subjects that it wishes to consider and seek Executive agreement to do so;

It is expected that the panel will seek the views of a wide range of representatives and stakeholders from civic society in recognition of the importance of having civic voices heard and civic views considered in relation to key social, cultural and economic issues.

Consideration is currently being given to identifying and appointing Panel members.

Ms Lockhart asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the benefits of the Social Investment Fund.
(AQO 14/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Social Investment Fund is a community led, integrated approach to addressing issues associated with poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration in areas of need. One of its key benefits is the focus on supporting communities to identify needs and to develop and prioritise interventions to address those needs, tailored to the local communities.

Benefits will derive from the strategic objectives of the fund, which are:

- Skilled and Educated Communities
- Healthy Communities
- Safe and Secure Communities
- Engaged and Contributing Communities
- Better Places and Spaces
- Whilst the delivery of projects is ongoing and it is too early to formally evaluate progress on achievement of the expected benefits, some are already materialising in local communities. For example SIF investment in employment focused projects is providing training and work placements to local people to increase their opportunities for employment. Already over 500 people are benefiting from training and paid work placements; 33 have secured jobs and attribute their success to the support received through SIF.

In addition almost 1200 children and families are benefiting from engagement in early intervention projects to support their physical, intellectual, social and emotional development. Parents are telling us about the positive change in children's behaviour and how much their families are benefiting from the projects.

Another key focus of SIF is education and over 300 people are currently benefiting from dedicated educational support through after school and breakfast clubs, home visiting, family/parent support and transitions advice.

There are also very visible examples of the benefits being realised, including the transformation of the derelict site on the Newtownards Road into a brand new fit for purpose community health facility. Another recently refurbished premises, also on the Newtownards Road, has been transformed into a visitors' centre due to formally open in the coming weeks. Further capital works are nearing completion including Cloona House in Poleglass, Fermanagh House in Enniskillen, West Lisburn Community Centre and Laganview Enterprise Centre in Old Warren. These are all due to complete works over the summer and become operational, providing not only physical improvements to the area, but increased community services to local people.

We expect this positive trend to continue and for the programme to deliver the primary benefits in local communities and really help improve people's lives.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how her Department ensures the independence of the Basic Payment Scheme appeals process.

(AQW 677/16-21)

Miss McIlveen (The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs): The Review of Decisions process is designed to provide applicants with an opportunity to have a Departmental decision reviewed independently. At Stage One, the decision is reviewed by a Departmental case officer who has not been involved in the original decision. A permanent Stage 1 team exists for that purpose. At Stage Two, the case is reviewed by an independent, external panel though the final decision is taken by the Head of the Paying Agency, a senior Departmental official.

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs if her Department has plans to review legislation surrounding the advertisement and sale of pets.

(AQW 767/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I recognise that the advertising of animals for sale on the internet is a perfectly legitimate way to attract buyers, and that it is being used increasingly for farm animals in a number of countries as well as for pets and companion animals.

A range of legislation exists to protect the welfare of animals, to ensure responsible ownership and to protect the public. For example, the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 and the Dogs Order (NI) 1983 (as amended).

My Department plans to review the legislation governing the welfare of animals in petshops, and in animal boarding, riding and zoological establishments, in advance of the transfer of responsibility for licensing these premises to Councils. This review will also consider the evidence and views on online pet sales submitted during the consultation on the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011. Such issues include the selling of pets from premises that are not traditionally recognised as petshops, and raising awareness about the minimum standards for online sales introduced by the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG).

PAAG was created in 2001 to combat the growing concern amongst animal welfare organisations regarding the irresponsible advertising of pets. It brings together a variety of interested partners including Defra, Dogs Trust, Blue Cross, Cats Protection and the British Veterinary Association. Since PAAG introduced its minimum standards for online pet advertising in 2013 over 130,000 inappropriate adverts selling pets have been removed from different websites.

The Irish Pet Advertising Advisory Group (IPAAG) is made up of representatives from Ireland's leading animal welfare groups such as Dogs Trust, ISPCA and the Donkey Sanctuary, the veterinary profession and the online retail sector. Its work closely mirrors that of PAAG.

As a member of both PAAG and IPAAG, my Department works with both organisations to promote better self-regulation by online sites that advertise pets. Officials attend regular meetings of both organisations and have ongoing interaction with PAAG and IPAAG members.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the agri-food sector in Upper Bann.

(AQW 907/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Upper Bann area has a rich heritage in agriculture and food production, supporting a wide range of livestock and crop production systems, and being home to specialist artisan food and drink producers and many household brands such as Tayto, Avondale Foods, Moy Park, Irwin's, White's, and Wilson's Country. The borough is also home to 2 of the 3 PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) products in Northern Ireland, namely Lough Neagh Eels and Armagh Bramley Apples.

I am aware that the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon council (ABC), in which the Upper Bann constituency is situated, recognises that the agri-food sector is a priority for its local economy. The 'Food Heartland' is the brand that ABC has developed to promote the agri-food sector in the borough, and in the past two years my Department, through the Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme, has provided financial support for the 'Food Heartland Forum'.

I know that the agri-food sector will be a key driver in strengthening our local economy going forward and I am keen to support it. Under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, my Department is developing measures to support sustainable growth across Northern Ireland. The Farm Business Improvement Scheme that is currently being developed includes a package of measures for farmers aimed at knowledge transfer, cooperation, innovation and capital investment. Additionally the proposed Agri-food Processing Investment Scheme will seek to improve the economic performance and competitiveness of the agri-food sector. Together these Schemes will continue to provide support for those engaged in the agri-food sector in the area to develop and improve the competitiveness and sustainability of their businesses.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted for animal cruelty offences in the last two years.

(AQW 973/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The welfare of animals here is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011. It does not contain an offence specifically referred to as 'animal cruelty' but specifies a range of offences including those relating to activities which may cause animals to suffer unnecessarily.

In the last two years, the Public Prosecution Service have directed prosecution in respect of 18 people for offences involving unnecessary suffering under Section 4 of the 2011 Act. 16 of these people have been convicted for offences involving unnecessary suffering.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what powers her Department has to combat animal cruelty.

(AQW 974/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The welfare of animals is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 (the 2011 Act), which recognises that causing an animal unnecessary suffering is a serious offence. The 2011 Act sets out very clear enforcement roles, with my Department being responsible for enforcement in relation to farmed animals; the PSNI respect of wild animals, animal fighting, and welfare issues where other criminal activities are involved; and Councils in respect of non-farmed animals, such as domestic pets and horses.

The 2011 Act provides powers of entry for inspectors and allows them to seize an animal that is suffering unnecessarily, or that may suffer unnecessarily if its circumstances do not change. This power to intervene before an animal suffers is a very important aspect of the 2011 Act. If an offence has been committed, inspectors can take a range of enforcement actions appropriate to the circumstances of each case, including giving a warning or prosecution. The 2011 Act also allows an inspector to serve a legally binding Improvement Notice on a person who has not taken reasonable steps to ensure that the needs of their animal have been met to the extent required by good practice.

My Department has made a number of Statutory Rules to safeguard animal welfare under powers provided by the 2011 Act and my inspectors are responsible for enforcement of those relating to farmed animals. They include the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (NI) 2012, which lay down standards for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes; and the Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (NI) 2012, which prohibit a range of procedures involving interference with the sensitive tissues of an animal.

My Department has also made Regulations under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 to provide powers for my inspectors to safeguard animals during transport and at the point of slaughter. These are Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (NI) 2006 and the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (NI) 2014.

My Department is also responsible for implementation and enforcement of legislation safeguarding the welfare of animals in petshops, animal boarding establishments, riding and other establishments using powers in the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 1972.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how many farmers she expects to complete the Farm Family Key Skills Health and Safety Training in each of the next three years.

(AQW 988/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department is planning to train farmers in Family Farm Key Skills Health and Safety Training as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Family Farm Key Skills Health and Safety Training 2016 – 2019

Year	Number of Farmers
2016-17	600
2017-18	1000
2018-19	1400

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the qualifications that will be required by training providers to deliver Farm Family Key Skills Health and Safety Training.

(AQW 989/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Trainers who will deliver the Farm Family Key Skills Health and Safety Training must have an Agricultural Level 3 or equivalent qualification to the satisfaction of College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise. In addition the trainer must demonstrate evidence of delivering Health and Safety training to farmers or farming community within the last 3 years.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what Health and Safety qualifications a training provider will be required to hold to deliver Farm Family Key Skills Health and Safety Training.

(AQW 990/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The training providers who will be delivering Farm Family Key Skills Health and Safety Training are not required to have a Health and Safety qualification. However trainers must have an Agricultural Level 3 or equivalent

qualification to the satisfaction of College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise. In addition the trainer must demonstrate evidence of delivering Health and Safety training to farmers or farming community within the last 3 years.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department has provided support for farmers to concrete their private lanes.

(AQW 1009/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I understand that the most recent funding for farmers to concrete private lanes was in the early 1980s. The funding was made available through the Farm and Horticulture Development Scheme which was administered by the then Department of Agriculture Northern Ireland (DANI).

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (i) for her assessment of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs report into the use of shock collars as training aids for dogs; and (ii) to outline what consideration her Department has given to introducing a ban on the use of shock collars as training aids.

(AQW 1022/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I am aware that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) funded research into the effect on dogs of electronic training aids, which was undertaken by Lincoln University, Bristol University and the Food and Environment Research Agency in 2007; and further research by the University of Lincoln in 2011.

While the research found that the use of electronic training aids can have a detrimental effect on the welfare of some dogs, Defra concluded that the research findings were not strong enough to warrant a complete ban on the use of electronic training aids on welfare grounds.

However, Defra does advise that electronic training aids should only be used if no positive reward training has worked and if the only alternative is euthanasia of the dog. Owners whose dogs have behavioural problems are encouraged to seek the advice of properly qualified professionals who are trained and insured to advise dog owners about the best methods to deal with the problems, and the best training method for their particular dog.

If an electronic training aid is used in Northern Ireland the operator remains subject to Section 4 of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011, which places a duty of care on those responsible for an animal to protect those animals from unnecessary suffering. Contravention of this provision can lead to a penalty of up to 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. This will increase to 5 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine once the relevant provision of the Justice Act (NI) 2016 is commenced.

My officials met representatives of the Electronic Collar Manufacturers' Association (ECMA) in November 2011 to discuss the legislative position here and discuss the nature and purpose of their products. In October 2013, my officials met the Kennel Club to discuss my Department's position on a possible introduction of a ban on the use electronic training aids on dogs in light of the research funded by Defra.

My Department completed a Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 in February this year, which included extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders. The Final Report noted that electronic training aids are currently permitted as long as their use does not cause unnecessary suffering and concluded that as the scientific evidence on the effect of electronic training aids is not conclusive, and given the strong penalties available if welfare is compromised, the Review is content with the Department's current position.

My Department will keep the use of electronic training aids under review. Any plans to introduce a ban would be subject to public consultation.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, following the discovery of Angel Dust in a beef carcass.

(AQW 1035/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The discovery of the growth promoter clenbuterol, also known as 'Angel Dust', in a bovine carcass and in follow-up searches, in the Republic of Ireland is regrettable as it can tarnish the reputation of the wider beef industry, even by association. Enforcement officers in the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) are investigating the case and have been in regular contact with my Department's Central Enforcement Team. There is no suggestion of any links with Northern Ireland at this point and I have not had any discussions with Minister Michael Creed.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she has any plans to replicate the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme II (TAMS II) currently open in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 1060/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: To ensure that our agri-food industry gains optimum benefit from the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014- 2020, it is essential that we structure its associated measures and schemes to our specific needs. I understand that in the Republic of Ireland, TAMS II offers a range of investments with requirements which are quite specific to the applicant and that schemes are targeted mainly on a sector by sector basis.

As a result of consultation with inter alia stakeholders across the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland during the development of the RDP, the Farm Business Improvement Scheme (FBIS) has been developed.

The FBIS is a package of measures, which includes a proposed capital support element, that has been tailored to improve the competitiveness and productivity of our farming industry. Following the RDP themes, the capital element will be aimed at supporting investments that improve: resource and production efficiency; climate change and resilience to adverse weather; animal and plant health; and health and safety on farms.

FBIS will be open to all farming sectors, all ages of farmer, and is not designated geographically to any particular areas or land types.

Lessons learned from previous schemes (such as the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme and the Farm Modernisation Programme) have also been taken into account, along with the recommendations of the Agri-Food Strategy Board in its Going for Growth Report.

My officials have met with officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to discuss commonalities between our respective schemes.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail any changes in the bee population indicated from her Department's inspections over the last 5 years.

(AQW 1061/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Plant Health Directorate (PHD) in my Department delivers an annual programme of surveillance, inspection and enforcement for the control of notifiable pests and diseases in support of protecting bee health, with the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) providing science and diagnostic support.

There is no statutory requirement for registration as a bee keeper and so complete data on changes to the managed honey bee population cannot be obtained through the inspection programme. However as part of a Europe-wide survey of honeybee colony health known as COLOSS, AFBI has been monitoring overwintering losses since 2009. Colony losses locally have fluctuated from 8-43% which is predominantly determined by weather conditions with the 2012-2013 winter being particularly bad for honey bees. The average number of colonies kept by beekeepers locally was 4.4 to 7.8, however, typically most beekeepers would maintain less than 5 hives. Officials estimate that there are currently approximately 1,000 active beekeepers locally with interest from potential new entrants remaining high - an average of 138 individuals enrolled in preliminary beekeeping courses each year over the last 5 years.

The EU supports bee health through funding under the Apiculture Programme. Allocation of funding from 2018 onwards will require member states and regions to report number of overwintering bee colonies. My Department is researching methodologies including voluntary and compulsory registration to support the collection and reporting of accurate data.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 1077/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Rural Development Programme is being rolled out in a phased and co-ordinated way.

Under the RDP competitiveness objective, the roll-out of the knowledge transfer element of the Farm Business Improvement Scheme began in November last year. Over 2950 farmers have now joined Business Development Groups and attended their first meeting. The second knowledge transfer element, Farm Family Key Skills, opened in March this year.

Under the RDP environment objective, three forestry schemes opened last November and applications for over 300 hectares of new woodland for planting this winter have been received. Payments for the 2016 Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme commenced in March and the target of making payments, worth £17.9m, to 95% of eligible businesses was achieved.

Under the rural development objective all local rural development strategies have now been assessed and all Local Action Groups (LAGs) have signed and returned their legal contracts to implement their strategy. All LAGs have held funding workshops for potential applicants under the Rural Business Investment Scheme and 7 LAGs have invited applicants to apply to the scheme.

A Rural Network has been established to engage with all those interested in rural development and to roll out publicity of the schemes.

My officials are continuing to work to obtain the necessary business case approval and develop scheme design, to enable further RDP schemes to open as soon as possible, including FBIS capital, the Agri-Food Processing Scheme, Rural Tourism and the Environmental Farming Scheme.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the measures taken by her Department to address coastal erosion.

(AQW 1096/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The coast forms part of a highly dynamic system. As such, it will be subject periodically to the natural process of coastal erosion. This is particularly true of sandy beaches and dune systems.

The management of any given area will depend on a range of factors such as the nature and value of the site at risk, the coastal processes affecting it and the area's conservation interests. It is these factors that will influence the most appropriate response, such as whether there should be non-intervention through to the construction of coastal defences.

My Department, for its part, has a specific role as the marine licensing authority. It receives applications for construction/development proposals planned up to the high water mark.

It will consider the factors outlined above, as part of the pre-application and licensing process, and through consultation with statutory bodies and relevant experts, provide guidance on the environmental information or reports required to accompany an application.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the relocation of her departmental headquarters to Ballykelly.

(AQW 1108/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Executive agreement to proceed with relocation is in place and JH Turkington & Sons Ltd were appointed in March 2016 and have commenced a period of pre-construction design work. Construction at Ballykelly is due to commence in September 2016 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

In taking the move to Ballykelly forward I am reflecting further on plans to see what best suits the long term needs of the Department, whilst ensuring that the new site at Ballykelly is a success and provides opportunities for people who live in the northwest. As I progress with the plans however, I am acutely aware of the importance of business continuity and the need to have plans in place that take account of retaining crucial skills and corporate knowledge.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline what action will be taken against the persons responsible for the oil spill on the Larne coast to contribute towards the cost of the clean up; and to encourage more diligent oil storage and transport in the future.

(AQW 1174/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department is conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances that led to this release of oil into the Irish Sea. On Saturday 11 June statutory samples of the spilt oil were taken with a view to prosecution. Given that this case may result in a file be passed to the Public Prosecution Service it would be inappropriate for me to comment any further on these issues at this time.

Any costs incurred by the Department will be recovered from the polluter.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the measures taken by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in responding to the recent oil spill at Larne; and what measures, if any, were taken to notify and prevent members of the public from sailing or swimming in the area following the spill.

(AQW 1190/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My officials have been involved with the investigation and monitoring of this incident since it was reported to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) on Saturday 11 June.

Whilst the focus of NIEA and the Marine and Fisheries Division has been primarily on the environmental impact other bodies such as Mid and East Antrim Council, the Food Standards Agency and the Public Health Authority have all been kept informed of the incident to allow them to assess the consequences of the incident for their areas of responsibility.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the risks to the health of adults and children sailing in Larne Lough following the recent oil spill incident.

(AQW 1191/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I am unable to outline the risks to the health of adults and children sailing in Larne Lough because it is outside the remit of my Department. I can however assure you that Mid and East Antrim Council, the Food Standards Agency and the Public Health Authority have all been kept informed of the incident to allow them to assess the consequences of the incident for their areas of responsibility.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the financial assistance awarded to each of the agricultural shows over the last five years.

(AQW 1200/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department currently sponsors 16 Show Societies and the amount allocated to each Show is determined through their annual return. A total budget of £5000 is available each year. Table 1 below provides the amount of sponsorship paid to individual Shows over the last 5 years.

Table 1: Sponsorship of Local Shows 2011 to 2015

Local Show	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Antrim	£225	£225	£330	£275	£270
Armagh	£425	£425	£360	£350	£355
Ballymena	£350	£350	£320	£220	£245
Ballymoney	£300	£300	£300	£250	£235
Balmoral Show	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£900
Castlewellan	£425	£425	£385	£360	£355
Clogher Valley	£400	£400	£380	£320	£315
Cultra (Rare Breeds)	£100	£100	£150	£150	£150
Fermanagh	£350	£350	£340	£340	£330
Killyleagh	£50	£50	-	-	-
Londonderry/Limavady	£250	£250	£200	£200	£220
Lurgan	£225	£225	£285	£320	£300
Newry	£200	£200	£220	£220	£210
Omagh	£225	£225	£280	£210	£235
Saintfield	£225	£225	£220	£210	£280
Mullahead	-	£1,000	£500	£300	£300
NI Ploughing	£250	£1,250	£230	£275	£300
NI Vintage Ploughing Ass.	-	£900	-	-	-
Total	£5,000	£7,900*	£5,500	£5,000	£5,000

* Additional funds provided to the Ploughing Associations in 2012-13 as they were hosting the European Championships

In addition to sponsoring all local Shows, my Department also participates at eight of the Shows each year and like other exhibitors, pays for trade space. By having a presence at these Shows, my Department is able to promote the Services that we provide and it also allows us to engage directly with farmers and growers and members of the rural communities.

The past two years have seen an increase in the number of local agricultural Shows applying to my Department's Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme (NIRFP) for funding to promote local food produce within the Shows through the provision of 'food villages'. The NIRFP has provided support for the associated costs of marketing, venue/marquee hire and cookery demonstrations. The NIRFP funding provided over the last 5 years is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme funding to Local Shows 2011 to 2015

Local Show	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Clogher Valley	£1,055.10			£844.20	Offered £850 - claim expected 30/6/16
Fermanagh	£1,558.94	Offered £2,832.50 but not claimed			Offered £3,240 but not claimed
Armagh				£3,336.75	£2,500
Ballymoney					£1,956
Londonderry/Limavady					Offered £3,757.50 - claim expected 30/6/16

N.B. In addition £25,625 has been offered to local agricultural shows through the 2016/17 programme, to assist with their food offerings during the Northern Ireland Year of Food and Drink 2016.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the outcomes of the Rural Challenge Programme 2012, specifically how it supported people with poor mental health and wellbeing.

(AQW 1275/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Rural Challenge Programme 2012 provided an opportunity for rural community and voluntary groups to address localised poverty and isolation issues, through a competitive application process to a small grants fund (between £2,000 and £10,000 per applicant).

Forty four applications were awarded funding, totalling £296,834, with over 10,000 individuals benefiting from the very successful programme. Seven of the projects funded focused specifically on addressing the issues of suicide, self harm, substance misuse and mental health issues within rural communities. The seven projects are listed, with more detail, below.

Organisation	Project	Summary of Project Aims & Objectives
Aurora Counselling	Be Heard Be Supported	This project involved the delivery a community-led counselling and therapy service, linked through GP collaboration and referrals, with clients in three outreach centres in Park, Dungiven and Claudy The project targeted carers and lone parents dealing with stress, depression, emotional and mental health issues.
The Lakeland Players	Act Now (Stamp Out Stigma (SOS))	This project was delivered by the Promoters in partnership with Beacon (N I Association for Mental Health). The project delivered a programme designed to educate & tackle mental health issues for young people in post-primary schools across Fermanagh through the interactive medium of drama and via a series of workshops and performances. The project targeted 1000+ children across 14 post primary schools in Fermanagh.
Niamh Louise Foundation	Breaking the Silence	This project enabled the Foundation to expand the facilities at their Resource Centre in Dungannon. It also enabled them to engage a Suicide Prevention Officer and Mentors to offer a mentoring/ befriending service and bereavement support for vulnerable people in the area. The project also trained 16 rural community 'gatekeepers' to promote positive mental health / suicide or self harm prevention. Other activities included the delivery of a series of awareness presentations and support group sessions, the publication of their Newsletter and celebratory Ceremony of Light events.
Mid-Ulster Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy	Lone Parent Support Programme	MACP was established to promote the preservation and protection of mental health among people of all ages in Cookstown/Magherafelt and surrounding areas by providing or assisting in the provision of appropriate locally based counselling services for those in need. Their project provided free one-to-one or group counselling on an as required basis.
Saval GFC	Engaging all Saval Youth (EASY)	This project targeted children and young people and delivered a range of activities including boxersise, dancing, self-defence, swimming lessons, first aid & suicide awareness classes.
FASA Peninsula Mens Group	FASA Peninsula Men's Shed	FASA provide specialised services with regards suicide, self harm, substance misuse and mental health crisis across both the most socially deprived urban and rurally isolated areas of Northern Ireland. This project targeted men in the Ards Peninsula area who were unemployed or elderly and at risk of suicide, self harm, substance misuse and/or mental health crisis. This project was based on the Men's Shed programme, and was delivered by a FASA facilitator who, as well as implementing the project developed mental health recovery programmes for participants.
FASA Peninsula Womens Group	FASA Peninsula Women's Group	This project brought unempolyed women together to reduce feeling of isolation, improve self esteem, self confidence, skills, mental and physical health and to improve community spirit.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department will bring forward a Climate Change Bill.

(AQW 1298/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Legislation to help address climate change is already in place in the form of the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The Act sets an ambitious long term target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% over 1990 levels by 2050 across the UK.

Northern Ireland is making good progress on reducing its emissions. The latest Greenhouse Gas Inventory, published on 14 June 2016, shows a reduction of 17.4% from 1990 levels. Updated projections, published in December 2015, show that we are broadly on track to achieving the Programme for Government target set by the previous Executive of a 35% reduction by 2025.

I will keep the need for local legislation and other measures which might help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions under review. But our continued progress, without a NI Climate Change Act, shows our commitment to tackling one of the most serious global challenges that we face.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what is her Department's current estimate of how much it will cost to remove and/or clean up the estimated 1.2 million tonnes of waste which has been illegally dumped in Campsie.

(AQW 1322/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: To firstly clarify, the estimated volume of controlled waste illegally disposed at Mobuoy Road is reported to be a minimum of 913,105m³. An additional estimate of 252,050m³ of controlled waste is present in the area of the former licensed landfill in which some of this waste has been illegally disposed.

My Department through its contract with the environmental consultancy group, WYG, have identified three remediation options for cleaning up the site. These options are;

- 1 Containment using a capping system incorporating gas management and hydraulic barriers and controls;
- 2 On-site treatment that may involve one or more treatments such as physical segregation and recycling, composting, recovery, solidification / stabilisation; and
- 3 Excavation and disposal.

These options will be subject to detailed evaluation with an integrated remediation strategy developed with costs once the risk assessment to protect the River Faughan is completed in October 2016.

At this stage, best case and worst case cost estimates have been provided for each remediation option. The minimum estimated costs reflect those for the containment remediation option; these costs are in the region of £20 Million. The maximum estimated costs are for the excavation and disposal option; these costs are in excess of £100 Million.

It is important to note that these remediation options need to be further assessed and as part of this process, additional options may be identified. My Department will be developing a fully costed cleanup strategy over the coming months. The key priority of this strategy for my Department is to protect water quality of the River Faughan and the surrounding environment and ensure the clean-up provides value for money.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, in light of the referendum on membership of the European Union, for her assessment of her Department's relationship with Europe.

(AQO 153/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Last week's vote will inevitably change the relationship that my Department has with Europe. At this early stage I cannot give you any detail on the mechanisms of our exit however it will be my top priority to ensure our agri-food industry, rural communities and environment stakeholders make the best of this new opportunity.

Although we have voted to leave, this will not take effect until the UK Government has negotiated a withdrawal treaty with the EU. This negotiation will take a number of years to complete. EU support for our farmers and our current trading arrangements, will remain in place during that time.

We will be negotiating new trading arrangements with the EU and the rest of the world and I will be working to defend the interests of our agri-food industry in these negotiations.

As we move forward I intend to develop a strong and closer working relationship with the Defra Minister, and my counterparts in the Scottish and Welsh Governments, to ensure I deliver all that I can for farmers, foresters, fishermen and the environment in Northern Ireland.

Mrs Little Pengelly asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs given recent drilling in Woodburn Forest Park, for her assessment of the quality of drinking water in South Belfast.

(AQO 154/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: There are stringent regulations in place to protect the quality of our drinking water. These regulations require Northern Ireland Water to regularly monitor drinking water quality at consumer taps, and to immediately report to my officials within the Drinking Water Inspectorate where drinking water fails to meet public health standards. There is a further measure within the regulations requiring NI Water to undertake a risk assessment of its drinking water sources, water treatment works, and onward distribution of water to consumers taps. The risk assessment is required to be kept under review and the outputs from this process are also reported to the Drinking Water Inspectorate. These measures are in place to ensure the ongoing provision of safe, clean drinking water. Based on the outputs from both these regulatory processes, it is my assessment that the drilling currently taking place at Woodburn Forest is not having an impact on those consumers receiving water from Woodburn Reservoir.

Only a very small part of the South Belfast constituency (part of the Shaftesbury Ward) receives any of its water supply from Dorisland WTWs (Woodburn). This water is blended with water from Dunore Point WTWs.

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on spending on rural development.

(AQO 155/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The new 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme is worth up to £623 million. Approximately £261million is allocated for the competitiveness of our agri-food industry, £245 million to protect our rural environment and £80 million to develop our rural economies.

Spending on the new RDP commenced in September 2014. The total payments reimbursed by the European Commission by the 31st March this year, were approximately 53 million Euros. Together with the associated national match funding, this equates to approximately £70 million sterling.

The 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme is now in the final stages of closure and will close by 31st December this year. The European allocation to the last Programme was approximately 329 million Euros. These European funds matched with funds from DAERA's own budget will give a final total Programme value of over £506 million. There may be some corrections to the final accounts applied by the European Commission during the final closure process.

Outside the RDP, the separate Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation budget for the 2016/17 year is £4m. In addition my Department is also responsible for the Rural Needs Act and the Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation framework. The focus of the Rural Needs Act is to work with other Departments and public authorities to assist them in determining how best the needs of rural people can be reflected in policies, strategies, plans and services.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how she is working with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to develop an island of Ireland food label.

(AQO 156/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Enhancing the existing markets for our high quality agri-food produce, including our most important market in Great Britain, and securing new markets will continue to be a top priority for my Department.

Specifically in relation to the labelling of our food products, the EU Country of Origin Labelling rules provide for mandatory country of origin (CoOL) labelling for fresh, chilled and frozen unprocessed meat of swine, sheep, goat and poultry. In addition, there is provision for additional voluntary country of origin labelling on foods that enhances clarity of information for consumers, and does not conflict with the mandatory rules.

The EU labelling legislation is applicable across all Member States. The Food Standards Agency in NI is the Central Competent Authority for food labelling, including the CoOL rules. My Department is responsible for beef and veal labelling legislation.

I support the local industry who have been calling for flexibility to label its products in accordance with traditional marketing and trade practices.

Whilst FSA (NI) is the central Competent Authority for food labelling here, I will consider if there is any role for DAERA in supporting solutions in this matter. With the decision taken in the referendum last week the GB market is likely to have greater importance for Northern Ireland exporters moving forward. We do however need to ensure that we have routes to markets for produce coming from Northern Ireland.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the benefits of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

(AQO 158/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund provides Northern Ireland with the opportunity to invest in all sectors of the fishing industry over the next six years in order to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

We have secured €23.51m, or 10% of the UK total EMFF allocation, with €13.7m available to support applications from fishermen, processors, aquaculture and community-led local development interests. The remaining funding will be used for data collection and fisheries management and is ring-fenced by the Commission for such purposes.

Combined with a national funding contribution of €4.6m, around €18.3m is required to deliver my Department's EMFF investment proposals. The funding will enable the industry, scientists and my Department to work together help address the challenges of the landing obligation introduced in the new Common Fisheries Policy in 2014. The EMFF will also provide support for investment by fishing vessel owners, fish processors, aquaculture businesses, port authorities and wider communities with a significant association with our fishing industry.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she has any plans to open a new environmental management scheme for farmers.

(AQO 159/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I intend to implement a new agri-environment scheme, the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS).

The Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) will offer farmers an agreement to deliver a range of environmental measures. Farmers will be paid the costs incurred and income foregone for carrying out environmentally beneficial actions on their land.

The scheme has been designed to be straightforward for farmers, taking account experience of previous agri-environment schemes.

A programme of EFS awareness-raising will take place, prior to the scheme opening for applications. This will provide farmers with important information about the scheme and assist them to understand its requirements.

The application process will be online and successful applicants will receive training and support to help them implement their EFS agreement.

The EFS aims to address specific environmental needs, primarily relating to biodiversity and water quality. It will be targeted and prioritised to deliver maximum environmental benefit and value for money.

The EFS has three levels. A higher level, primarily for environmentally designated sites. A wider level to deliver benefits across the countryside, outside of environmentally designated areas. A group level to support co-operative action by farmers in specific areas such as a river catchment.

A number of schemes, including the EFS, are being developed in parallel by my Department and the aim is to implement these in line with business priorities and as soon as possible.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the setting of a target to increase woodland cover in the Programme for Government.

(AQO 160/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Northern Ireland Executive is seeking views on the draft programme for government framework, and I would welcome responses from the forestry sector. Forestry has potential to contribute to quite a few of the outcomes – living and working sustainably and protecting the environment by working in forestry, wood processing, and the small businesses that use forests for tourism and pre-school activities; by supplying wood as a substitute for fossil fuels; and living long, healthy active lives by taking exercise in our forests. The programme depends on collaborative working to deliver these outcomes. I believe the forestry sector has the depth of collaborative working across the public, voluntary and private sectors to deliver a programme of planting and tending sustainable, resilient forests – but there is always more that can be done.

The Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020 is a start. The budget is sufficient to create a further 1,800 hectares of new woodland and is a good opportunity for those thinking about diversifying away from farming into forestry. It is also time to review the 2006 forestry strategy, and how it can be adapted to match the new Programme for Government. I hope the forestry sector will come forward with good ideas to help us improve the outcomes for Northern Ireland.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how much of her departmental budget is assigned to health and safety training for farmers and farming families.

(AQO 161/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Northern Ireland Executive is seeking views on the draft programme for government framework, and I would welcome responses from the forestry sector. Forestry has potential to contribute to quite a few of the outcomes – living and working sustainably and protecting the environment by working in forestry, wood processing, and the small businesses that use forests for tourism and pre-school activities; by supplying wood as a substitute for fossil fuels; and living long, healthy active lives by taking exercise in our forests. The programme depends on collaborative working to deliver these outcomes. I believe the forestry sector has the depth of collaborative working across the public, voluntary and private sectors to deliver a programme of planting and tending sustainable, resilient forests – but there is always more that can be done.

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Department for Communities

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities (i) whether he is aware of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's decision to take no action following the construction of a memorial to terrorists in the Hillview Estate, Castlederg; (ii) whether the NIHE have given this piece of land away; (iii) who in the NIHE made the decision to take no action; and (iv) whether the NIHE maintain responsibility for this piece of land.

(AQW 1082/16-21)

Mr Givan (The Minister for Communities): The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to:-

- (i) The replacement or removal of symbols, such as murals and memorials, is a complex and sensitive matter. It is important to recognise that no single agency can work on its own to achieve this. It needs a number of agencies and bodies to work together and the involvement of the public and relevant communities.
- (ii) The land is still owned by the Housing Executive and has not been sold or transferred.
- (iii) Given the sensitivity of this issue, the matter has been considered at local, regional and central levels of the Housing Executive. Local consultation has indicated that to remove the memorial could lead to unrest in the community and be a risk to staff and contractor welfare.

The Housing Executive will continue to work with those who live on their estates, their representatives and other agencies to look at an alternative use for these spaces.

- (iv) The Housing Executive continues to maintain the land, but not the memorial.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) the number of people on social housing waiting lists in West Tyrone; and (ii) the number of those people in housing stress.

(AQW 1103/16-21)

Mr Givan: As of the end of March 2016 there were 1,376 people on the social housing waiting list in West Tyrone, of these 542 are considered to be in housing stress.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Communities to outline the new social housing schemes due to be built in North Down over the next five years.

(AQW 1136/16-21)

Mr Givan: As the Social Housing Development Programme is a three year rolling programme of planned social housing schemes, I am unable to provide you with the detail of schemes planned for the full five year period you have requested.

I can however, advise that there are currently 169 new social housing units planned to start onsite in North Down as part of the Social Housing Development Programme 2016/17- 2018/19. Details of the planned schemes are listed below:

Housing Association	Scheme	Settlement	Units Estimated on site year	Estimated Onsite year
Clanmil	Corner of Faulkner Road/Clandeboyne Road	Bangor	58	2016/17
Clanmil	66a- 78 Bloomfield Road	Bangor	52	2016/17
Fold	Design and Build land adjacent to 16 Belfast Road	Bangor	24	2016/17
Habinteg	Killaughey Road	Donaghadee	24	2016/17
Hearth	Craigowen Gate Lodge, 208 Bangor Road	Craigavon	1	2016/17
Helm	18 Warren Road	Donaghadee	10	2017/18
Total			169	

You may however, wish to note that programmed schemes may be lost or slip to future programme years for a variety of reasons relating to e.g. site acquisition / achieving Planning Permission. Additional schemes may also be added to the SHDP through the purchase of Existing Satisfactory / Off-the-shelf properties in-year, and through the annual housing association bidding round / programme formulation (which is currently underway).

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister for Communities on how many occasions the Social Security Agency requested an adjournment for an Employment and Support Allowance appeal; and of these, how many were (i) granted; and (ii) refused, in each of the last twelve months, broken down by appeal hearing district.

(AQW 1154/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Department does not retain information on whether or not a request for adjournment of an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) appeal was initiated by the Department or by the appellant.

It is not therefore possible to provide the information requested by the Member.

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister for Communities to detail the number of benefits appeals where a presenting officer has been in attendance; and to show this as a percentage of the benefit appeals in each of the last twelve months, broken down by appeal hearing district.

(AQW 1155/16-21)

Mr Givan: The table below details the number of benefit appeals where a presenting officer has been in attendance, shown as a percentage of the number of benefit appeal hearings in the last twelve months, broken down by hearing venue.

Venue/Appeals Type	No. Attended	No. Hearings	%
Apr	303	1445	20.97%
Armagh	17	54	31.48%
Ballymena	1	51	1.96%
Ballymoney	0	16	0.00%
Banbridge	9	23	39.13%
Belfast	119	588	20.24%
Coleraine		21 72	29.17%
Cookstown	5	20	25.00%
Craigavon	16	95	16.84%
Downpatrick	7	66	10.61%
Dungannon	19	52	36.54%
Enniskillen	6	43	13.95%
Limavady	6	26	23.08%
Londonderry	10	87	11.49%
Magherafelt	3	30	10.00%
Newry	29	90	32.22%
Newtownards	23	84	27.38%
Omagh	3	24	12.50%
Strabane	9	24	37.50%
May	265	1237	21.42%
Armagh	4	42	9.52%
Ballymena	17	57	29.82%
Ballymoney	8	16	50.00%
Banbridge	2	21	9.52%
Belfast	94	492	19.11%
Coleraine	21	51	41.18%
Cookstown	4	17	23.53%
Craigavon	7	59	11.86%
Downpatrick	13	46	28.26%
Dungannon	15	45	33.33%
Enniskillen	12	48	25.00%
Limavady	7	31	22.58%
Londonderry	12	105	11.43%
Magherafelt	8	34	23.53%
Newry	18	68	26.47%
Newtownards	12	56	21.43%
Omagh	10	27	37.04%
Strabane	1	22	4.55%

Venue/Appeals Type	No. Attended	No. Hearings	%
Jun	249	1020	24.41%
Armagh	2	18	11.11%
Ballymena	11	56	19.64%
Ballymoney	5	16	31.25%
Banbridge	8	22	36.36%
Belfast	84	346	24.28%
Coleraine	7	22	31.82%
Cookstown	1	14	7.14%
Craigavon	9	104	8.65%
Downpatrick	6	46	13.04%
Dungannon	28	65	43.08%
Enniskillen	10	28	35.71%
Limavady	3	28	10.71%
Londonderry	27	59	45.76%
Magherafelt	11	37	29.73%
Newry	19	56	33.93%
Newtownards	9	55	16.36%
Omagh	7	33	21.21%
Strabane	2	15	13.33%
Jul	213	929	22.93%
Armagh	3	31	9.68%
Ballymena	16	55	29.09%
Ballymoney	5	13	38.46%
Banbridge	1	12	8.33%
Belfast	79	347	22.77%
Coleraine	10	47	21.28%
Cookstown	3	10	30.00%
Craigavon	17	60	28.33%
Downpatrick	11	27	40.74%
Dungannon	14	35	40.00%
Enniskillen	3	19	15.79%
Limavady	0	18	0.00%
Londonderry	20	82	24.39%
Magherafelt	1	22	4.55%
Newry	14	58	24.14%
Newtownards	3	40	7.50%
Omagh	10	35	28.57%
Strabane	3	18	16.67%
Aug	234	971	24.10%
Armagh	8	32	25.00%
Ballymena	13	31	41.94%

Venue/Appeals Type	No. Attended	No. Hearings	%
Ballymoney	7	13	53.85%
Banbridge	2	16	12.50%
Belfast	88	423	20.80%
Coleraine	10	29	34.48%
Cookstown	7	13	53.85%
Craigavon	10	44	22.73%
Downpatrick	10	29	34.48%
Dungannon	13	26	50.00%
Enniskillen	6	26	23.08%
Limavady	7	11	63.64%
Londonderry	25	114	21.93%
Magherafelt	2	18	11.11%
Newry	8	47	17.02%
Newtownards	8	48	16.67%
Omagh	5	15	33.33%
Strabane	5	36	13.89%
Sep	301	1076	27.97%
Armagh	4	28	14.29%
Ballymena	24	61	39.34%
Ballymoney	1	11	9.09%
Banbridge	10	23	43.48%
Belfast	111	411	27.01%
Coleraine	9	46	19.57%
Cookstown	3	13	23.08%
Craigavon	18	62	29.03%
Downpatrick	1	38	2.63%
Dungannon	14	31	45.16%
Enniskillen	13	40	32.50%
Limavady	10	23	43.48%
Londonderry	29	99	29.29%
Magherafelt	5	25	20.00%
Newry	15	47	31.91%
Newtownards	11	56	19.64%
Omagh	12	29	41.38%
Strabane	11	33	33.33%
Oct	262	1065	24.60%
Armagh	10	33	30.30%
Ballymena	6	59	10.17%
Ballymoney	3	8	37.50%
Banbridge	1	14	7.14%
Belfast	104	428	24.30%

Venue/Appeals Type	No. Attended	No. Hearings	%
Coleraine	8	35	22.86%
Cookstown	3	15	20.00%
Craigavon	11	53	20.75%
Downpatrick	11	51	21.57%
Dungannon	13	41	31.71%
Enniskillen	5	34	14.71%
Limavady	8	24	33.33%
Londonderry	23	83	27.71%
Magherafelt	13	19	68.42%
Newry	13	86	15.12%
Newtownards	12	37	32.43%
Omagh	15	30	50.00%
Strabane	3	15	20.00%
Nov	214	1015	21.08%
Armagh	2	33	6.06%
Ballymena	18	64	28.13%
Ballymoney	2	9	22.22%
Banbridge	1	21	4.76%
Belfast	89	373	23.86%
Coleraine	17	47	36.17%
Cookstown	2	13	15.38%
Craigavon	16	68	23.53%
Downpatrick	15	54	27.78%
Dungannon	3	30	10.00%
Enniskillen	4	30	13.33%
Limavady	4	19	21.05%
Londonderry	3	72	4.17%
Magherafelt	4	22	18.18%
Newry	12	55	21.82%
Newtownards	14	52	26.92%
Omagh	7	36	19.44%
Strabane	1	17	5.88%
Dec	165	1031	16.00%
Armagh	2	35	5.71%
Ballymena	6	36	16.67%
Ballymoney	2	17	11.76%
Banbridge	5	15	33.33%
Belfast	60	405	14.81%
Coleraine	7	38	18.42%
Cookstown	1	9	11.11%
Craigavon	16	104	15.38%

Venue/Appeals Type	No. Attended	No. Hearings	%
Downpatrick	9	40	22.50%
Dungannon	10	35	28.57%
Enniskillen	2	26	7.69%
Limavady	4	10	40.00%
Londonderry	9	73	12.33%
Magherafelt	1	28	3.57%
Newry	7	77	9.09%
Newtownards	21	58	36.21%
Omagh	1	14	7.14%
Strabane	2	11	18.18%
Jan	403	1304	30.90%
Armagh	2	49	4.08%
Ballymena	10	65	15.38%
Ballymoney	2	9	22.22%
Banbridge	4	21	19.05%
Belfast	297	559	53.13%
Coleraine	6	48	12.50%
Cookstown	0	11	0.00%
Craigavon	12	82	14.63%
Downpatrick	12	62	19.35%
Dungannon	3	44	6.82%
Enniskillen	3	42	7.14%
Limavady	0	18	0.00%
Londonderry	20	77	25.97%
Magherafelt	0	18	0.00%
Newry	5	72	6.94%
Newtownards	11	67	16.42%
Omagh	6	28	21.43%
Strabane	10	32	31.25%
Feb	452	1538	29.39%
Armagh	1	20	5.00%
Ballymena	7	72	9.72%
Ballymoney	0	20	0.00%
Banbridge	1	25	4.00%
Belfast	379	662	57.25%
Coleraine	5	65	7.69%
Cookstown	0	21	0.00%
Craigavon	0	65	0.00%
Downpatrick	7	61	11.48%
Dungannon	4	42	9.52%
Enniskillen	3	55	5.45%

Venue/Appeals Type	No. Attended	No. Hearings	%
Limavady	6	22	27.27%
Londonderry	10	107	9.35%
Magherafelt	3	16	18.75%
Newry	9	95	9.47%
Newtownards	12	117	10.26%
Omagh	3	36	8.33%
Strabane	2	37	5.41%
Mar	232	1579	14.69%
Armagh	4	38	10.53%
Ballymena	13	74	17.57%
Ballymoney	0	17	0.00%
Banbridge	3	21	14.29%
Belfast	111	623	17.82%
Coleraine	10	80	12.50%
Cookstown	8	20	40.00%
Craigavon	11	95	11.58%
Downpatrick	6	64	9.38%
Dungannon	1	52	1.92%
Enniskillen	4	65	6.15%
Limavady	2	30	6.67%
Londonderry	25	154	16.23%
Magherafelt	1	37	2.70%
Newry	15	83	18.07%
Newtownards	16	77	20.78%
Omagh	1	31	3.23%
Strabane	1	18	5.56%
Grand Total	3293	14210	23.17%

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Communities to outline his plans for the provision of further social housing in Upper Bann.

(AQW 1204/16-21)

Mr Givan: There are currently 46 social housing units which are currently under construction in the Upper Bann Parliamentary Constituency. Details are attached in table A.

As part of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) 2016/17 to 2018/19 a further 94 new social homes are planned. Details of the planned schemes are attached in table B.

Please be advised that programmed schemes can be lost or slip to future programme years for a variety of reasons eg relating to delays in acquiring sites and/or failure to secure planning permission. Additional schemes can be added to the SHDP as part of the annual programme formulation process (housing association bidding round) or through the purchase of Existing Satisfactory/Off-the-shelf properties on an in-year basis.

Table A: Schemes currently under construction

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
South Ulster	129 Bridge Street	Portadown	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	131 Bridge Street	Portadown	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	135 Bridge Street	Portadown	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	137 Bridge Street	Portadown	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	1 Watsons Lane	Portadown	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	2 Watsons Lane	Portadown	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	17 Castle Lane Mews	Lurgan	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	15 Sloan Hill Mews	Lurgan	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
South Ulster	12 Irwin Drive	Lurgan	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	Mental Health	1	2014/15	2016/17
Apex Housing	Corcrain Walk (T)	Portadown	New Build	Active	3	2015/16	2017/18
Clanmil	Dromore Street	Banbridge	New Build	General Needs	13	2015/16	2018/19
Clanmil	Dromore Street	Banbridge	New Build	Physical Disabilities	4	2015/16	2018/19
Clanmil	Dromore Street	Banbridge	New Build	Active Elderly	15	2015/16	2018/19
South Ulster	19 Deeny Drive	Lurgan	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	1	2015/16	2016/17
South Ulster	11 Taghnevan Close	Lurgan	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	1	2015/16	2016/17
Total					46		

Table B Planned schemes

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Apex Housing	118 Clonmeen (T)	Craigavon	New Build	Physical Disabilities	1	2016/17	2017/18
Ark	Derrytrasna	Derrytrasna	New Build	General Needs	8	2016/17	2017/18

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Location	Type	Need Group	Units	Onsite Year	Completion Year
Choice	Edward Street	Portadown	Rehabilitation	Leaving Penal est.	15	2016/17	2018/19
Habinteg	Woodlands (T)	Gilford	New Build	Physical Disabilities	1	2016/17	2017/18
South Ulster	ESPs North Lurgan	Lurgan	Existing Satisfactory Purchase	General Needs	5	2016/17	2017/18
South Ulster	Hill Street	Lurgan	New Build	General Needs	11	2016/17	2017/18
South Ulster	38 North Street	Lurgan	New Build	General Needs	15	2016/17	2017/18
Clanmil	Grattan Park	Lurgan	New Build	General Needs	28	2017/18	2019/20
South Ulster	Lake Street	Lurgan	New Build	General Needs	10	2018/19	2019/20

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Communities to detail all the recipients of funding from the Creative Industries Innovation Fund; including (i) the date funding was received; (ii) the amount of funding received; and (iii) the purpose of the funding. (AQW 1222/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Creative Industries Innovation Fund operated from 2008 to 2015, supporting 357 projects, with a total investment exceeding five point five million pounds (£5.5m). Please find detail of recipients and funding in Annex A below.

Annex A

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2014-2015	Northern Regional College	3,870.00	The Earl Bishop Trail
2014-2015	Catherwood Guitars	10,000.00	Manufacturing Process Restructuring and New Product Development
2014-2015	The Left Hand Cinema	8,000.00	The Unreality Show
2014-2015	Royal Television Society NI	4,400.00	Royal Television Society Northern Ireland Student Television Awards
2014-2015	University of Ulster	7,500.00	Ulster Festival of Art & Design
2014-2015	NISP Connect	7,500.00	Generation Innovation Night of Ambition
2014-2015	Specialisterne NI	5,980.00	Uncovering Talent for NI's Digital Media, Animation and Film Industry Roles
2014-2015	Creative & Cultural Skills	9,700.00	The Greenhouse: Design-led Service Innovation Programme
2014-2015	Northern Ireland Design Alliance	9,000.00	Anatomy of Design Part 2
2014-2015	The Nerve Centre	20,000.00	Creativity NI
2014-2015	Institute of Directors	5,000.00	IOD Leadership, Support and Development Programme
2014-2015	Ballymena Business Centre Ltd	20,000.00	Creative Incubation Hub
2014-2015	Sara O'Neill	8,500.00	Art and Apparel by Sara O'Neill
2014-2015	Backspindle Games Limited	10,000.00	CLACKS a Discworld® boardgame
2014-2015	Blackstaff Games Ltd	10,000.00	Dogbiscuit - The Quest for Crayons
2014-2015	Emain Publications	8,200.00	Emain Publications - Development Phase
2014-2015	eye4education	9,500.00	The Careers Game

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2014-2015	Grafik Digital Ltd	10,000.00	The 100 Day Project
2014-2015	Abigail Ryan Homewares	6,525.00	Corporate Interiors: Wallpapers & Fabrics
2014-2015	Foxhaut Games	10,000.00	Astralis
2014-2015	Andrew Cooke	9,260.00	Development and Promotion of Ceramic Musical Instruments_
2014-2015	Billy Goat Entertainment Ltd	10,000.00	Her Majesty's SPIFFING Game: Early Access
2014-2015	Bob Price	10,000.00	Pitch & format development for The Green Notebook
2014-2015	Carrie Neely Contemporary Art	10,000.00	Art Loves
2014-2015	Craft Northern Ireland	19,450.00	"Innovation Boost" Programme 2014-15
2014-2015	Deepa Mann-Kler	10,000.00	Light Art
2014-2015	Diane McCormick	10,000.00	Ceramics Metal and Glass-Interactions
2014-2015	Freshly Baked Games Ltd	10,000.00	User Testing Tool Prototype (Unity Plugin
2014-2015	Garry McElherron / MourneQuest	9,800.00	MourneQuest: The Game of Myth and Legend.
2014-2015	Grainne Maher Millinery	5,950.00	Participation in London Fashion Week' HEADONISM
2014-2015	HyperDuck SoundWorks	10,000.00	Re-animation
2014-2015	In name of John Burke	10,000.00	WW1 Trench Experience.
2014-2015	Irony Metalworks Ltd.	10,000.00	Mallon Ancestral Foundry Bronze Collection
2014-2015	Italic Pig Ltd	10,000.00	Schrödinger's Cat and the Irresistible Force - Story, Script, Character and Environment Development
2014-2015	Jude Cassidy textiles	10,000.00	Expansion of textile business through export sales and new product development
2014-2015	Katie Brown Designs	10,000.00	Developing Textile Print Designs for the Interiors Market
2014-2015	Let's Expand Ltd	10,000.00	Let's Expand.....Vocabulary
2014-2015	Linen Hall Library	9,980.00	Linen Hall Postcard App
2014-2015	Loughlion Design	9,028.00	Frogjaw Crafty
2014-2015	Marie-Claire Ferguson Bespoke Millinery	9,548.00	a tailor-made collection of hats by Marie-Claire Ferguson.
2014-2015	Mary Callan Knitwear	10,000.00	Fusion of Knitwear Heritage with 21st Century Technology
2014-2015	Meadow	9,370.00	Electroluminescent Decorative Lighting
2014-2015	Mourne Textiles Ltd	10,000.00	Continued apprentice training, product development and increased marketing.
2014-2015	The Muckraker	6,500.00	Development of subscription system to sell long form content and marketing strategy
2014-2015	Pandara's Box Ltd	10,000.00	Pandara's Box of Side-scrollers
2014-2015	Parakite Ltd	10,000.00	Awesome Awesome Aliens
2014-2015	Priory Productions	7,000.00	The Great Hunger, A New Musical
2014-2015	Six Mile Hill Ltd	10,000.00	Six Mile Hill - Visual Development for Genre Slate

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2014-2015	SMALLTOWN AMERICA MUSIC LIMITED	7,750.00	Heavy Needle - Quality Physical / Digital Records
2014-2015	Stephen Farnan	9,000.00	Porcelain Landscapes - Filling the Gaps
2014-2015	Swip Technologies Ltd	10,000.00	Swip Athlete Telemetry System
2014-2015	Troll Inc Ltd	10,000.00	Graffiti Grinder
2014-2015	University of Ulster	10,000.00	Enhancing Visitor Experiences through Location Specific Mobile Games
2013-2014	University of Ulster	9,995.00	Notations
2013-2014	Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry	5,000.00	ACNI/Chamber of Commerce Creativity Month Event
2013-2014	Institute of Directors	7,000.00	Creative Industries Innovation Fund Leadership and Development Support Programme
2013-2014	Creative & Cultural Skills	9,995.00	Mapping exercise and event
2013-2014	CultureTechLtd	16,000.00	Open Innovation Challenge
2013-2014	Digital Circle (NI) Ltd	9,995.00	UNITY 3d part 2
2013-2014	Northern Ireland Design Alliance	9,995.00	Promotion of Mapping Survey; collation and analysis of results
2013-2014	Northern Ireland Museums Council	9,950.00	Promoting value of NIMC collections to the creative industries
2013-2014	Skillset Northern Ireland	9,950.00	Unity 3 D
2013-2014	Abigail Ryan Homewares	10,000.00	abigail*ryan - New markets - Kitchen/Home Gift
2013-2014	Acorn Film & Video Ltd	10,000.00	Shot Logger Mobile Application
2013-2014	Aetopia Limited	7,000.00	Professional Photographer Client Workflow Portal (Content Portal)
2013-2014	Augusto Gomez	10,000.00	IMMORTAL FIGHTERS
2013-2014	Black Market Games Limited	9,110.00	Dead Hungry Diner
2013-2014	Brain and Nerd Ltd	10,000.00	Predestination Ship Designer
2013-2014	Cahoots NI Ltd	10,000.00	i Magic
2013-2014	Clarity Business Education Ltd	9,300.00	Business Plan Navigator: E learning Portal
2013-2014	Craft Northern Ireland	19,985.00	Export Development Project 2013-14
2013-2014	Dance Resource Base (NI) Ltd	12,285.00	NI Dance at British Dance Edition 2014 - Linking the sector to a Global Market for Dance
2013-2014	Derry Productions	7,500.00	Interactive advertising by Derry Productions
2013-2014	Dphisound	9,600.00	Project Meelmore
2013-2014	Dr Sarah McAleer & Eddie J Doherty	9,996.00	3d digital Design & Print Jewellery Project
2013-2014	UKJ Limited t/a Elevation Design	10,000.00	Measurement Guide System with iInstruction Videos
2013-2014	EPIC TOUR	9,690.00	Epic Tour
2013-2014	Fable Multimedia Ltd	10,000.00	MATHBENCHMARKER
2013-2014	Flickerpix Ltd	10,000.00	Monsta Mash (working title0
2013-2014	GamesApptually	10,000.00	Finn Folktales - Giant Rush
2013-2014	Get Out Records	8,615.00	Artist and Label Development: Rapid Growth Plan

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2013-2014	Hall Black Douglas Architects	10,000.00	Sustainable Urban Residential Architecture in India
2013-2014	Iglu Media Ltd	10,000.00	Moonshine Game
2013-2014	Imphora Ltd	7,900.00	Go Berserk Making Programs with Java e-book
2013-2014	James Rooney Chartered Architect Ltd	10,000.00	Hexi-House disaster relief shelter
2013-2014	Little Yellow Star Ltd	10,000.00	ANIMATED PHYSICS
2013-2014	Mourne Textiles Ltd	10,000.00	Re-issue of historical textile designs and of full production weaving, handloom weaving and design workshop originally established in 1951 by internationally-renowned textile designer Gerd Hay-Edie.
2013-2014	Notasuch Films	10,000.00	The Niners - They're A Sketch
2013-2014	Outsider Games LTD	7,950.00	Labyrinth: Real World (Provisional Title)
2013-2014	Rams' Pocket Radio	2,000.00	Rams' Pocket Radio Album release
2013-2014	Refound	9,924.00	Refound creative services and exportable products
2013-2014	Samantha Moore	9,980.00	Samantha Moore -The Brand
2013-2014	Sioda Lingerie	10,000.00	DIGITAL LACE PRINTING AND SCALING UP PRODUCTION FOR EXPORT
2013-2014	Sirocco Software	10,000.00	Online Racing Championship
2013-2014	Six Mile Hill Ltd	10,000.00	Boys From County Hell - Development
2013-2014	Sixteen South Ltd	10,000.00	Secret Seven
2013-2014	The Steensons	10,000.00	Impressions
2013-2014	Stephen Farnan	10,000.00	Porcelain Landscapes
2013-2014	An tSnáthaid Mhór Teoranta	10,000.00	Re-positioning An tSnathaid Mhor and Enhanced e-book format development
2013-2014	Uproar Comics	9,900.00	Gamification Publication
2013-2014	Verbal Arts Centre	9,971.00	Verbal QuickReads
2013-2014	Wee Buns Ltd	5,000.00	Zoo
2013-2014	Welig Heritage Crafts	10,000.00	Hands on Experience (HOE)
2013-2014	White Mountain Music Publishing Limited	10,000.00	International Collaborations Catalogue
2013-2014	Whittrick Press LLP	9,900.00	The Crumble Giant
2013-2014	ROCO Magazine	9,850.00	Fully Interactive Magazine for all tablets and Smartphones.
2012-2013	McNally Morris Architects	9,000.00	Autism and the Built environment
2012-2013	Hall Black Douglas Architects	10,000.00	High Rise Architecture and Urban Design 3D Digital Visualisation Exemplar Designs for India
2012-2013	James Rooney Chartered Architect Ltd	8,330.00	Hexi-House, disaster relief shelters and future permanent housing solutions for the urban poor
2012-2013	paperclip architects	8,000.00	The Garden Pod.
2012-2013	Rachel Bevan Architects	9,500.00	R&D Design project to develop an innovative prefabricated form of construction using hemp lime eco materials
2012-2013	ArtsEkta	8,500.00	Ekta Events
2012-2013	Crucible Pictures Ltd.	10,000.00	Crucible Training

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2012-2013	Refound	8,930.00	ReFound
2012-2013	Uproar Comics	9,500.00	"Zombies HI" The App.
2012-2013	Abigail Ryan Homewares	10,000.00	Weddings and Wallpaper; New Markets
2012-2013	Adrian Margey Art	10,000.00	A Brand Entry & Positioning Strategy for Adrian Margey Art in the USA and ROI
2012-2013	Art on Fashion Ltd	10,000.00	Art on Fashion Showcasing App
2012-2013	Belfast Free Tours	8,500.00	Experience Ireland - There's More to Belfast than Walls
2012-2013	Belfast Metropolitan College	14,952.00	Belfast Met Creative Hub Project
2012-2013	Billy Goat Entertainment Ltd	8,800.00	Outfoxed Xbox
2012-2013	Blacknorth Studio Ltd	10,000.00	Forest - iPad App - Animation & Marketing
2012-2013	Clarity Business Education Ltd	7,000.00	Clarity Business Education Digital Learning Paths
2012-2013	Co Couture Limited	10,000.00	Co Couture Interactive E book
2012-2013	Craft and Design Collective	10,000.00	Dark Side SouveNlrs - The Hand Meets High Tech
2012-2013	Craft Northern Ireland	20,000.00	Craft Map Development and Export Support
2012-2013	Crescent Arts Centre	10,000.00	The Crescent Arts Centre - iPhone & iPad app
2012-2013	Digital Key Limited	6,858.00	Siege!
2012-2013	Digital Media Choices	10,000.00	Codename Puck
2012-2013	Dog Ears Ltd	10,000.00	PUFFINS ROCK TEST ANIMATION
2012-2013	Dphisound	9,990.00	Game Developer's Sound Library (working title)
2012-2013	The E Learning Organisation	10,000.00	Creative Entrepreneurs Corner (CEC)
2012-2013	Fresh Made Media	10,000.00	Sea Sense
2012-2013	Get Out Records	6,559.00	Artist and Label Development
2012-2013	Goddess and Swift Ltd	10,000.00	International Brand Growth and Development
2012-2013	Goldsmith Broadcast	10,000.00	NIGolf.TV
2012-2013	Grainne Maher Millinery	10,000.00	develop an innovative new design range of both Grainne Maher millinery and jewellery, and facilitate expansion
2012-2013	Hole in the Wall Gang Limited	10,000.00	Revolution!
2012-2013	I Do Cartwheels	10,000.00	I Do Cartwheels, The Half-Tide Furniture Collection
2012-2013	Imphora Ltd	9,990.00	Go Berserk making Websites with HTML book
2012-2013	Irish Food Heritage Project	10,000.00	Irish Food Heritage Project (IFHP) App
2012-2013	Jude Cassidy	10,000.00	Export
2012-2013	Kabosh Theatre Ltd	10,000.00	The West Awakes
2012-2013	Lagan Press Ltd	9,505.00	Lagan Press - Poetry Hub
2012-2013	Leonora Ferguson Millinery & Accessories	7,000.00	Digital Design for Fashion and Interiors
2012-2013	Londonderry Chamber of Commerce	19,800.00	Culture Teching
2012-2013	Lost Number	9,950.00	Project Ninpo

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2012-2013	Maiden City Festival	7,900.00	Siege Heroes Trail - Pocket Guide App for iPhone and Android
2012-2013	Mighty Sprite Productions Ltd	10,000.00	Sitcom Writing Scheme
2012-2013	Mindflood LTD	10,000.00	PatchBlox
2012-2013	Mobilizd	5,695.00	Formula Fun v1.0 for iPhone
2012-2013	Molten Magazine	9,680.00	Mainland UK and Digital Initiation of 'Molten'
2012-2013	Non Zero Sum LLP	9,527.00	High Resolution Photo-polymer 3D Printing
2012-2013	Notasuch Films	10,000.00	Call for Comedy
2012-2013	Six Echo Studios Ltd	5,500.00	"Atoms" Mobile Video Game
2012-2013	Tactility Factory Ltd	10,000.00	BIG textiles and Tactility Factory
2012-2013	Tailored Ink Publishing	9,657.00	Sense Magazine, Online and Digital Content Project.
2012-2013	An tSnáthaid Mhór Teoranta	10,000.00	I Pad Game: The Fairy Catcher.
2012-2013	Verbal Arts Centre	9,665.00	Verbal Magazine - Digital Transition Project (DTP)
2012-2013	The Weatherbies Limited	10,000.00	Mr Barometer's Weather Forecast
2012-2013	Whittrick Press LLP	9,984.00	Whittrick Press
2012-2013	Wireless Mystery Theatre	10,000.00	Weird City Radio - Belfast
2011-2012	360 Production	9,962.00	Things You Need to Know - IOS App
2011-2012	Belfast Film Festival	10,000.00	BFF Short Film Chammel
2011-2012	Blacknorth Studio Ltd	9,635.00	Forest - Interactive Storybook
2011-2012	Colourpoint Books	10,000.00	Mobile Educational Teaching Resource
2011-2012	The Creativity Hub Ltd	9,950.00	'Peoples' iPad App
2011-2012	Crosstown Media	10,000.00	iPostkard
2011-2012	The Employable Ltd	10,000.00	An online collaboration tool
2011-2012	Fleming Steele Ltd	10,000.00	CINEMAGIC Mobile Application
2011-2012	Inlifesize Ltd	10,000.00	'Faerie Hollow' Entertainment App
2011-2012	Mobilizd	6,200.00	Formula Fun Game Design & Digital Asset Library
2011-2012	Performa Sports Ltd	10,000.00	Performa Sports Desktop Application
2011-2012	Six Echo Studios Ltd	3,840.00	Digital Asset Library and Style Bible for Video Games
2011-2012	TourTalk LLP	10,000.00	Production of a new audio Titanic Tour
2011-2012	Treasure Pilgrim Ltd	10,000.00	Treasure Pilgrim - Online Treasure Hunts with Real Treasure
2011-2012	Aerona Software Systems Ltd	10,000.00	Patient Education Software for Clinics
2011-2012	AirPOS Ltd	10,000.00	Air POS Mobile ePOS and Inventory Scanner Tool
2011-2012	Awakin Ltd	9,800.00	Go Explore NI in 2012
2011-2012	Bandhack Limited	9,850.00	BandHack
2011-2012	Banjax Ltd	10,000.00	Twiv (Twitter Video Editor)
2011-2012	Billy Goat Entertainment Ltd	10,000.00	Outfoxed
2011-2012	BT48.com	10,000.00	OnNow* (working title) - a real time curated geo location event guide for mobile devices

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2011-2012	Crucible Pictures Ltd.	10,000.00	Balooka
2011-2012	Discovery Publications	10,000.00	Development of "Nelly Fandango" into an e-book
2011-2012	Dog Ears Ltd	10,000.00	Puffins Rock App for iPhone and iPad
2011-2012	EEEvent Hub Limited	10,000.00	Holdall
2011-2012	Entec Studios	10,000.00	The Finn McCool Chronicles
2011-2012	Fable Multimedia Ltd	9,995.00	Komodo Maths Mobile App
2011-2012	Filmtrip LTD	10,000.00	Media Perception App (working title)
2011-2012	Guildhall Press	10,000.00	Derry - City of Music (COM) App (Enhanced Multimedia Ebook)
2011-2012	Kabosh Theatre Ltd	10,000.00	Belfast Bred App
2011-2012	Non Zero Sum LLP	9,920.00	3D Computer Vision Tracking and Reconstruction for Augmented Performance
2011-2012	Photo Works North / Source Magazine	7,260.00	Visiting the Archive
2011-2012	Play Resource Warehouse	9,020.00	Inspiration Channel
2011-2012	Pulse Online Productions Ltd	10,000.00	Thompson Dock and Pumphouse QR Video Tour
2011-2012	Siobhan Kirrkamm T/A 3square	10,000.00	3square: Mobile Phone Application
2011-2012	Sixteen South Ltd	10,000.00	Driftwood Bay - Development
2011-2012	Spiderhousepr	10,000.00	Dine for a Cause
2011-2012	Starfish Web Consulting	6,000.00	Starfish Mobile Arcade (multiplayer gaming on the move)
2011-2012	Stephen Downey	9,800.00	Shakin' Safari
2011-2012	An tSnáthaid Mhór Teoranta	10,000.00	Interactive Children's Book App for Apple iPad and iPhone "Ó Chrann go Crann."
2011-2012	Voluntary Arts Network (for Voluntary Arts Ireland)	10,000.00	Running Your Group - E-Learning Module Development
2010-2011	Smalltown America Limited	25,350.00	Smalltown America Music Business Expansion
2010-2011	Straandlooper Ltd	25,800.00	Carnage 3 and Spotisodes
2010-2011	Wee Man Studios Ltd	48,850.00	Mobile Games 3.0
2010-2011	Stephen Farnan	10,000.00	Development of Benburb Art School
2009-2010	Don Quixote's Real Estate Agency Ltd	47,500.00	Micro Budget Filmmaking Model
2009-2010	Adrian Margey Art	9,460.00	Exhibition Costs/Product Development/ Establishment of Wedding Gift List Service.
2009-2010	Ameli Events	9,970.00	The O'Malley Experience
2009-2010	Anthony Toner	10,000.00	Anthony Toner - New Territories
2009-2010	Bag of Bees	7,505.80	New Creative Business and Online Store
2009-2010	Blackthorn Design	8,550.00	Love Your County Website and iPhone Application
2009-2010	Blick Shared Studios	9,700.00	'Green' Event Management Service
2009-2010	Bluebird Media	8,000.00	Adelaide Adventures
2009-2010	Bodyguard Software Ltd	10,000.00	Stronghold App Product Development
2009-2010	Causeway Jewellery Creations	6,500.00	Expansion of Corporate Sales

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2009-2010	Crucible Pictures Ltd.	10,000.00	'Haven' - Pilot Animation Programme
2009-2010	David Baxter Audio Services	7,100.00	Building an Audio Post Production Business
2009-2010	Derek Wilson Ceramics	4,420.00	Integrated Business Development Package
2009-2010	Design Onion	3,850.00	Business Development Project
2009-2010	Docpot	3,964.00	Business Development Costs
2009-2010	Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company	9,700.00	Bespoke Dance Training Service
2009-2010	Eilidh Patterson	5,000.00	National and International Market Development, with a Focus on Nashville TN
2009-2010	Elfire Architectural and Sculptural Ceramics	8,621.00	Innovation in Architectural and Site Specific Ceramic Art
2009-2010	Exise Ltd	6,480.00	Manage My Social Network (MMSN)
2009-2010	Garden State Ltd	10,000.00	Bandzai.com - Web Application Beta Test Phase
2009-2010	Garvan Traynor	3,625.00	Product Development Costs
2009-2010	Jacki Knits	9,990.00	Jacki Knits - Start-Up
2009-2010	Jeff Robinson PR	9,051.00	Eager Beaver Publicity - Digital PR Agency
2009-2010	Jill Graham Contemporary Jeweller	10,000.00	Marketing and Advertising Campaign
2009-2010	Jill Phillips	9,592.00	Wall Surfaces - Sensorary
2009-2010	John Piekaar Fine Bespoke Furniture	2,530.00	Business Start-Up Costs
2009-2010	Kinga Pers Studio Ceramics	8,800.00	Ceramics in Architecture
2009-2010	Lookaly LLP	8,740.00	Lookaly iPhone App
2009-2010	The Lost Brothers	9,200.00	Lost Brothers Market Development Plan
2009-2010	Lotus de Wit Jewellery	1,068.00	Business Development Project
2009-2010	Melting Pot Candle Co	6,029.00	Melting Pot Promotions
2009-2010	Moving on Music	5,690.00	UK Showcase/Networking Opportunity and Development of In-House Marketing Capability
2009-2010	Photo Gallery Ireland	3,000.00	Future Growth
2009-2010	Pixelbrix	5,605.00	Pixelbrix Start-Up Costs & LGBT Out Takes Film Archiving
2009-2010	Ponydance Theatre Company	6,304.97	Professional Development in the Dance Sector
2009-2010	Premiere Circus	10,000.00	Business Marketing Development Project
2009-2010	Problue Solutions	8,500.00	Advanced Development & Marketing of Beathoker.com Portal
2009-2010	Rachel O'Neill	10,000.00	Development of Looplaa Children's Brand
2009-2010	Score Draw Music	7,400.00	Catalogue Representation of Northern Irish Music
2009-2010	Seacourt Print Workshop Limited	7,564.00	Research, Design and Promotion of Printmaking Services
2009-2010	Susie Rea	5,152.00	Business Development Costs
2009-2010	TRC Promotions Limited	10,000.00	Willowstone Arts & Music Festival 2010
2009-2010	Unsemble.com	1,818.73	Development of Unsemble.com
2009-2010	Vectorfunk	9,840.00	Web Service Start-Up for the Web Design Industry

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2009-2010	White Mountain Music Publishing Limited	7,000.00	Business Start-Up Costs
2009-2010	Will McConnell	1,500.00	Development of Bandwidth Music Video Production Company
2009-2010	The Woodturning Shop	7,600.00	Promotion of Woodturning Business
2009-2010	Belfast City Council	32,500.00	South by Southwest 2010
2009-2010	Big Telly Theatre Company	46,961.00	Live Ads
2009-2010	Books NI	85,050.00	Development of BOOKS NI
2009-2010	Clarity Business Education Ltd	19,406.00	Smart Phone Application Development
2009-2010	Connsonic Ltd	10,000.00	Connsonic Ltd Start-Up Funding
2009-2010	County Link Media Ltd	39,700.00	Fermanagh.tv Phase Two
2009-2010	Craft Northern Ireland	40,000.00	Craft Export Programme
2009-2010	Dance Resource Base (NI) Ltd	10,000.00	Business Enhancement Programme
2009-2010	The Design Zoo	46,675.00	Alternate Reality Game
2009-2010	Dumb Productions Ltd	48,620.00	Business Development of Dumb Productions
2009-2010	GBL Productions	47,000.00	Developing GBL Productions
2009-2010	Glasgowbury	50,000.00	Creative Development
2009-2010	LitNet-NI	32,232.97	LitNet-NI Start-Up Funding
2009-2010	Michelle Gallen t/a SearchFindLearn	46,674.00	Development of www.talkirish.com
2009-2010	Momentum ICT Federation Ltd	75,000.00	Digital Circle Collaboration and Promotion Website
2009-2010	The Nerve Centre	41,582.00	Development of Culture NI Website
2009-2010	NORIBIC (Northern Ireland Business and Innovation Centre)	70,814.00	'STEPS to Creativity' Programme (Stimulating Traditional Enterprises through Project Support)
2009-2010	Referralot Ltd	33,944.00	Creative Artists' Web and Mobile Apps Referral Solutions
2009-2010	Simple Steps SPV JV	50,000.00	Development of Simple Steps Autism Pack
2009-2010	University of Ulster	8,593.87	Contemporary Souvenir
2009-2010	Wall Effects Ltd	25,375.00	Employment of Full-Time Artist
2009-2010	West Belfast Partnership Board	10,000.00	Creativewestbelfast Website
2009-2010	Workers' Educational Association	35,766.85	Creativity Thirst
2009-2010	Young at Art	20,788.00	Young at Art Tours
2009-2010	Counturcarbs	35,000.00	Web-Based Carbs Counter for Diabetics
2009-2010	The 15 Second Film Festival Ltd	50,000.00	15 Second Films
2009-2010	Aetopia Limited	10,000.00	iChuck Project
2009-2010	Ards Borough Council	35,900.68	Establishment of Web-Based Creative Economy Resource Tool within the Ards Borough
2009-2010	Arts & Business Northern Ireland	9,600.00	Individual Giving Training Programme

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2009-2010	Banbridge District Council	40,000.00	Creative South East Economic Development (SEED) Support Network
2009-2010	Banjax Ltd	75,000.00	Cineclectic
2009-2010	Be Entertainment Ltd	47,838.00	Beat Generation
2009-2010	Below the Radar Ltd	45,000.00	Alex Gibney Northern Ireland Programme
2009-2010	The British Council	50,000.00	'Creative Economy NI' & 'Cultural Leadership International' Projects
2009-2010	Craft and Design Collective	75,000.00	Business Development
2009-2010	Craft Northern Ireland	98,200.00	Business Adviser/Creative Innovation Adviser/Marketing
2009-2010	David Dudgeon Studios	67,000.00	3-Year Business Development Plan
2009-2010	UKJ Limited t/a Elevation Design	18,412.00	Product Expansion
2009-2010	Entec Studios	34,000.00	Development of Online Gaming Website
2009-2010	Filmtrip LTD	38,220.00	Holosuite
2009-2010	Filmtrip LTD	35,000.00	Digital Slate
2009-2010	Golden Thread Gallery	37,490.00	Establishment of Commercial Section to Represent Northern Irish Artists at an International Level
2009-2010	HD Camera Hire	75,000.00	Staff Costs/Advertising & Website Costs/Equipment Costs
2009-2010	In Your Space Events Management Ltd	15,000.00	In Your Space Event Management
2009-2010	NORIBIC (Northern Ireland Business and Innovation Centre)	36,706.27	Creative Arc
2009-2010	NPE Media Ltd	10,000.00	Irish Sports Monthly
2009-2010	Oh Yeah Music Centre	50,000.00	Creative Development Co-ordinator
2009-2010	Raidió Fáilte	42,000.00	Fadu an Lionra/ Widen the Net
2009-2010	Reflex Stock Limited	10,000.00	Focal Point
2009-2010	Sixteen South Ltd	75,000.00	Co-Production - Children's Television
2009-2010	Smalltown America Limited	73,600.00	IndependentMusic.com
2009-2010	Sonic Music Services Ltd	71,797.00	Sonic Live!
2009-2010	Spires Gallery Ltd T/A Spiresart	37,500.00	Divine and Audacious Design
2009-2010	Straandlooper Ltd	46,991.50	Product Development Costs
2009-2010	Tactility Factory	46,854.00	Business Development Costs
2009-2010	Ulysses Films	8,500.00	Development of Drama for New Digital Platforms
2009-2010	University of Ulster	30,000.00	Creative Industries Forum and Exhibition
2009-2010	Verbal Arts Centre	59,786.00	Verbal Content & Research
2009-2010	West Belfast Development Trust Limited t/a Work West	48,994.00	Work West & Trans Urban Arts
2009-2010	Workers' Educational Association	9,864.17	Creativity Thirst (Coleraine proposal)
2009-2010	Adam Frew	6,200.00	(Ceramics) Business Development
2009-2010	Alan Beattie	9,714.51	Fashion & Textile Design Project

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2009-2010	Algan Arts	4,891.00	Product Development & Marketing
2009-2010	Angela Kelly Jewellery	6,000.00	Product Development & Marketing
2009-2010	Ann McNulty	9,550.00	Product Development Costs
2009-2010	Belfast Festival at Queen's	9,823.00	Marketing Campaign
2009-2010	CanDo Interactive Ltd	9,850.00	3D iPhone Game Development
2009-2010	Catherine Scott Ceramics	10,000.00	Re-Design/Re-Fitting of Premises, Purchase of Equipment & Updating of Website
2009-2010	Compass North Glass	10,000.00	Development of New Business
2009-2010	The Creativity Hub Ltd	10,000.00	'Rory's Story Cubes' for the iPhone
2009-2010	The Design Zoo	10,000.00	Digital Events Project
2009-2010	Digital Arts Studios	7,811.00	Expansion of Digital Software Training Service
2009-2010	Eddie Doherty Goldsmiths	10,000.00	Creation of Studio & Gallery Space/Dvpt of Website/Equipment Costs
2009-2010	Fiona Kerr	9,940.00	Development Project
2009-2010	Fleur Jackson Interior Design	9,870.00	Website & Portfolio Development Costs
2009-2010	Frank Design and Communication Ltd.	9,050.00	Digital Sculptures
2009-2010	The Glass Studio	8,682.12	Workspace Fit Out/Marketing & Promotion/New Skills
2009-2010	Grainne Maher Millinery	10,000.00	Start-Up Costs
2009-2010	Irony	10,000.00	Extension of Existing Business to Include Casting & Metal Plating
2009-2010	Julie-Anne Graham	9,049.27	Product Development & Marketing/Exhibition Costs
2009-2010	Liz Weir	6,670.00	Ballyeamon Barn Creative Breaks
2009-2010	Michael Brown	8,500.00	Product Development Costs
2009-2010	Michelle Butler Ceramics	10,000.00	Product & Premises Development
2009-2010	Mission Hall Quilts Ltd	10,000.00	Development of a Retail Design and Textile Studio
2009-2010	Moving on Music	4,950.00	Website Development/Artist-in-Residence & Commission of New Work
2009-2010	Penny Distribution	10,000.00	Development of Penny Licensing
2009-2010	Rachel McKnight	9,340.00	Development of E-Commerce Website
2009-2010	Red Earth Designs	10,000.00	Picture Framing Project/Business Expansion Costs
2009-2010	Score Draw Music	6,509.00	Business Development
2009-2010	Zenith Design Studio (formerly Seer Studios)	9,162.76	Business Development
2009-2010	Simply Rouge	9,642.00	Business Expansion Costs
2009-2010	Starfish Web Consulting	10,000.00	Development of Online Creative Industries Social Network / Business Development Costs
2009-2010	Susan Francesca Hunter	9,095.00	Business Development
2009-2010	The Talent Tribe Academy Limited	9,550.00	Supporting Young People in Careers in the Creative Industries
2009-2010	Trans Urban Arts	9,900.00	Delivery of Training Programme for Creative Sector Workers
2009-2010	Volte-face Records	9,694.54	Escape Act

Finance Year	Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project Title
2009-2010	We Like Soup	10,000.00	Start-Up Costs
2009-2010	Wee Man Studios Ltd	10,000.00	Develop Games for iPhone
2009-2010	Willow	9,970.00	Establishment of an International Type Foundry
2008-2009	Belfast City Council	30,000.00	South by Southwest 2009 (SXSW)
2008-2009	Craft Northern Ireland	56,850.00	IT Upgrade/Display Units/Marketing Plan/Craft Cultural Tourism Strategy
2008-2009	Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission	97,693.65	Integrated Development Package
2008-2009	NORIBIC (Northern Ireland Business and Innovation Centre)	97,960.00	ACE Creative Conference

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the Poverty Strategy.
(AQW 1308/16-21)

Mr Givan: On 26 May, the Executive agreed a Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21.

The draft Framework contains 14 strategic outcomes, supported by 42 indicators which are clear statements for change.

My Department will specifically be responsible for the development of a Social Strategy to complement the Programme for Government. Work to tackle poverty will be integral to this strategy.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities how they plan to address child poverty in West Tyrone.
(AQW 1309/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy 2016-19 was published on 25 March 2016. At the heart of it, is our vision to take children out of poverty, improve the well-being of children in low income families and reduce the risk that children in poverty will grow up to be poor adults.

As this is an Executive Strategy, all Ministers are committed to its delivery and I will be working closely with my Executive colleagues as we develop our new Programme for Government.

My Department will also specifically be responsible for the development of a Social Strategy to complement the Programme for Government. Work to address child poverty, regardless of where children might live, will be integral to the development of that Social Strategy.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Communities to detail where the £8.3 million allocated to his Department in the June Monitoring Round will be spent.
(AQW 1325/16-21)

Mr Givan: The £8.3m allocated to the Department for Communities in the June Monitoring Round will be spent on the following:

- £4.3m for the reinstatement of maternity grant and funeral loans incorrectly removed from the DfC baseline during budget 2016/17.
- £2m for Fresh Start Agreement commitment for Welfare Advice Centres.
- £2m to address other statutory pressures within the Department, including support for local government programmes.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Communities, in light of the 40,000 households on the social housing waiting list, 22,000 of whom are living in housing stress, to detail how many (i) social houses; and (ii) affordable houses will be built as a result of the June Monitoring Round allocation; and given the need to provide wrap around support services for some of our most vulnerable citizens that are homeless and in housing stress, to outline what allocation has been made to support programs including the Supporting People Programme and Housing First in the June monitoring round.

(AQW 1326/16-21)

Mr Givan: I can advise that in relation to:-

- (i) £106 million has been allocated to the Social Housing Development Programme for the delivery of 1,600 new starts in 2016/17;
- (ii) The £5.5 million in Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) loans awarded to the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association in the June monitoring round will support the purchase of up to 154 additional affordable homes. This

brings the total FTC awarded to Co-Ownership to £100 million and will provide for the purchase of up to 2800 additional affordable homes by March 2019.

The 2016-17 budget allocated for my Department's Supporting People Programme is almost £72.8m. There was no change made to this allocation in June monitoring. Just over £250K of this allocation is for the provision of a Housing First service managed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and delivered by De Paul Ireland in Belfast and Londonderry. Housing First is aimed at ensuring that there is a move away from placing homeless people with chronic needs into hostels, but instead places them in permanent accommodation where they will receive intensive housing support appropriate to their needs in order to create a sustainable tenancy.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Communities if he plans to review Neighbourhood Renewal.
(AQW 1328/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department conducted a review of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy by way of an independent evaluation in 2015. A full report was published in April 2015 and is available by accessing my Departmental web site at <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/nr-evaluation-report-2015.pdf>

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Communities whether (i) his Department will support the Foyle Cup football tournament; and (ii) if he plans to visit the city during the tournament.
(AQW 1329/16-21)

Mr Givan:

- (i) My Department is supporting the Foyle Cup football 2016 tournament by providing £16,000 funding.
- (ii) Unfortunately due to diary commitments I am unable to visit the city during the tournament.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities how much has been paid in Housing Benefit family premiums in each of the last three years.
(AQW 1337/16-21)

Mr Givan: I am unable to provide the information in the format the Member has requested as Housing Benefit Family Premium is not a payment in itself, rather it is an addition to the Housing Benefit 'applicable amount' which is used in calculating Housing Benefit entitlement for claimants who are not in receipt of a "passported" benefit (Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Guarantee Credit).

An "applicable amount" reflects the basic living needs of the claimant and family and equates to a personal allowance for the claimant (and partner), a personal allowance for each child and young person in the family, and any additional premiums and components they qualify for.

The Housing Benefit system automatically adds the Family Premium to all Housing Benefit claims that meet the criteria. To determine the financial impact of Family Premium on the amount of Housing Benefit paid for past or existing cases would require all of the existing claims to be recalculated manually taking into account the removal of the Family Premium element.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) the total amount of Discretionary Housing Payments in each of the last three years; and (ii) the total budget for this financial year.
(AQW 1338/16-21)

Mr Givan: The table below outlines the amount of Discretionary Housing payments in each of the last three years and also the total budget for this financial year:

Discretionary Housing Payments	£'000
2016-17 Budget	6,681
2015-16 Spend	3,483
2014-15 Spend	3,202
2013-14 Spend	3,422

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities to outline the support his Department currently provides to individuals suffering from gambling addiction or the organisations that support them.
(AQW 1341/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department does not provide any support to individuals suffering from gambling addiction; addiction services generally are the responsibility of the Department of Health.

I understand that a number of charitable organisations also provide support to those with gambling problems; some of these are funded in part by the gambling industry.

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Communities, pursuant to AQO 43/16-21, given that the budget for Foras na Gaelge has been reduced every year since 2008, whether he will consider allowing an increase in the budget for the period from 2017 to 2020 to restore the level of support to 2008 levels.

(AQW 1368/16-21)

Mr Givan: The budgetary allocations for North South Implementation Bodies are determined in accordance with the agreed annual guidance issued by the Finance Departments of the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government.

I am advised that reductions to budgets of all North South Bodies over the past six years have been in keeping with the efficiency savings determined by both Finance Departments.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister for Communities whether he has any plans to instruct Planning Offices, within local councils, to give special attention to planning applications for occupational therapist-approved adaptations to the homes of people living with disabilities, given the one year period for the completion of work prescribed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive under the terms of its payment scheme.

(AQW 1390/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants, if planning approval is required, this is requested along with all other grant documentation before it issues approval to carry out the works.

Following approval, although work should be completed within 12 months, the Housing Executive has advised that it is flexible and will allow additional time in order to complete the work.

Furthermore while the Housing Executive request that all grant documentation is submitted within 6 months, it is only after 12 months that it would consider closing an application, and even then would not do so if the applicant still wishes to proceed and is awaiting statutory approval such as Planning.

On the basis of the apparent flexibility in the process I currently have no plans to ask Planning Offices to give special attention to applications for OT approved adaptations to the homes of people living with disabilities.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Communities to outline how his Department plans to address social housing needs, including the need for sheltered accommodation for older people in Trillick.

(AQW 1391/16-21)

Mr Givan: I have been advised by the Housing Executive that there is currently no housing need in Trillick or the surrounding area and that existing stock is meeting the local demand.

Therefore there are currently no plans for the development of social housing nor supported accommodation for older people at this time. However, if you are aware of a specific need not being met, I would suggest engagement with the local Housing Executive office.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Communities to outline the actions his Department is taking to combat underage gambling.

(AQW 1417/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 contains a number of restrictions in respect of underage gambling, these include:

- Under-18s are prohibited from engaging in betting transactions and are not permitted to enter a licensed bookmaking office.
- Under-18s may not participate in bingo in a licensed bingo club.
- No ticket or chance to win a prize in a society's lottery may be bought or sold by anyone under the age of 16.
- Under-18s are not permitted in areas of amusement arcades with £25 prize gaming machines.

My officials are reviewing the legislation with a view to introducing additional measures to protect the young and vulnerable.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Communities whether his Department intend to review the current gambling legislation to restrict machines to a £8.00 jackpot.

(AQW 1419/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 permits Amusement with Prizes machines with a maximum stake of 30p and a maximum prize of £25 in adult amusement arcades which hold the appropriate council permit, licensed bingo clubs and in the bar areas of public houses and licensed hotels. Amusement with Prizes machines with a maximum stake of 30p and a maximum prize of £8 are also permitted in travelling showmen's fairs and amusement arcades.

Higher level machines, known as Jackpot machines have a maximum stake of 50p and a maximum prize of £250; these are permitted only in registered private members clubs.

I am currently reviewing the legislation.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Communities to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through his Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1435/16-21)

Mr Givan: Please see table below outlining the Department's completed capital projects and those in progress for 2011/12 – 2016-17. Details about future projects within Fermanagh and South Tyrone are not currently known.

Name	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
Enniskillen NRA Estate Markers	18,800						18,800
Kilmacormick resource centre extension -build				67,832	116,726	184,595	369,153
NIHE Programme of Environmental Improvements	143,226	78,989					222,215
Devenish Nature reserve		65,115	58,774				123,889
Enniskillen play parks			150,000	148,924			298,924
DRD programme of works		448,000					448,000
West end permanent comm. centre						349,109	349,109
Donnelly's Field			60,105				60,105
Dungannon Youth Resource centre – refurb	125,549	212,797					338,346
Refurb of Gardeners Hall	196,000						196,000
Dungannon & Coalisland NIHE NRA Capital Programme 11/12	79,633						79,633
St Patricks Dungannon Family Learning Centre			260,791				260,791
Refurb of play park at Annaghsee Dungannon					62,000		62,000
Bellanaleck CRISP	53,096						53,096
Brookeborough CRISP	5,970						5,970
Dungannon Public Realm Phase 1	39,785	8,175	593,987	1,127,833			1,769,780
Dungannon Public Realm Phase 2	6,310	520	309	9,516	1,876,500	510,000	2,403,155
Dungannon Public Art		15,399	6,071				21,470
Enniskillen Town centre revitalisation paint/signage & training scheme			397,173	83,258			480,431
Enniskillen Town Centre remedial works			9,673				9,763
Dungannon paint/signage scheme			52,022	42,057			94,079
Dungannon Revitalisation			89,064	31,275			120,339
Enniskillen Town Centre Improvement			350,223	3,086			353,309
Enniskillen Revitalisation			154,356	94,758			249,114
Enniskillen Castle Basin Public Realm				820,000	570,000		1,390,000
Lisnaskea Library			381,000	894,873			1,275,873
Fintona Library				56,466	33,854		90,320
Capital spend for Dungannon JBO		198,860	25,765		28,177		252,802
Aghaloo & Blackwater Community					1,020		1,020
Donaghmore & District Community				5,167			5,167
Dungannon Amateur Boxing Club					40,035	1,048	41,083
Lisnaskea Emmetts GAC	5,500						5,500
1ST Aughnacloy Scouts	30,000						30,000

Name	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
Aghadrumsee St Macartan's GFC	5,224						5,224
Aghaloo O'Neills GFC	6,188						6,188
Aughintober Regeneration	50,000	179,775					229,775
Ballinamallard United FC	1,894						1,894
Coalisland Fianna GFC			201,491	16,352	5,586		223,429
Donaghmore & District Com Association					9,152		9,152
Dungannon Swifts FC	5,750						5,750
Dungannon Thomas Clarke GFC	5,631						5,631
Dungannon United Youth FC			238,875				238,875
Eglish St Patricks GAC	6,037						6,037
Fermanagh District Council	4,317						4,317
North Fermanagh Cricket & FC	29,830						29,830
Omagh District Rifle and pistol club	215,847	23,028					238,875
Portora Royal Grammar School			50,000				50,000
St Josephs GAC (Ederney)			4,681	207,231	8,588	7,712	228,212
Stewartstown Harps GAC	6,125						6,125

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities who is responsible for regulating local gambling advertising for (i) the internet; (ii) radio; (iii) television; and (iv) on billboards.

(AQW 1438/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 regulates local gambling advertising on radio, television and on billboards.

With regard to Internet advertising, Section 5 of the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 creates an offence of advertising unlicensed remote gambling in Northern Ireland. The effect of this is that a remote gambling operator who does not hold the required Gambling Commission licence will not be able to advertise remote gambling in Northern Ireland.

Enforcement of the law is a matter for the PSNI.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Communities to outline the action his Department can take when a house has been taken into receivership and is falling into disrepair.

(AQW 1456/16-21)

Mr Givan: Under the Department's empty homes strategy, if details of an empty property is notified to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's empty homes unit or the empty homes website, a letter is issued by the Housing Executive to the owner (if known) asking what is intended to be done with the property. If the property is up for sale the Housing Executive will ask a Housing Association if they would be interested in purchasing it to bring it back into use.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Communities to outline any planned public realm schemes for Lagan Valley, specifically in Moira.

(AQW 1506/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department is working closely with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council officials to take forward a further scheme in Lisburn City Centre. The streets under consideration for the Lisburn Linkages Project are Bridge Street, Antrim Street, Railway Street, Castle Street, Seymour Street, Bachelor's Walk and Market Place. The proposal is likely to involve the installation of new paving and kerbs, street lighting, some street furniture and improved drainage. The design will follow on from the recently completed scheme and will complement the improvements already delivered.

My Department is also working closely with officials from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to progress plans for a public realm scheme in Dromore town centre. The project is at a very early stage with the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team who will design a scheme focusing on the Outer Square and Church Street in the town centre.

Unfortunately, Moira has a population of less than 5,000 people and therefore is not considered as "urban"; responsibility for its regeneration lies with DAERA (Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs).

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Communities whether he will complete an investigation into delays and obstructions over the provision of bilingual street signs and tourist information following the report from the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, published in January 2014.

(AQW 1513/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1995 allows councils to install signage in a street, showing the name of the street. Such signage must show the name of the street in English and, having had regard to the views of occupiers, may show the name of the street in any other language. Councils are separate legal entities and it is for each council to take its own decisions in relation to its street naming policies.

Issues about traffic signs and tourist information are matters for the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for the Economy, respectively.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the Housing Selection Scheme review.

(AQW 1517/16-21)

Mr Givan: Under a commitment made in the Housing Strategy "Facing the Future", a fundamental review of the allocation of social housing in Northern Ireland is being led by the Department. As part of this commitment, independent research was commissioned from the Universities of Ulster and Cambridge, and was published for public comment in December 2013. Departmental proposals are now being prepared, supported by evidence and informed by the independent research. Any proposals for change will be subject to a full public consultation.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Communities to detail the number of households where three members of a family, including two with physical disabilities, are sleeping together in the living room because their current home is not suitable or adaptable to meet their complex needs, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1518/16-21)

Mr Givan: The information is not available because Waiting List information maintained by the Housing Executive contains information in relation to whether an Applicant or a member of their household is a wheelchair user. The total number of wheelchair applicants on the waiting list is 457 of which 423 are in housing stress and these figures are broken down by Parliamentary constituency in the table below. The Waiting List does not, however, contain specific information on whether an Applicant or a member of their household is registered with a disability.

Wheelchair Applicants on the Waiting List

Parliamentary Constituency	Wheelchair Applicants not in Housing Stress	No in Housing Stress
Belfast East	1	19
Belfast East/South	1	5
Belfast North	1	39
Belfast South	2	21
Belfast South/Strangford		3
Belfast West	1	25
Belfast West/North		2
Belfast West/South		1
East Antrim	5	23
East Londonderry		26
Fermanagh South Tyrone	1	21
Foyle	1	26
Lagan Valley	2	18
Mid Ulster	3	9
Newry & Armagh		27
North Antrim	3	26
North Down		33
South Antrim	5	16
South Down	1	23

Parliamentary Constituency	Wheelchair Applicants not in Housing Stress	No in Housing Stress
Strangford	2	24
Upper Bann	4	22
West Tyrone	1	14
Total	34	423

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Communities what plans his Department has to introduce legislation to regulate apartment management companies.

(AQW 1524/16-21)

Mr Givan: The regulation of apartment management companies is a cross cutting issue and the Department of Finance is coordinating the inter-Departmental work to ensure that identified problems are addressed.

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Communities what recourse is available for a property owner or tenant to pursue a grievance against an apartment management company.

(AQW 1525/16-21)

Mr Givan: At present there is no legislation in Northern Ireland governing the actions and remit of apartment management companies.

The regulation of private management companies is a cross cutting issue and the Department of Finance is coordinating the inter-Departmental work to ensure that identified problems are addressed.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Communities whether legislation exists governing the actions and remit of private management companies that oversee the maintenance of common or green spaces in new housing developments.

(AQW 1593/16-21)

Mr Givan: At present there is no legislation in Northern Ireland governing the actions and remit of private management companies.

The regulation of private management companies is a cross cutting issue and the Department of Finance is coordinating the inter-Departmental work to ensure that identified problems are addressed.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Communities whether his Department will ensure that free and expert debt advice will be available and accessible in Omagh.

(AQW 1598/16-21)

Mr Givan: Debt advice in Northern Ireland is funded and commissioned by the Money Advice Service (MAS). MAS has awarded a contract to Citizens Advice NI to deliver debt advice in Northern Ireland from April 2016.

My Department has funded the Housing Rights Service £340k for the 2016/2017 year to deliver the Mortgage Debt Advice Service. This service provides free independent mortgage debt advice to people in Northern Ireland.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities what assessment his Department has made of the extent of problem gambling.

(AQW 1603/16-21)

Mr Givan: I refer the member to the answer provided to AQW 1052/16-21 .

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Communities what measures are being taken by his Department and the Housing Executive to resolve the issues associated with an encampment at Creagh Business Park, Toome.

(AQW 1608/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive has advised that it is charged with the statutory responsibility as set out in Article 28 (A) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, which states:

Article 28(A)(1) The Executive:

- (a) Shall provide such caravan sites as appear to it to be appropriate for the accommodation of caravans of members of the Irish Traveller community, and
- (b) May manage those sites or lease them to some other person.

There is no statutory provision for the management or control of unauthorised sites or power to remove Travellers from land. There is no further responsibility for the behaviour of unknown third parties due to their status as Irish Travellers or

responsibility in relation to anti-social behaviour caused by individuals who are not tenants of the Housing Executive. This is beyond the scope of the Housing Executive's housing functions and statutory responsibility to Irish Travellers.

As a responsible landlord who has powers under statutory homelessness legislation, the Housing Executive met with the families to discuss their housing needs but they did not wish to avail of offers of temporary or permanent accommodation which the Housing Executive could provide.

As additional information, there are currently 12 pitches available at Daisyfield Site in Londonderry, 3 pitches at Ballyarnett also in Londonderry, 5 pitches at Legahory Close which offer all amenities and protections under the Caravans Act (NI) 2011 which may assist in the serving of Article 5 by the PSNI.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities to detail how many council employees receive salaries (i) in excess of £55,000 per annum; and (ii) in excess of £100,000 per annum.

(AQW 1634/16-21)

Mr Givan: In the 2014/15 financial year 208 council employees received salaries in excess of £50,000 per annum (figures within the 2014/15 certified District Council accounts are recorded in £10k increments therefore total for £55k not specifically recorded) and 7 in excess of £100,000 per annum.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities, pursuant to AQW 554/16-21, to detail (i) how many central government planners were transferred to local government; (ii) how many were transferred to each council area; and (iii) how many Northern Ireland Environment Agency mineral units staff were transferred.

(AQW 1636/16-21)

Mr Givan: As part of the reform of local government, 300 planning staff transferred from the Department of the Environment (NI) to district councils on 1 April 2015. A breakdown of these by council area is set out in the table below.

Seven scientific and technical personnel from NIEA transferred to local government. Those staff transferred to Mid and East Antrim borough council and now comprise local government's Shared Environmental Service.

Council	Number of Planners
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council	28
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council	23
Mid Ulster District Council	30
Ards & North Down Borough Council	26
Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council	29
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council	23
Belfast City Council	33
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council	25
Derry City and Strabane District Council	28
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	25
Newry Mourne & Down District Council	30

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities what regulations are in place to ensure that homeowners and landlords do not let their empty homes fall into disrepair; and what powers his Department has to intervene if a landlord/homeowner knowingly allows their empty home to fall into disrepair.

(AQW 1642/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive has advised that the legislation giving them power to secure or demolish unoccupied premises is contained within the Housing (NI) Order 1981.

Article 63 of the Housing (NI) Order 1981 states where the Housing Executive is satisfied that action is necessary to prevent damage to or otherwise protect housing accommodation, it may serve upon the owner of any unoccupied premises a Notice requiring them within a period of not less than 7 days as the Housing Executive may specify in the Notice:

- 1 To execute such works including work to secure the premises;
- 2 To take steps for demolishing the unoccupied premises or any part of the premises and removing any rubbish or materials resulting from or exposed by the demolition.

The legislation gives the Housing Executive discretion to carry out works specified in the Notice:

- 1 When requested in writing by the owner;

- 2 Where the owner fails to act in the time specified in the Notice;
- 3 Where the owner defaults in an undertaking to carry out the work.

The works are as necessary to:

- 1 Render the premises suitable for use and to prevent damage to, or
- 2 Otherwise to protect housing accommodation.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Communities for an update on funding through Neighbourhood Renewal to Oxford Sunnyside Football Club, Lurgan.

(AQW 1678/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Oxford Sunnyside Football Club project to upgrade an existing grass pitch to a new synthetic playing surface is one of a large number of capital projects that are contained on the local Neighbourhood Renewal Actions Plans for the wider Craigavon area that are with the Department for consideration. There is currently insufficient Neighbourhood Renewal budget available to progress all applications. The Club is aware that there is no budget cover available in the shorter term to enable their application for funding to be progressed. The position will continue to be reviewed should additional budget become available.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities how many staff took voluntary redundancy through the Voluntary Exit Scheme within the working age group, including in the Employability Service; and what was the total cost of these redundancies.

(AQW 1699/16-21)

Mr Givan: Working Age Group within the Department for Communities came into existence on 9 May 2016. Working Age Group includes the former Employment Service. Fourteen staff from Working Age Group exited through the Voluntary Exit Scheme on 31 May 2016. Final compensation costs are not yet known however, the estimated compensation cost associated with these exits is £396K.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Communities (i) to detail the impact of the vote to leave the EU on his Department; (ii) whether the recently announced £280m from the European Investment Bank to build 4,700 new social homes and retro-fit existing units will be affected; and if so, (iii) whether the Executive will make up the funding shortfall to enable the Housing Associations to begin construction.

(AQW 1741/16-21)

Mr Givan:

- i) Until the timing and conditions of a withdrawal settlement are known, it will not be possible to make a meaningful assessment of the impact of the vote to leave the European Union on my Department.
- ii) I can confirm however, that the vote to leave the EU will have no impact on the recently announced funding contract of £280m by the European Investment Bank.
- iii) There would be no requirement for the Executive to make up this element of the Associations private finance.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Communities to outline his Department's strategy for widening access to libraries in West Tyrone.

(AQW 1748/16-21)

Mr Givan: As community hubs, libraries are free, inclusive, shared, accessible and trusted spaces, embedded in communities and used by people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. As 89% of the population lives within two miles of a branch library or mobile library stop, I recognise that there is tremendous potential for libraries, including those in West Tyrone, to provide local access to, and support for, a range of citizen-focused services.

Libraries NI also recognise this, and its strategy for increasing library usage is set out in its draft 2016/17 Business Plan. Amongst others, this Plan aims to widen access to libraries through targeted outreach work, partnership working with local community organisations, charities and Government Departments. Libraries NI is also a statutory partner in the Community Planning process and has been working closely with local councils serving the West Tyrone constituency (Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council) in the development of their respective Community Plans, recognising the important role libraries play as community hubs.

In order to widen access to libraries as far as possible, including those in West Tyrone, Libraries NI and my Department believe that greater joined up working is essential in order to meet the challenges ahead. I am pleased therefore that Libraries NI has already developed Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) with various parts of Government to help support their activities in the community such as DfC employment services, DE and DAERA. A number of initiatives are being taken forward through these partnerships in libraries. These include Job clubs to support the unemployed; basic IT training for farmers, rural dwellers and those seeking employment; early intervention schemes to improve educational aspirations of pre-schoolers and primary school children and much more.

I fully support this partnership working and my officials, in conjunction with Libraries NI, are exploring other areas of potential collaboration with other Departments, including organisations which now form part of DfC. This is to ensure that every opportunity is used to widen access to libraries and provide as wide a range of services to the community as possible.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Communities whether Co-Ownership Housing has any responsibility for essential repairs to tenants' properties.

(AQW 1854/16-21)

Mr Givan: Co-Ownership purchasers are classed as home owners under the terms and conditions set out in their shared ownership lease. Under the terms of this lease essential repairs are the responsibility of the purchaser.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Communities whether Co-Ownership Housing is required to carry out regular inspections of their tenants' properties; and if so, what is the purpose of these inspections.

(AQW 1855/16-21)

Mr Givan: Co-Ownership Housing has a right within the shared ownership lease to gain access to the interior of a property upon reasonable notice. That said, the right to enter under this lease is not formally classed as an inspection. It should be highlighted that Co-Ownership Housing normally only enters a property at the request of the homeowner for the purposes of meeting with them to discuss issues, such as, arrears.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Communities to outline the process by which his Department sets rent levels and rent increases for Co-Ownership Housing.

(AQW 1856/16-21)

Mr Givan: Rent levels and increases for the Co-Ownership Housing scheme are set by the Department for Communities in exercise of the powers conferred on it under Article 8 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 by means of a Rent Determination with the consent of the Department of Finance.

Rents at outset are calculated at 2.5% of the value of the equity in the property which is not yet owned by the Co-Ownership purchaser. Annual increases are then applied with effect from 1st April using the previous October's RPI figure.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the Sub-Regional Stadia Programme.

(AQO 168/16-21)

Mr Givan: In March 2011, the Executive endorsed an investment of £36.2m for sub regional stadia development for football as a priority area of spend.

A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for sub regional funding was approved by DFP in June 2015.

A 12 week consultation on the proposals for the Sub Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer took place from 30 November 2015 until 22 February 2016. The proposals contained within the Sub Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer consultation document were based on the agreement reached by the Executive in March 2011 to "meet the strategic needs of football including those as outlined in the IFA's paper entitled "Strategic Facility Need" (dated March 2011)." The consultation document therefore reflected the five priorities outlined in the IFA's draft Facilities document.

The IFA subsequently updated their 2011 Facilities Strategy, however it was only proper that the consultation was based on what was in place at the time the Executive endorsed the investment.

During the consultation, the Department facilitated 5 public consultation events and also met with a number of individual stakeholders. The Department received 1,279 responses to the consultation, 98 from named organisations and 1,181 from individuals.

Responses to the consultation document will help to shape the programme going forward; including the eligibility criteria for the programme.

Statistical analysis of the consultation responses was completed in April 2016.

Officials in the Stadia Team are currently carrying out detailed consideration and analysis of the responses to the consultation together with all other relevant information before making recommendations to me on the way forward.

I anticipate that the programme will be launched and open for applications later in 2016.

Mr McKee asked the Minister for Communities what ongoing training is available for members of local council planning committees.

(AQO 169/16-21)

Mr Givan: Responsibility for planning in Northern Ireland is shared between the 11 district councils and the Department for Infrastructure. The Department for Communities does not have responsibility for directly providing training services to councils. District councils are statutory authorities in their own right, and are responsible for fulfilling their obligations under

the reformed two-tier planning system and for meeting their own training and development needs in relation to their planning functions.

Councils do however receive training and support services from the Local Government Staff Commission and the NI Local Government Association (NILGA), which is the representative body for councils in Northern Ireland. Its remit includes elected member development and it has published the Councillors' Guide to the Northern Ireland Planning System.

NILGA is currently delivering a training programme for elected members entitled 'Making Planning Work'. This programme is specifically aimed at supporting councillors who sit on planning committees. The programme is already underway and will continue until March 2017 and will provide training for councillors on all aspects of planning processes and responsibilities.

Additionally, councils have now embarked on or have completed the Elected Member Development Charter, which is intended to identify the gaps in their knowledge and understanding of their new roles, including positions of responsibility such as planning committees.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the timeframe for the publication and implementation of the Sexual Orientation Strategy.

(AQO 170/16-21)

Mr Givan: The good relations strategy, Together: Building a United Community, gives a commitment to publishing a Sexual Orientation strategy. The Stormont House Agreement and the Fresh Start document both state that the Together: Building a United Community will be implemented in full.

The member will also be aware that the Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21, which is currently out for consultation until 22 July 2016.

The draft Framework includes specific outcomes in respect of 'a more equal society' and 'a shared society that respects diversity'.

These are very high level outcomes that we need to develop supporting actions to deliver against. Detailed work has started with the launch of the Framework for public consultation and I would welcome the views of everyone as part of that consultation process.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Communities what plans his Department has to review social housing provision by the Housing Executive and Housing Associations in rural areas, to meet the needs of rural dwellers.

(AQO 171/16-21)

Mr Givan: I am committed to increasing the number of social homes throughout Northern Ireland whether it is in urban or rural areas.

Housing activity in rural areas, which as you know is classed as a settlement with a population of circa 4,500 is identified through the Housing Executive's Rural Action plan and then delivered through the Social Housing Development Programme.

Following a review of the 'Rural Homes and People' policy during 2015 and eight weeks of public consultation at the beginning of 2016, the Housing Executive is preparing to launch its 'Sustainable Rural Communities': Rural Strategy & Action Plan 2016-2020 in September 2016.

The Rural Strategy recognises that there are two key factors impacting on the provision of social homes in rural areas namely:

- The identification of social housing need; and
- The identification of land in rural locations which is suitable and available for housing development.

In order to address these the strategy will focus on providing a rural housing enabler service and assisting rural communities who wish to examine the provision of social and affordable housing in their locality. This service will incorporate the assessment of rural housing need, the identification of potential development sites, engagement with housing associations and local councils and the examination of the potential to facilitate mixed tenure schemes in rural areas.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Communities to outline the current population threshold for town centre regeneration projects.

(AQO 172/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department's urban regeneration programmes, including those which support schemes in town centres, are delivered in settlements which have a population of 5,000 or more persons.

This population threshold is based on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's urban-rural classification. Settlements with populations of 5,000 persons or above are defined as urban and those with lesser populations are rural.

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Communities what assessment his Department has made of the impact of Welfare Reform on child poverty.

(AQO 173/16-21)

Mr Givan: The aims of the current Welfare Change programme in Northern Ireland is to make the welfare system fairer, more affordable and to better assist people into work, thereby reducing poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency.

To date, my Department has published an extensive range of analysis on the main reforms, estimating both the likely number of individuals and households that could be impacted along with the financial impacts. There has also been substantial quantitative and qualitative research into attitudes to the Welfare Changes.

A specific study of the impact of Welfare Changes on poverty levels has not been undertaken by my Department or by the Department for Work and Pensions at the UK level. This is due to the fact that poverty is widely acknowledged to be rooted in multiple factors such as educational attainment, health, and worklessness. Therefore, forecasting the impact of a particular policy change is unlikely to be robust.

It is important to also note that forecasting poverty generally involves developing complex models dependant on a wide range of financial and demographic trends. These trends would themselves be produced from a series of models and forecasts by government and non government bodies.

The uncertainty around the assumptions that would have to be built into any such model would severely impact the robustness of the output produced. Such forecasts therefore would not lend themselves well to target setting.

I can assure the Member and the House that I will bring forward very soon a very robust evaluation strategy that will clearly measure the impacts of welfare changes across Northern Ireland as we progress this very ambitious agenda aimed at helping people to improve their lives.

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Communities how claimants with poor mental health and wellbeing are supported through changes to the welfare system.

(AQO 174/16-21)

Mr Givan: I do understand and appreciate that claimants may be anxious and concerned about the impact of welfare changes on their existing benefits and my Department is fully committed to supporting claimants through these changes.

Enquiry lines are in place to provide advice and guidance to claimants and face to face assistance is also available at local Jobs & Benefits/Social Security Offices. In addition, a number of practical arrangements are in place to support vulnerable people impacted by the changes.

The Personal Independence Payment customer journey in Northern Ireland has additional contact points built in to safeguard existing DLA claimants, such as those with poor mental health, who fail to make a claim when advised to do so. This includes a phone call and also a home visit to encourage and assist the claimant with making the claim. Furthermore, claimants with mental health issues will not be automatically disallowed Personal Independence Payment if they fail to return their PIP2 Questionnaire form, but instead will be invited to attend a face to face consultation.

Arrangements are also in place for vulnerable claimants who are impacted by the Employment and Support Allowance changes to be introduced from 28 November whereby if they have not made contact with the Employment and Allowance Centre, a safeguard visit will be carried out.

As part of the Fresh Start Agreement, the Northern Ireland Executive agreed £8m funding over 4 years to provide additional independent advice services to help and support customers through Welfare Reform. My Department is currently finalising arrangements with regional advice organisations to have these additional services in place to include specialist support for the more vulnerable, including those with poor mental health and wellbeing. The organisations will be working with their own frontline advice centres and a wide range of partner organisations to ensure that appropriate help and support is provided to people across Northern Ireland.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister for Communities how his Department can help communities deliver local flags protocols.

(AQO 176/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive recently published its Community Cohesion Strategy, which includes Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols as one of its five themes. The Housing Executive has also developed a 'Good Practice Guide to Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols', which recognises that to be effective, the strategy is best delivered through community led initiatives, at a pace determined by the local community. To support this work, the Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Unit proactively engages and negotiates with communities and provides funding to flags and mural initiatives.

I welcome the work that has been done over recent years to establish flags protocols in a number of communities such as Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh, Banbridge, Rathfriland, South Belfast and Lisburn. It is particularly encouraging that some communities have recently announced that the flags protocols established in 2015 have been successful and are being continued in 2016.

I also welcome the announcement last May by the Loyalist Communities Council of a flags protocol for the whole of Northern Ireland and I would echo their appeal for widespread adoption of, and adherence to, the protocol.

Department of Education

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of primary 1 pupils enrolled at each bunscoil in each of the last five years.

(AQW 812/16-21)

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): Year 1 enrolments in Irish medium schools for the last five years are as follows:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Bunscoil an Luir	13	13	9	11	21
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	3	10	8	6	11
Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh	14	21	28	28	22
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	19	12	21	19	24
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	19	16	12	14	16
Bunscoil Cholmcille	13	12	17	10	11
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	9	10	10	18	15
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	37	39	43	44	45
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	10	13	18	15	17
Gaelscoil an Lonnain	5	9	13	10	11
Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	12	18	15	18	21
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	12	20	18	19	22
Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir	17	14	15	20	23
Gaelscoil Eanna	22	34	32	28	25
Gaelscoil Eoghain	-	13	10	21	11
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	15	15	15	10	13
Gaelscoil Leim an Mhadaidh	12	13	8	17	15
Gaelscoil Na Bhfal	23	27	26	27	25
Gaelscoil na Daroige	11	11	12	13	7
Gaelscoil na gCrann	17	16	23	19	26
Gaelscoil Na mBeann	-	12	11	12	8
Gaelscoil na Mona	12	15	21	16	18
Gaelscoil na Spéiríní	5	8	4	8	9
Gaelscoil NeAchtain	-	14	22	14	14
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	24	20	26	21	25
Gaelscoil Uí Neill	19	24	24	25	22
Scoil An Droichid	22	22	24	23	22
Scoil na Fuisseoige	19	22	23	18	22

Source: NI school census

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education how much money was spent annually on rent, rates, repairs and maintenance for buildings and grounds for (i) Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (ii) Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education; (iii) Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta; and the (iv) Controlled Sector Support Council, in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

(AQW 979/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department has not incurred any expenditure to date in respect of rent, rates, repairs and maintenance for buildings and grounds for the Controlled Schools' Support Council as it is not scheduled to come into operation until 1 September 2016.

The tables below set out the relevant detail on rent, rates, repairs and maintenance for buildings and grounds provided by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta,

Table A - Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Rent	£50,377	£45,546	£49,825
Rates	£1,348	£7,550	£2,763
Repairs and Maintenance	£21,950	£70,451	£16,802
Totals	£73,675	£123,547	£69,390

Note: The 2015-16 expenditure figures for CCMS are based on expenditure reported in CCMS's 2015-16 Draft Resource Accounts. CCMS's 2015-16 Resource Accounts are yet to be finalised, however it is anticipated there will be no significant change to the 2015-16 figures.

Table B - The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Rent	£17,500	£17,500	£17,500
Rates	£0	£0	£0
Repairs and maintenance	£4,126	£2,528	£2,170
Totals	£21,626	£20,028	£19,670

Table C - Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Rent	£36,643	£35,983	£37,230
Rates	£0	£0	£0
Repairs and maintenance	£952	£1542	£546
Totals	£37,595	£37,525	£37,776

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education for a breakdown of monies spent from 2011-12 on (i) special needs education; (ii) administration costs; and (iii) departmental staff costs.

(AQW 1168/16-21)

Mr Weir:

(i) Special needs education

The table below provides the total spend on special needs education from 2011-12.

£m	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*
Total	195.75	214.47	230.95	243.62	253.82

* the 2015-16 figures are provisional.

The above figures include spend on statemnted pupils in mainstream schools, pupils in special schools and home to school transport for statmented pupils attending primary, post-primary and special schools. The table also includes funding provided for Middletown Centre for Autism and a number of capacity-building initiatives within the Review of SEN and Inclusion.

Schools are also responsible for meeting any additional needs of pupils within the first three stages of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN. Such funding is not separately identified from within the overall delegated budget distributed to schools, nor is it separately reported on. The level of spend by schools for such pupils cannot be disaggregated from the schools' overall expenditure.

(ii) Administration costs

The table below provides the total spend on administration costs.

Organisations (£m)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*
Education Authority (Previously Education and Library Boards)	43.19	41.50	40.47	40.21	41.25
Department of Education	17.59	17.94	18.29	17.92	16.35
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments (CCEA)	5.63	4.86	5.19	5.72	5.00
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)	2.15	2.02	2.10	2.24	2.10
General Teaching Council (GTCNI)	1.27	1.14	1.04	1.01	1.19
Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)	0.66	0.63	0.65	0.68	0.63
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG)	0.63	0.62	0.61	0.67	0.62
Youth Council (YCNI)	0.36	0.32	0.34	0.34	0.30

* the 2015-16 figures are provisional

* the 2015-16 figures do not include amounts in relation to the Voluntary Exit Scheme.

(iii) Departmental staff costs

The table below provides the total spend on departmental staff costs from 2011-12.

£m	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*
Total	25.50	26.42	28.90	29.94	31.85

* the 2015-16 figures are provisional.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the organisations that received funding from the Pathways Fund; (ii) the amounts provided in each of the last two years; and (iii) the projected funding for the next two years.

(AQW 1206/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Pathway Fund was introduced on 1 April 2016.

The organisations that were allocated Pathway Funding in this first year of the Fund, and the amounts awarded are outlined in the table below:

	Name of Organisation	Award 2016 /2017
1	Acorn Womens Group / Woodland Adventure Playgroup	£28,610.00
2	An Droichead	£38,719.00
3	Ardstraw community playgroup	£19,587.97
4	Ashton Community Trust / Kinder Kids Daycare	£37,365.00
5	Ballee Community Childcare	£18,225.06
6	Ballybeen Women's Centre LTD	£17,198.90
7	Ballymacarrett Youth and Community Project /Dee Street Playgroup	£21,397.10
8	Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid	£48,771.00
9	Blackie River Community Groups	£59,329.00
10	Bloomfield Community Association	£21,462.00
11	Bo Peeps Playgroup	£7,709.18
12	Cairde Gaelscoil na Móna / Naionra na Mona	£30,000.00
13	Care Bears Community Playgroup	£4,653.00
14	Chrysalis Women's Centre	£38,683.00

	Name of Organisation	Award 2016 /2017
15	Clogher Valley Playgroup	£6,508.53
16	Cornabracken Child Care LTD	£62,380.36
17	Dara Pre-School	£14,210.60
18	Denamona Pre-School Education Centre	£12,151.63
19	Derry Well Women	£8,331.00
20	Dunnaman Children's Centre	£15,521.46
20	East Belfast Mission-Bright Sparks Daycare	£103,366.00
22	Eskra Childcare Ltd / Playtime Playgroup	£23,448.34
23	Falls Women's Centre	£57,584.19
24	First Housing Aid & Support Services	£57,425.00
25	First Steps Community Playgroup	£25,179.96
26	First Steps Daycare Ltd	£91,839.90
27	First Steps Playgroup and Parent & Toddler Group	£32,390.00
28	Foyle Down Syndrome Trust	£98,222.00
29	Giggles and Wiggles	£16,250.44
30	Giggles Early Years LTD	£51,404.00
31	Glen Community Parent Youth Group	£29,781.68
32	Grove Community Playgroup	£21,414.00
33	Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre Ltd /Sunshine Playgroup	£47,435.00
34	Hobby Horse Playgroup	£6,508.53
35	Home-Start North Down	£18,044.58
36	Ionad na Faiseoige	£30,000.00
37	Ionad Uibh Eachach / Gaelspraoi and Gaelchuram (2 locations)	£80,619.00
38	Jack and Jill Pre-School	£6,894.00
39	Kiddies Castle Early Years	£19,349.00
40	Kids R Us Cross Community Playgroup	£6,508.53
41	Kids Together Belfast	£29,882.64
42	Kidzone	£33,983.72
43	Kilcooley Women's Centre	£60,333.84
44	Larne Community Care Centre / Kids Korner	£26,830.00
45	Ligoniel Family Centre	£14,040.00
46	Limavady Community Development Initiative Ltd	£51,846.87
47	Little Amps Early Years	£11,180.00
48	Little Orchids Ltd	£22,271.67
49	Lower Oldpark Community Association / Avoca Playgroup	£28,181.00
50	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group	£41,013.00
51	McClintocks Childrens Centre	£24,896.63
52	Monbrief Pre-School Playgroup	£11,317.00
53	Nai-ionad Ard Eoin	£25,335.00
54	Naíonra an tSléibhe Dhuibh	£45,634.00

	Name of Organisation	Award 2016 /2017
55	Naiscoil Dhun Padraig	£7,122.00
56	Newhill First Steps Daycare Centre Ltd	£36,431.00
57	Newry Early Years children and Family Centre	£54,931.00
58	Newtownbutler Playgroup Ltd	£43,664.82
59	Nippers Alley Playgroup	£14,875.00
60	Oasis Caring in Action	£31,176.08
61	Parish of Nativity Playgroup	£12,970.76
62	Play-A-Way Childcare Centre / Play-a-way Playgroup	£19,710.76
63	Pomeroy Pre School Playgroup	£19,981.90
64	Quaker Service	£40,000.00
65	Rainbow Child And Family Centre	£30,000.00
66	Richmount Playgroup	£3,031.00
67	Roden Street Community Development Group	£14,139.84
68	Royal Mencap Society - MENCAP	£6,508.53
69	Sólás	£30,000.00
70	St Colums PreSchool Centre	£2,987.01
71	Star Neighbourhood Centre	£17,438.00
72	The Dry Arch Childrens Centre	£29,400.00
73	The Firs Playgroup	£27,866.94
74	Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	£25,166.78
75	West Bann Development	£51,812.00
76	Whiterock Creche Association Ltd	£36,400.12
77	Women's Centre Derry	£25,561.00
78	Women's Windsor Centre	£43,547.88
		£2,385,945.73

Funding is allocated for the financial year 2016/17. I am not yet in a position to confirm funding levels beyond this year. For 2017/18 funding, all groups, including those in the table above, will be required to submit an application to the Fund.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education , pursuant to AQW 244/16-21, to detail the recruitment criteria for the appointment of the necessary staff to support these children.

(AQW 1240/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has advised that the following criteria is required when appointing the necessary staff to support pupils who attend the Language Communication Team.

Essential Criteria

Applicants must:

- (i) be a qualified teacher as recognised by the Department of Education to teach in grant-aided schools;
- (ii) have a minimum of 5 years' relevant teaching experience (Early Years - KS2) within the last 8 years in a formal school setting;
- (iii) have a minimum of 2 years' experience of teaching children with language and communication difficulties within a formal school setting;
- (iv) have experience of drawing up and implementing specific intervention programmes for young children with SEN
- (v) have experience of providing advisory support/training to school staff, parents, colleagues or other professionals;
- (vi) have used ICT in professional work in support of teaching and learning;

(vii) have access to transport in order to fulfil the requirements of the post.

Desirable

(i) Additional qualifications in the education of pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The Selection Panel reserves the right to enhance the criteria in order to facilitate a manageable shortlist.

Knowledge, Skills and Personal Qualities

Applicants should:

- have a sound knowledge of current educational developments within the area of Special Education and also within the wider educational context;
- be committed to inclusive approaches in meeting pupils' Special Educational Needs;
- have extensive working knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies and approaches to meet the learning needs of children with language and communication difficulties;
- have the ability to work effectively as a member of a team with a pro-active and flexible approach;
- possess good presentation, oral and written communication skills;
- have excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively with inter-agency and multi-professional teams;
- be a committed and enthusiastic member of the team with the ability to lead and motivate professional colleagues in this specialist area of work;
- possess personal qualities of caring, empathy and mutual respect.

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of youth workers funded by his Department that are based in North Belfast, including the organisations in which the youth workers are based.

(AQW 1285/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has provided the following information on funded statutory and voluntary youth provision in North Belfast. This includes full-time, part-time and outreach workers.

Youth Organisation	Number of staff funded
Voluntary:	
Ardoyne YC	15
Holy Family YC	15
New Lodge YC	11
Ballysillan YFC	*
John Paul II YC	11
Deanby	5
Greater Whitewell	*
Streetbeat	7
Townsend Street	*
Club Oige Mhachaire Bothain	*
Statutory:	
Ballysillan YI	*
Fortwilliam YC	8
Glencairn YI	7
Hammer YC	10
Mountcollyer YC	9
Mountainhill YC	6
North Belfast Area Project	9
Total number of staff funded	121

* Please note in cases where fewer than 5 staff are employed the exact number is not given, in compliance with data protection.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the actions necessary following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child report on the rights of the child.

(AQW 1420/16-21)

Mr Weir: It is clear that there is a wide range of issues covered in the UN Committee's report and it is important that a collective approach across Executive Departments is taken when considering its recommendations.

I am committed to respecting the rights of children and young people. The Executive's new Children and Young People's Strategy will be the main strategic instrument through which Departments will work together to improve the well-being of our children and young people. Led by my Department, the Strategy will ensure that due regard is given to the UNCRC report.

Similarly to the Programme for Government, the Strategy will be outcomes focused. It will seek to outline how the Executive will work towards improving a wide range of aspects of children and young people's lives including safety and stability, learning and achievement, health, play and leisure, employment opportunities and the chance to contribute positively to their communities.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Education whether (i) his Department is aware of the infrastructure problems facing St. Mary's Primary School, Cloughcor; and (ii) his Department intends to intervene to rectify the problems.

(AQW 1448/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department received a Minor Works Application from St Mary's Cloughcar, on 20 June 2016, requesting works to the structure of the roof within the main school building.

The Minor Works Application will now be forwarded to the Education Authority (EA) to provide a scoping report and an estimate of costs for necessary works.

Upon receipt of the scoping report the matter will be further considered regarding progression of the scheme.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department will investigate the possibility of expanding Surestart provision to areas that do not currently qualify.

(AQW 1476/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Sure Start Programme was initially delivered in the 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland, and a recent expansion initiative to extend the programme to the 25% most deprived areas, as defined by the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, is expected to complete during 2016/17.

Four new Sure Start projects have been created and 14 projects have expanded their catchment areas to extend services to an additional 21 wards.

The recent Independent Review of Sure Start¹ considered the Department's current targeting of provision in areas of highest deprivation and did not recommend a change to this approach.

The focus of the Sure Start Programme will therefore continue to be on these most disadvantaged areas, where the most positive and beneficial outcomes for children can be realised.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's response to the Broken Promises report.

(AQW 1497/16-21)

Mr Weir: I am aware that The National Autistic Society and Autism NI launched 'Broken Promises' report, in May 2016, which calls on the NI Assembly to ensure that the necessary resources are in place to realise the promise of real change for people with autism and their families in Northern Ireland.

My officials have recently received the report and are currently considering it.

I remain committed to ensuring that every child, including those with autism spectrum disorder receives a high quality education that enables them to fulfil their potential.

Mr Attwood asked the Minister of Education (i) whether he plans to provide in-year funding to relieve schools' budget pressures arising from the decisions on pension and national insurance contributions; (ii) how much funding will be released; and (iii) when such funding will be released.

(AQW 1543/16-21)

Mr Weir: It is my intention to give further consideration to the overall 2016-17 Education budget position before I make any funding decisions.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister of Education to outline the purpose of the £5M allocation announced in the June monitoring round for the drawdown of schools' surpluses under the end-year flexibility scheme.

(AQW 1544/16-21)

1 Independent Review of the Sure Start Programme, RSM McClure Watters 2015

Mr Weir: In June 2011 the Executive agreed the Schools Surplus scheme, which is in respect of controlled and maintained schools only. This allows these schools to either increase or draw down their surpluses. The arrangement allows the Department to draw down on banked amounts of the school surplus held by the Department of Finance or to bank any further net surpluses built up in year by schools. The £5m allocation announced in June Monitoring is the initial drawdown from this schools surplus scheme in 2016-17. I have agreed that this be allocated to the Education Authority, who is the Funding Authority for all controlled and maintained schools.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of schools where the Education and Training Inspectorate has reported the provision of learning as being below satisfactory in (i) 2013-14; (ii) 2014-15; and (iii) 2015-16. (AQW 1545/16-21)

Mr Weir: Complete inspection data is currently not available for the 2015/16 Academic Year. The percentage of schools where the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has reported the provision of learning as being below satisfactory was 2.1% in the 2013/14 Academic Year and 1.6% in the 2014/15 Academic Year. The ETI applies a Proportionate Risk Based model of inspection and cohorts inspected in each year are not directly comparable.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education to outline the difference between a Jointly Managed School and a Jointly Managed Church School. (AQW 1550/16-21)

Mr Weir: There is no material difference between a Jointly Managed School and a Jointly Managed Church School - the latter reflects that the Trustee representation is agreed by the Transferor churches and the Catholic Church and managed by a Board of Governors with balanced representation from both the main communities here. Whilst there is potential for other forms of a Jointly Managed School, the current provision relates only to what has been termed by stakeholders as a 'jointly managed church school'. (DE Circular 2015/15 refers).

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education what is the religious balance required for a Jointly Managed School. (AQW 1551/16-21)

Mr Weir: There is no minimum religious balance requirement for a jointly managed school - this is considered on a case by case basis. In most cases a jointly managed school will be established as a result of the amalgamation of a controlled and a Catholic maintained school and will be reflective of the religious breakdown of the constituent schools.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education whether there is a minimum pupil threshold for a Jointly Managed School. (AQW 1552/16-21)

Mr Weir: In a case of an amalgamation between a former controlled and maintained school (s), the new school will not be subject to a minimum enrolment criteria for receipt of recurrent funding. (Para 4.7 DE Circular 2015/15 refers).

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education whether legislative change is required for Jointly Managed Schools. (AQW 1553/16-21)

Mr Weir: A legislative change is not required.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister of Education whether a Jointly Managed School can operate over two separate sites. (AQW 1554/16-21)

Mr Weir: A Jointly Managed School can operate over two sites.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department will introduce mandatory autism training for teachers and classroom assistants. (AQW 1600/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department currently has no plans to introduce mandatory autism training for teachers and classroom assistants.

Since the launch of the NI Executive Autism Strategy and Action Plan, my Department has been working closely with the Education Authority (EA) and the Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA) and other departments on implementation of actions. These include delivering training programmes for teachers, educational professionals, youth workers and parents and providing effective support for pupils with autism.

The EA has advised that teachers and schools are routinely informed of training opportunities and actively encouraged to attend. If referrals for support are received the EA will review the status of training in the school and meet identified training needs as required.

In addition, MCA provides a comprehensive range of training opportunities for those staff supporting children with autistic spectrum disorders across all schools.

The training provided by the Centre is tailored to the needs of educational professionals and school staff. A range of sessions are specifically designed to the needs of staff in mainstream schools. In partnership with the EA, the Centre also provides tailored whole school training for schools upon request.

Mr McEliduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department will ensure that the provision of defibrillators in all schools be established as soon as possible.

(AQW 1601/16-21)

Mr Weir: A defibrillator is an optional addition to first aid provision in schools and should be considered in the context of the school's first aid risk assessment. Therefore the decision of a school to acquire a defibrillator and train staff in its use is a matter for each school. I have no plans to place a requirement upon schools to have a defibrillator on site but will keep the issue under review.

Mr McEliduff asked the Minister of Education how his Department will provide choice for parents, including those whose children currently attend Gaelscoil na gCrann, that would like their children to benefit from Irish medium post-primary provision in the Strule Shared Education Campus in Omagh.

(AQW 1602/16-21)

Mr Weir: The schools which will move to the Strule Shared Education Campus (SSEC), Omagh are Arvalee School and Resource Centre; Christian Brothers Grammar School; Loreto Grammar School; Omagh Academy Grammar School; Omagh High School, and; Sacred Heart College.

While none of the schools provide post-primary Irish Medium (IM) education, it is the responsibility of the Planning Authorities, (the Education Authority in conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools) working with CnaG (the representative body for Irish medium education) and the wider sector, to bring forward practicable plans and proposals in this regard.

The future development of IM education will be considered, therefore, through the Area Planning Process and in the context of the Sustainable Schools Policy to determine the most suitable location for IM Post-primary education in the Omagh area. Any significant change to a school currently proposed for the SSEC, such as the establishment of an IM Unit, for example, would require the publication of a development proposal.

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Education to whom, or to which body, may a parent or member of the public make a complaint about a member of the teaching profession.

(AQW 1627/16-21)

Mr Weir: A parent or member of the public wishing to make a complaint about a member of the teaching profession can do so by contacting the Principal or Board of Governors of the school in which they are employed. Complaints about a teacher should be handled in line with the published complaints policy of the school.

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education for an update on the progress of the proposals for the new build school for Holy Trinity College, Cookstown.

(AQW 1649/16-21)

Mr Weir: Holy Trinity College was included in the capital investment statement of 22 January 2013 as one of 22 primary and post primary schools to advance in planning.

Initial work to progress the project was delayed due to the submission of a Development Proposal to increase the school's enrolment to 1,300 pupils which was approved in March 2015.

A Business Case has recently been approved by the Department for the new post-primary school with estimated costs of £36m. This is currently with the Department of Finance for consideration.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail how many children were allocated a funded place in a nursery school or unit prior to reaching their third birthday by 1 July of the year in which they began attendance; broken down by each Education and Library Board region, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1650/16-21)

Mr Weir: The number of two year olds in nursery schools and units in 2015/16, broken down by Education and Library Board region is as follows:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Belfast	82	66	96	46	N/A
Western	157	156	137	147	N/A
North Eastern	128	207	236	306	N/A

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
South Eastern	52	71	119	74	N/A
Southern	61	90	107	118	N/A
Total	480	590	695	691	493

Source: NI school census

Notes:

- 1 Age is as at 1st July of the previous academic year i.e. 1st July 2015 for 2015/16.
- 2 The Education Authority was formed in April 2015 which was an amalgamation of the five Education and Library Boards. As the former Education and Library Boards no longer existed in 2015/16, the figures represent the total across the entire Education Authority.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Education whether his Department is considering a competition size gym hall for Lismore School, Craigavon.

(AQW 1674/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Major Capital Investment project for a new build for Lismore Comprehensive is in the early stages of design. The Department's Building Handbook provides advice and guidance on the planning and design of school premises and the standards to which they should conform. In line with the Handbook, the new school build will include a sports hall of 440m² for the teaching of physical education, a gymnasium of 260m² and fitness activity area of 100m².

There are currently no plans to increase this standard provision however should a school wish to apply for additional funding to a recognised funding agency such as the Sports Council for NI or the local district council to increase accommodation and facilities for physical education, the Department will consider any proposal that does not subsequently increase the Department's approved overall costs or delay progress.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Education to outline his plans to develop the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum to form part of Key Stage 1.

(AQW 1676/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department of Education requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own policies on how they will address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within the curriculum. A school's policy should reflect the school's ethos, be subject to consultation with parents and pupils and endorsed by the Board of Governors.

At Key Stage 1, RSE may be delivered as part of the Personal Understanding and Health strand of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding area of learning.

I have no plans to make any changes in this regard.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to outline all examination courses which were indicated to cease as a result of his decision to end English examination boards provision.

(AQW 1685/16-21)

Mr Weir: It was not my decision to end English examination boards' GCSE provision here. I have re-opened the market by lifting the restriction upon the accreditation of 9-1 GCSEs. Subsequently AQA, OCR and Pearson have confirmed that they will make their GCSE specifications available here again with immediate effect.

I refer the member to the statement I made to the Assembly on 28 June and published in the Official Report.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) his plan to review the previous decision to discontinue the use of English examination boards; and (ii) what estimate has been made of the funding that can be saved to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment should the requirement for them to develop new curricula no longer exist.

(AQW 1686/16-21)

Mr Weir:

- (i) I refer the member to the statement I made to the Assembly on 28 June and published in the Official Report.
- (ii) The Department of Education had previously allocated funding to CCEA to support arrangements in regards to grading changes, including the development of GCSE or equivalent curriculum. Following my decision for a change in grading policy, which by necessity has been made within an extremely tight timescale to provide certainty to schools, CCEA will now need to assess the financial impact, including how much of the allocation will still be required to implement the changes I announced on 28 June.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to reduce the current entitlement framework requirement to provide 24 and then 27 subject choices.

(AQW 1687/16-21)

Mr Weir: I will be giving consideration to the Entitlement Framework policy over the coming months including the statutory requirements.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister of Education to list the planned capital investments in schools in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 1777/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department's Major Capital Investment Programme currently includes a large number of planned Major Capital projects and School Enhancement Projects (school refurbishment or extension schemes costing between £0.5 - 4m) representing significant investment in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency area.

In June 2012, a Major Capital Investment project was announced for Enniskillen Model Primary School. A business case was approved in February 2015, with estimated costs of £6m, for a replacement school, on an extended site, integrating the existing listed building. This project is currently in design.

In January 2013, three further projects were announced to advance in planning in the area. Business cases have been approved for projects for St Patrick's Academy and Devenish College with estimated costs of £28.7m and £23.2m respectively. Devenish College is currently in design and construction work for St Patrick's Academy is anticipated to begin on site in July 2016. A business case remains under development for a project for Enniskillen Royal Grammar School (the amalgamation of Portora Royal and Enniskillen Collegiate).

In July 2014, the Moy Shared Education Campus (SEC) was included in the first tranche of SEC projects announced and the business case is under development.

On 15 March 2016, Gaelscoil Aodha Rua was included in an announcement focused on projects to advance in planning within the primary sector. On 23 March 2016, Enniskillen Integrated Primary School and Brookeborough SEC were included in the first tranche of projects to benefit from the government's Fresh Start Agreement funding package for shared and integrated education. These three projects are all in the very early stages of planning.

Five schools in the constituency were also announced, in March 2014, to receive capital investment through the School Enhancement Programme (SEP):

- At Willowbridge Primary School, work is underway to provide an extension to the Lendrum Campus to include multi-purpose rooms, Home Economic, Art and Design and General Classrooms. The total cost for this project is £3.9m and is due to be complete in April 2017.
- Erne Integrated College has had a phased project approved at a total cost of £4m. Phase one, to carry out an internal refurbishment of the existing building, is now complete. Phase 2 which will provide a stand-alone Sports Hall, Sixth Form Centre, SEN accommodation and other refurbishment works and is due to begin on site in August 2016.
- Mount Lourdes Grammar School will have the dining hall refurbished and extension at a total cost of £1.1m. This work is expected to begin on site in September 2016.
- it is expected that work will commence in July 2016 to provide a new sports hall and ancillary accommodation for Integrated College Dungannon with estimated total costs of £3.1m.
- The project for St Michael's College is currently at the final design stage. This will see the provision of a new floodlit 3G pitch, with athletics area and changing pavilion. The project has a total project cost of £1.07m.

All projects that are not contractually committed will be subject to funding being available at the time to permit the project to proceed to tender stage.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education why the Education Authority letter of 7 June 2016 states it will implement no new Special Educational Needs nursery arrangements before September 2017, given that six schools will reduce hours as of September 2016.

(AQW 1792/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority (EA) has assured me that it will not be implementing any substantive arrangements before September 2017 in terms of its review of pre-school provision in special schools.

However, as I reported to the Assembly on 13 June, pre-school places in special schools are anticipated to increase by around 20% by September 2016. In order for the EA to meet its statutory obligations, and for every child who needs a place to be able to access one, the Authority has agreed a number of interim measures to extend early years' provision across the special school sector to meet these immediate demands.

Where dual sessions are introduced in schools, this will inevitably result in a reduction in session time, but it will extend the number of early years' placements available and should enable all children who require a place to be accommodated in September 2016.

The EA has also made it clear that these are short-term arrangements to meet immediate demand and that they will remain under review. A longer term decision on provision will only be made following completion of the review.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has to consider surplus spaces in both the controlled and maintained sector in relation to temporary variances for a jointly managed school.

(AQW 1838/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department has already issued guidance covering this scenario in its Jointly Managed Schools Circular – reference number 2015/15. This is available on the Department's website, www.education-ni.gov.uk. Paragraph 6.9 specifically, states:

“For the purposes of dealing with TV requests, jointly managed primary and post-primary schools will be classified alongside both denominational and non-denominational categories. This means that when a TV request for a child is received from a jointly managed school, it is likely to be approved unless there are alternative places available in both the controlled and maintained sectors within a reasonable travelling distance of the child's home. Conversely, a jointly managed school would not be considered as an alternative setting for a child who requests a place in any other sector.”

I trust this answers your question.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the new controlled sector support body provide support and help manage the joint managed schools.

(AQW 1852/16-21)

Mr Weir: Management of a jointly managed school is negotiated between the partner schools and set out in the school's Scheme of Management. It is expected that governors will be representative of both the Catholic and Transferor churches and that the Education Authority representatives will reflect both religious traditions.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Education why the funding for a nurture unit for Bunscoil Beann Mhadagainn and Bunscoil An Droichead in Belfast was withdrawn.

(AQW 1866/16-21)

Mr Weir: Funding for a nurture group in the two schools was not withdrawn, as the funding had not been confirmed.

The former Education Minister had decided to bring forward a one year nurture group pilot for schools in the Irish Medium sector. Funding could not be secured at that time and although initial engagement took place to identify two potential participants, and arrange training for their staff, it was made clear that the commencement of the pilot remained contingent upon securing funding.

The 2016-17 budget position for Education is extremely challenging and unfortunately I am unable to provide funding for this pilot at this time,

I would encourage the schools to maximise the training provided and explore how best to develop and implement a whole school nurturing approach, to the benefit of all pupils attending the schools.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether pupils from a non-Christian faith can attend jointly managed schools.

(AQW 1869/16-21)

Mr Weir: A jointly managed school is open to pupils of all faiths and none.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to list the protestant churches schools, broken down by denomination.

(AQW 1872/16-21)

Mr Weir: Three voluntary maintained schools were originally established by the Church of Ireland, i.e. Seagoe Primary School, Drelincourt Infants School and Desertmartin Primary School. Kilcoan Primary School, which is expected to close on 31 August 2016, was originally established by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Department of Finance

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance, following his recent visit to New York, how he will bring transparency to the distinction between his business interests, his public persona and his ministerial role.

(AQW 897/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir (The Minister of Finance): As I indicated at the time, I was visiting New York in a ministerial and personal capacity. No public money was used to pay for my trip. I took the opportunity to encourage key stakeholders to invest in the North and support the Fresh Start Agreement.

In terms of transparency regarding public and private roles, the Ministerial Code of Conduct places clear requirements on Ministers to make sure that their positions are not used for personal gain; all relevant interests are declared; and rules regarding gifts and hospitality are adhered to. I am satisfied that I am fully compliant with the Code.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Finance for his assessment of the removal of Airport Passenger Duty on the economy of the North West.

(AQW 1066/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Abolishing or significantly reducing Air Passenger Duty has the potential to encourage greater numbers of passengers travelling through airports in the North which in turn will help to stimulate greater economic activity locally.

While my Department has not undertaken specific analysis in relation to the potential impact on the economy of the North West, a report by the Ulster University report suggests that a 50 per cent reduction in APD would lead to an 8 per cent increase in passenger numbers across the North over a 3 year period, while abolition would lead to a 12 per cent increase.

Of course it is also important to consider the costs of reducing APD. Latest HMRC estimates show that in 2014-15 the North raised £98 million in APD revenue. A reduction in APD would lead to a reduction in the block grant.

Both the costs and benefits are subject to a degree of uncertainty so we need to examine this further. That is why I have called for a review of the ongoing application of APD by London on all short haul routes across Britain and Europe.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Finance to detail how the £1.5 million for estate rationalisation, announced in the June Monitoring Round and led by the Asset Management Unit, will be spent.

(AQW 1251/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: £1.5m was allocated in the June Monitoring Round to the Reform of Property Management Programme. This will be used to develop an investment strategy to support achievement of the target in the Executive's Asset Management Strategy to rationalise the Central Government Office Estate to achieve a space efficiency target of 9 to 11 square metres per workstation.

Approximately £400K will be used for the management of the Estate Rationalisation Project, approximately £960K will be used to develop four Outline Business Cases for office consolidation projects and approximately £140K will be used to develop further cross-regional area based office consolidation plans.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance to detail the number of deaths by suicide, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1331/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The table below details the number of deaths registered due to suicide¹ in each Health and Social Care Trust between 2010 and 2014, the latest year for which finalised figures are available.

Number of Deaths from Suicide Registered¹ by Year and Health and Social Care Trust, 2010-2014

Health Trust	Year of Registration				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Belfast	79	80	72	81	59
Northern	65	61	67	74	54
South Eastern	65	52	47	48	50
Southern	51	57	46	49	59
Western	53	39	46	51	46
Northern Ireland	313	289	278	303	268

¹ In considering suicide events it is conventional to include cases where the cause of death is classified as either 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury' or 'Undetermined intent'. Since 2001, the ICD10 codes used for 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury' are X60-X84 and Y87.0 and the ICD10 codes used for 'Undetermined intent' are Y10-Y34 and Y87.2

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance whether the £20m allocated to the Department for the Economy in the June Monitoring Round is to be baselined in line with commitments given by the then Minister of Finance and Personnel to the Department for Employment and Learning in January 2016.

(AQW 1424/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I am supportive of measures to enhance the skills base within our labour force that will help to grow our economy. In view of this it is my intention to seek Executive agreement through the upcoming Budget process to baseline the £20 million allocated to Skills in the June monitoring round.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Finance to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through his Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1433/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department has provided capital funding to the following projects through the Peace II Programme in the last 10 years.

- Praxis Care Group Training for Positive Outcomes
- Parkanaur Manor House Ltd
- Parkanaur Upholstery Ltd
- Killesher Community Development Association Tully Mill Restaurant
- Little Castle Cross Community Playgroup room refurbishment
- Refurbishment of Rascals Playstation Childcare Centre
- Glendurragh Childcare Centre improvement and refurbishment project
- Cleenish Cross Community Playgroup refurbishment
- Little Treasures Playgroup outdoor play area refurbishment
- Belleek Crossborder Childcare Co. Ltd kitchen refurbishment
- Irvinestown Cross Community Playgroup refurbishment
- Mullanaskea Com Pre School outdoor play area

My Department has also had capital spend on the following properties in the last 10 years.

- 5 Thomas Street, Jobmarket, Dungannon
- 39 Wellington Place, Castle Barracks, Enniskillen
- Dungannon JBO, Dungannon
- County Building, Enniskillen
- 21 Lough Yoan, Inishkeen House, Killyhelvin, Enniskillen
- 14 Queen Elizabeth Road, CB Enniskillen

There is currently no further anticipated capital spend in 2016-17 or future years in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance in relation to the North/South Bodies, to detail (i) the date he approved each 2016 business plan and Northern Ireland grant; and (ii) the amount of the Northern Ireland grant approved by him for each body for 2014, 2015 and 2016.

(AQW 1509/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The 2016 Business Plans for each of the North South Bodies were approved by my predecessors on the dates shown in the table attached. While not a North South Implementation Body, Tourism Ireland Limited was established to take forward work in the Tourism area of co-operation and operates under the same Business Plan approval process as the North South Implementation Bodies, therefore details of this body are also included.

North South Bodies

£million

Body	Date 2016 Business Plan Approved	Approved Grant 2016	Approved Grant 2015	Approved Grant 2014
Language Body	25/02/2016	4.3	4.9	3.5
Waterways Ireland	10/12/2015	2.5	3.1	1.9
Loughs Agency	04/11/2015	1.9	2.0	2.1
Intertrade Ireland	03/03/2016	2.8	2.6	3.0
Food Safety Promotion Board	10/12/2015	1.6	1.9	2.1
SEUPB	03/12/2015	1.0	1.0	1.1
Tourism Ireland Ltd	10/12/2015	11.7	11.7	13.3

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister of Finance to outline the financial consequences for public spending in light of the planned introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy.

(AQW 1578/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Executive's Spending Review 2015 settlement included Barnett consequentials in respect of the apprenticeships funded by the Levy in England. However, these additions were offset by negative Barnett consequentials arising from cessation of existing spending on apprenticeships.

As a result the additional funding provided to the Executive is lower than anticipated and significantly less than estimates of additional costs that will fall to local employers.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Finance how he intends to plan for the implications of budget cuts across other Departments.
(AQW 1591/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I plan to have a series of meetings with my Executive colleagues on the implications of Budgets going forward and that will help to inform the decisions that we as an Executive must take collectively on the appropriate level of funding for public services.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Finance whether there will be a co-ordinated plan to help Departments manage budget cuts; and what role will the Executive play in this decision making.

(AQW 1592/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I plan to have a series of meetings with my Executive colleagues on the implications of Budgets going forward and that will help to inform the decisions that we as an Executive must take collectively on the appropriate level of funding for public services.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance what governance arrangements are in place in relation to the £100m public funding Financial Transaction Capital provided to the NI Investment Fund.

(AQW 1624/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Executive has agreed to set aside £100 million of Financial Transactions Capital for a new Investment Fund. However, work is ongoing to establish this Fund and no funding has therefore yet been disbursed.

This work also involves developing appropriate governance arrangements. These are being developed with European Investment Bank advice and therefore reflect best international practice.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance to detail (i) the process of application by the private sector to the NI Investment Fund; and (ii) the approval process for applications.

(AQW 1625/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Investment Fund will be managed by an externally procured specialist fund manager. The fund manager will be contracted to invest in line with the Fund Investment Strategy, which sets out the type of projects eligible for investment and various diversification parameters.

Applications from project promoters will be made directly to the fund manager. The fund manager will then take the project investment decisions in line with the Investment Strategy. The robustness of the fund manager's internal due diligence and approval procedures will be tested as part of the procurement process.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance to detail the management of the NI Investment Fund, including the roles of the Department of Finance, the European Investment Bank and any other stakeholders.

(AQW 1626/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Investment Fund will be managed by an externally procured specialist fund manager. The fund manager will take all individual project investment decisions.

The Fund Manager will be held to account by an Investment Board, which will ensure that all project investments are consistent with the Fund Investment Strategy. This Investment Board will consist of officials from the Executive, including Department of Finance, and private sector independent experts. The European Investment Bank is contracted by the Department to provide technical advice in the establishment of the Fund. This ensures that best international practice is incorporated into the design of the Fund.

Work is ongoing to finalise the fund manager procurement strategy and one option being considered is to outsource the fund manager procurement to the European Investment Bank under a so-called 'fund of funds' structure. A decision on the way forward will be taken in the coming months.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 1153/16-21, to detail the new approach that has replaced the formal bidding process; and whether he intends to publish each Department's input.

(AQW 1694/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The new approach to in-year monitoring will be informed by ongoing engagement between departments and officials from Public Spending Directorate (PSD). Based on this engagement PSD will provide details of key pressures to be considered alongside an analysis of the overall public expenditure position. This will inform Ministerial discussions and Executive agreement on allocations through the in-year monitoring process.

I do not intend to publish the input received from departments.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to detail the number of meetings held between his Department and (i) the Northern Ireland Office; and (ii) the Election Office of Northern Ireland in relation to the £5.3million transferred to the NIO as part of the June monitoring round for the Assembly Election.

(AQW 1717/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I will provide the answer to all three related questions in this one response.

The Statement of Funding Policy states that the cost of Assembly elections in Northern Ireland are deemed a cost of devolution and that funds for these should be found from within the relevant block grant and where appropriate transferred to the UK body responsible for running the election. The Northern Ireland Office makes a Fees and Charges Order which sets the maximum recoverable amount relating to returning officer expenses.

The established practice around funding these costs is that Budget is transferred to the Northern Ireland Office as part of the Westminster Main Estimate process based upon an agreed robust estimate of costs. When the actual costs incurred are known any variance between the predicted cost and actual spend will be dealt with as a correcting transfer at Westminster Supplementary Estimates. I will update the Assembly on this at a future monitoring round.

As this practice is established no meetings took place between my Department and the Northern Ireland Office or the Election Office of Northern Ireland relating to this issue, the matter was handled by correspondence. Correspondence was received from the Northern Ireland Office providing detailed estimates of the returning officer expenses prepared by the Chief Electoral Officer (estimated at £3.843 million) and the cost of candidates mailing (estimated at £1.426 million). The full breakdown received is provided at Annex A. The returning officer expenses were based upon a funding model which was successfully adopted for the previous 2 elections. The cost of candidate freepost mailings are more difficult to estimate, but this has been based upon uptake at recent elections adjusted to take into consideration increases in the number of households, the electorate and prices for mailing.

Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

Assembly Election 2016

Funding Requirement - Assumes no Referendum in June 2016

Staffing	£	Notes
Permanent Staff	400,000	Four months
Permanent Staff Overtime	75,000	
DRO Allowance	13,000	Area Electoral Officers promoted to DP for 4 months
DRO Training	65,500	Lead trainers and assistant trainers - see note 1 below
Casual Staff	160,000	
Polling Staff - includes caretakers	1,100,000	staff paid at same rate as 2015 Parliamentary election
Polling Stations - Hire of private halls	17,000	
Count Staff	835,000	Based on count continuing to the Monday - see note 2 below
Count Staff - skills gap	7,500	consultant DROs to cover 2 vacancies
Hire of Count Venues	180,000	Based on count continuing to the Monday
Royal Mail - Postage of Poll Cards	390,000	
Transport of election equipment	140,000	B-Fast
Printing of Ballot papers	140,000	
Miscellaneous	320,000	see note 3 below
Total	3,843,000	

Notes

- 1 Training of poll staff comprises one lead trainer on a fee of £ 175.00 and three assistant trainers on a fee of £ 115.00 each. Total cost per session is therefore £ 520.00. Each constituency is allowed to hold a maximum of seven training sessions. Therefore 18 constituencies x 7 sessions x £ 520.00 per session = £ 65,500.
- 2 This figure includes contingency of £ 143,000 if the count extends to the Monday in all 18 constituencies.
- 3 Approximately £ 200,000 of this relates to stationery, £ 50,000 for the hire of plasma screens and laptops, £ 20,000 to the hire of staging £ 50,000 to miscellaneous payments such as equipment hire, payroll costs and signature checks.

Candidate Mailings Estimate

			electorate	households	candidates
		2011	1213136	765282	218
		2016	1274217	788842	266
		difference	61081	23560	48
		% increase	5.03	3.08	22.02
			Cost 2011	Cost 2016 with price uplift	Price Uplift
	Unaddressed 2011	3720283	£438,993.39	£479,907.57	9.32% increase in cost
Addressed:	Election sort 2011	430003	£94,170.66	£103,192.21	9.58% increase in cost
	Street sort 2011	1040992	£249,828.24	£273,761.79	9.58% increase in cost
		1470995	£782,992.29	£856,861.57	
Households	Unaddressed 2016			£494,688.73	3.08% increase in street sort
Addressed: (electorate)	Election sort 2016			£108,382.78	5.03% increase in election sort
	Street sort 2016			£287,532.00	5.03% increase in election sort
			Sub Total	£890,603.51	
				£1,086,536.28	22% increase in candidates
			Admin Cost	£102,000.00	
			Net	£1,188,536.28	
			Vat	£237,707.26	
			Total Cost	£1,426,243.54	

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance for a breakdown of the £5.3 million transferred to the NIO as allocated in the June monitoring round for the Assembly Election.

(AQW 1718/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I will provide the answer to all three related questions in this one response.

The Statement of Funding Policy states that the cost of Assembly elections in Northern Ireland are deemed a cost of devolution and that funds for these should be found from within the relevant block grant and where appropriate transferred to the UK body responsible for running the election. The Northern Ireland Office makes a Fees and Charges Order which sets the maximum recoverable amount relating to returning officer expenses.

The established practice around funding these costs is that Budget is transferred to the Northern Ireland Office as part of the Westminster Main Estimate process based upon an agreed robust estimate of costs. When the actual costs incurred are known any variance between the predicted cost and actual spend will be dealt with as a correcting transfer at Westminster Supplementary Estimates. I will update the Assembly on this at a future monitoring round.

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Electoral Office for Northern Ireland**Assembly Election 2016****Funding Requirement - Assumes no Referendum in June 2016**

Staffing	£	Notes
Permanent Staff	400,000	Four months
Permanent Staff Overtime	75,000	
DRO Allowance	13,000	Area Electoral Officers promoted to DP for 4 months
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Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to outline the reason for the allocation of £5.3million to the Northern Ireland Office in the June monitoring round for the Assembly Election.

(AQW 1719/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: I will provide the answer to all three related questions in this one response.

The Statement of Funding Policy states that the cost of Assembly elections in Northern Ireland are deemed a cost of devolution and that funds for these should be found from within the relevant block grant and where appropriate transferred to the UK body responsible for running the election. The Northern Ireland Office makes a Fees and Charges Order which sets the maximum recoverable amount relating to returning officer expenses.

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Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

Assembly Election 2016

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Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance to detail the work undertaken to estimate how much Northern Ireland receives in EU funding compared to how much it contributes; and what steps he is taking to ensure that Northern Ireland does not lose out as a result of a UK withdrawal from the EU.

(AQW 1833/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: Contributions to the EU Budget are made at UK level. This means there are no figures at regional level.

My Department will fully engage with Executive colleagues, other devolved administrations, the British and Irish Governments and the European Commission to ensure that we get the best possible deal in the event of a withdrawal from the European Union.

Department of Health

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future of the Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 374/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Health): The Northern Health and Social Care Trust's model for services in the Causeway and Glens area is based on the acute Causeway Hospital in Coleraine providing an Emergency Department and supporting clinical services. The acute service is complemented by intermediate care services and community teams evenly distributed across the area.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health to detail the statutory provisions for palliative care and end of life care for terminally ill children.

(AQW 487/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (N I) 2009 sets out my Department's general duty of care to the population of the north of Ireland. Under Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998, rights particularly relevant to healthcare include the right to life, the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment and the right to a family life.

There is no legislation locally which specifically makes provision for palliative and end-of-life care for terminally ill children.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health what reforms she will introduce to reduce waiting times.

(AQW 669/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: As I set out in my statement on waiting times in the Assembly on Monday 6th June 2016, this issue is the one that causes most concern to patients and I am determined to turn the position around. My policy will be to adopt a balanced approach ensuring much needed short-term action combined with longer-term change.

The elective care plan currently being developed will provide an important roadmap for achieving sustained improvement. In the interim Trusts have plans in place to address current pressures.

I welcome the £67 million of additional resources made available to help address a range of pressures across health and social care.

Additional money will not solve the problem. I am determined to lead transformation in the HSC. Part of that transformation must be about primary and secondary care working better together as well as reducing health inequalities by placing a strong focus on health promotion.

I await the report from Professor Bengoa and his expert panel which will be an important input to developing my vision for Healthcare in the north of Ireland.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health whether staff in Health and Social Care Trusts who raise issues of concern remain protected under the whistle-blower policy whilst they take forward a grievance either as direct, subsequent or ancillary result of the concerns raised.

(AQW 721/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Public Interest Disclosure (N I) Order 1998 ('the Order') protects workers from being subjected to a detriment by their employer and makes provision about the kinds of disclosures which may be protected and the circumstances in which such disclosures are protected.

HSC Trusts' whistle blowing policies seek to foster a climate of openness and a culture where it is safe and acceptable to raise concerns about inappropriate behaviour at any level of the organisation. Victimisation of staff who raise issues under this policy is a serious offence and will be viewed as misconduct. Such instances will be dealt with under the HSC Trusts' Disciplinary Procedure.

HSC staff who take forward a grievance on the grounds they made a protected disclosure may be protected if the causal link between the detriment and the whistle blowing can be established and if all requirements of the Order are met.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health to detail why the Southern Health and Social Care Trust failed to follow up on specific issues listed on the Child Protection Case Conference Care Plan agreed at a case hearing on 7 July 2015.

(AQW 747/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I have been advised by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust that this matter is subject to ongoing legal proceedings and, on that basis, information cannot be disclosed to third parties.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health what consideration has been given to the provision of sign language classes for parents of children who are born deaf; and what work has been undertaken with other Departments on this issue.

(AQW 775/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Health and Social Care Trusts actively engage with the parents of hearing impaired children from the time of their child's diagnosis through ongoing engagement with the Trusts' sensory support teams, which utilise a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach. In tandem with parents' specific wishes, Trusts actively promote the use of sign language.

The British Deaf Association (BDA) facilitates sign language classes for the parents of deaf children free in their own home throughout the north of Ireland.

The Department for Communities (DfC) promotes British and Irish Sign Language as indigenous languages in the north of Ireland and as part of this promotion, has funded a number of free sign language classes for those who are deaf and their families.

DfC is currently consulting on a Sign Language Framework which includes, as one of its objectives, the provision of free Sign Language classes for parents, siblings and grandparents of deaf children under its 'Prevention' theme.

The framework is predicated on cross-departmental cooperation, and each Department will have a role to play in respect of early intervention and family support.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health whether her Department will publish the Health and Social Care Board's review into learning disability services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 779/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The publication of the Health and Social Care Board's review into Learning Disability Services is ultimately a matter for the Board.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health whether it is possible for the Health and Social Care Board to appoint doctors to temporarily work in a GP practice until a permanent GP can be found.

(AQW 792/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) secures general medical services (GMS) from GP principles or partners, using the mechanism of the GMS contract. As independent contractors, GP practices can employ other staff, including other GPs, who may work as salaried GPs or locum/sessional GPs. The HSCB does not normally appoint doctors to work in a GP practice.

Where there is a risk that patients would not be able to access GP services, the HSCB will consider all possible actions to secure GP services. In some highly exceptional circumstances, this may include short-term arrangements for the direct engagement of GP locums.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health how her Department is promoting art's therapy for children with special educational needs in East Derry.

(AQW 825/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Western Health and Social Care Trust is currently having exploratory discussions with Artspace about the provision of arts and crafts for Children with Disabilities. If the Trust is able to take forward the service, it will be subject to procurement.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of young people presenting before (i) GPs; and (ii) Emergency Departments due to self-harm, suicidal tendencies and other mental health conditions, in each of the last 12 months.

(AQW 871/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) GPs are independent contractors who contract with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to provide Primary Medical Services to their patients. The number of young people presenting before GPs due to self-harm, suicidal tendencies and other mental health conditions is not collected centrally and is not available.

Mental Health is one of the disease registers in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), the purpose of which is to reward General Medical Services contractors for the provision of quality care. Further information on the QOF can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/quality-and-outcomes-framework-qof-statistics-annual-report>, whilst all available QOF data can be accessed on the Department of Health website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/qof-achievement-data>.

In relation to Mental Health, the contractor establishes and maintains a register of patients with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses and other patients on lithium therapy. The total number of people on the Mental Health register in the north, at 31st March 2015, was 16,696. The register cannot be broken down by age.

- (ii) Information on the number of young people attending emergency care departments (ED) due to self-harm, suicidal tendencies and other mental health conditions for each of the last twelve months is not available. However, information is available on the number of self-harm and suicidal ideation (thoughts) presentations at ED's, and is detailed in the Table overleaf for 2014/15, the most recent period for which information is available.

Please note that it has not been possible to provide this information by individual month as the small numbers involved may put patient confidentiality at risk.

Number of Self-harm and Suicidal Ideation Presentations 1 at Emergency Care Departments for those Aged Under 18 (2014/15) 2

Emergency Care Department	Self-Harm Presentations	Self-Harm Ideation Presentations
Mater	107	26
Royal Victoria	214	17
RBHSC	15	<10

Emergency Care Department	Self-Harm Presentations	Self-Harm Ideation Presentations
Antrim	130	27
Causeway	43	<10
Down	12	0
Lagan Valley	15	<10
Ulster	134	23
Craigavon	101	34
Daisy Hill	41	12
Altnagelvin	132	15
South West Acute	50	<10
Northern Ireland	994	170

Source: Public Health Agency

- 1 The number of presentations does not equal the number of individuals, as an individual can present to ED more than once.
- 2 Numbers less than 10 have been masked to protect confidentiality.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health for his assessment of whether the lack of affordable provision of sign language classes for parents of children who are born deaf is a breach of disability legislation; and how he plans to rectify this situation, including any joint working with other Departments.

(AQW 876/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Health and Social Care Trusts actively engage with the parents of hearing impaired children from the time of their child's diagnosis through ongoing engagement with the Trusts' sensory support teams, which utilise a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach. In tandem with parents' specific wishes, Trusts actively promote the use of sign language.

The British Deaf Association (BDA) facilitates sign language classes for the parents of deaf children free in their own home throughout the North of Ireland.

The Department for Communities (DfC) promotes British and Irish Sign Language as indigenous languages in the North of Ireland and as part of this promotion, has funded a number of free sign language classes for those who are deaf and their families.

DfC is currently consulting on a Sign Language Framework which includes, as one of its objectives, the provision of free Sign Language classes for parents, siblings and grandparents of deaf children under its 'Prevention' theme.

The framework is predicated on cross-departmental cooperation, and each Department will have a role to play in respect of early intervention and family support.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires that service providers make reasonable adjustments to ensure that persons with a disability do not experience discrimination. I am satisfied that in relation to my Department's functions there has been no breach of the Act.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health to outline the expenditure that £495,752,000 in Health Service Contribution Accruing Resources is being used to offset.

(AQW 981/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The £496m disbursement from the National Insurance Fund was a component part of the overall resources made available to my Department in 2015/16. It was therefore used to help deliver a wide range of health and social care services in that year.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health what assurances she give that the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service will be able to carry out training exercises, involving live fires, at Desertcreat in the long term and that there will not be a repeat of restrictions that happened at the Boucher Road site.

(AQW 1014/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: There has been a comprehensive engagement process in relation to the planning application and subsequent planning approval related to the Burn House and other combustion emission facilities on the Desertcreat site. The planning application was approved in January 2013.

Training exercises involving live fires can be carried out at Desertcreat.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health for a breakdown of the expenditure of the £40m announced in November 2015 by her predecessor, including (i) the spend per Health and Social Care Trust to address waiting lists; (ii) any monies used in other areas within individual Trusts; and (iii) any future plans for monies unspent.

(AQW 1016/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Of the £40 million allocated in the November 2015 monitoring round, £21.5 million was utilised on additional waiting list activity which together with a further £3.4 million which we were able to allocate, brought total expenditure on waiting list activity to almost £25 million.

The breakdown of spend per Health and Social Care Trust was Belfast HSC Trust, £9.7 million; Northern HSC Trust, £2.8 million; South Eastern HSC Trust, £6.7 million; Southern HSC Trust, £0.7 million; and Western HSC Trust, £5 million.

The balance of £18.5 million was utilised on a range of pressures in 2015/16 including funding to support cost pressures within Independent Care Homes and Domiciliary Care providers and GP Out of Hours services, as well as pay related costs in respect of front line services.

Overall the £40 million has supported the delivery of a higher level of elective care services that would otherwise have been the case. Over 80,000 patients benefited, through the delivery of 54,000 additional outpatient assessments, 17,500 additional inpatient / daycase treatments and diagnostic assessments, over 11,000 additional Allied Health Professional and other assessments.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to detail the capital investment plans for the Southern Health and Social Care Trust over the next five years.

(AQW 1024/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The following table lists capital investments which are currently ongoing in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

Project	Total Value
Banbridge Health & Care Centre	£16.0m
Craigavon Area Hospital High Voltage Electrical Infrastructure	£11.3m
Craigavon Area Hospital Mechanical Infrastructure	£6.5m
Paediatric Units at Daisy Hill and Craigavon Area Hospitals	£16.6m

Future capital investment projects in the trust will be considered by my Department and the Executive as part of Budget 2017 which will conclude in the autumn.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health for his assessment of the upcoming changes to the recruitment of locum respiratory physiologists, including how pay will be affected.

(AQW 1030/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health and Social Care Trusts, as employers, are responsible for the recruitment and terms and conditions of staff. I understand they are unaware of any planned changes to the recruitment of locum respiratory physiologists and have confirmed that Agenda for Change pay-scales are adhered to.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health to detail to the total number of respiratory physiologist vacancies over the last five years.

(AQW 1031/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The HSC Trusts, with the exception of the Belfast Trust which was unable to provide the requested information, have created and filled 6.7 whole-time equivalent vacancies for respiratory physiotherapists over the last five years.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health how many (i) locum; and (ii) permanent respiratory physiologists are employed in each Health and Social Care Trust; and to detail the total wage bill for both, over each of the last three years.

(AQW 1032/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The requested information is shown in the tables below, with headcount (HC) and whole-time equivalent (WTE) figures. Staffing figures are a yearly average, with the exception of the Western Trust where figures are as at March in each financial year.

Belfast HSC Trust

Year	Permanent HC	Permanent WTE	Locum HC	Locum WTE	Total basic salary
2015-16	14	13.72	3	3.0	£458,348.52 + locum costs
2014-15	14	13.72	3	3.0	£450,000 + locum costs

Year	Permanent HC	Permanent WTE	Locum HC	Locum WTE	Total basic salary
2013-14	13	12.6	2	2.0	£531,500 including locum

Northern HSC Trust

Year	Permanent HC	Permanent WTE	Locum HC	Locum WTE	Total basic salary
2015-16	7	4.8	1	Variable	£157,261
2014-15	6	4.1	0	0	£139,213
2013-14	4	2.1	0	0	£71,783

South Eastern HSC Trust

Year	Permanent HC	Permanent WTE	Locum HC	Locum WTE	Total basic salary
2015-16	2	2	0	0	£69,731
2014-15	2	2	0	0	£68,814
2013-14	2	2	0	0	Unavailable

Southern HSC Trust

Year	Permanent HC	Permanent WTE	Locum HC	Locum WTE	Total basic salary
2015-16	7	6.16	0	0	£201,456
2014-15	7	5.87	0	0	£187,934
2013-14	8	6.87	0	0	£231,990

Western HSC Trust

Year	Permanent HC	Permanent WTE	Locum HC	Locum WTE	Total basic salary
2015-16	4	3.59	0	0	£133,692
2014-15	4	3.59	0	0	£132,133
2013-14	4	3.59	0	0	£125,073

These figures have been provided by the HSC Trusts and have not been verified by my Department.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health when the new Innovative Fund will be ready to assist charities; and to detail the criteria for assistance.

(AQW 1034/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: A consultation on proposals for a new Health and Social Care Innovation Scheme closed on Friday 3 June 2016. The purpose of the Scheme is to encourage innovative approaches by the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to deliver improved health and social care outcomes. Final criteria for the scheme will be informed by consultation responses, which are currently being considered. At this stage, it is intended to open the Scheme to applications from the sector in 2016/17.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health to detail all the meetings (i) she; (ii) her predecessor; and (iii) departmental officials have had with Professor Rafael Bengoa and his team.

(AQW 1044/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I have had one meeting and my predecessor had three meetings, including the political summit on 17 February 2016, with Professor Bengoa and the expert panel. The expert panel has had four fact finding meetings with departmental officials and a further five fact finding meetings that have included departmental officials alongside representatives from medical specialties.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health for an update on the provision of a local air ambulance service; and whether Saint Angelo's airport will be used as a secondary base.

(AQW 1074/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Planning for the establishment of the north's first Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) is now underway by my Department and its arms length bodies. I have tasked the Health and Social Care Board and the Ambulance Service with leading on these preparations. This is a major project and it will therefore be some months before the service is in place. I will say more about this when planning has been progressed sufficiently. In the interim the Ambulance Service will continue to respond as appropriate to all calls for assistance.

Should an operational partnership develop in future with the Emergency Aeromedical Service in the south, this may open the possibility of exploring the facilities at St Angelo Airport, Fermanagh, as a second staging base to assist in securing further service coverage for the west of the island. My priority at present, however, is the establishment of the service in the first instance.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health to detail when his Department will provide funding for a children's paediatric cardiology network in order meet agreed deadlines, given an implementation plan was submitted to the Department of Health locally and in the Republic of Ireland in early 2016 with plans to establish an all-island catheterisation lab with a waiting list by December 2016 and with all surgery carried out in Dublin by 2017.[R]

(AQW 1078/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I plan to make an announcement about the implementation plan in the coming weeks. As outlined in my response to AQW 70/16-21, the plan envisages completing on a phased basis the transfer of all urgent patients to OLCHC by the end of 2017 and all elective patients by the end of 2018.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail the current (i) number of people on waiting lists; and (ii) waiting times for domiciliary care packages in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 1098/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: At 21 June 2016, 21 people were waiting for a domiciliary care package in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, the longest of which had been waiting over 14 weeks. In this case, the client is waiting for part of their care package to be put in place.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to outline the action taken by her Department to ensure that local services for older people in Fermanagh are fully supported.

(AQW 1100/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Western Trust is implementing a number of actions and service developments to ensure that local services for all older people in the Trust's area are fully supported. These developments include: the provision of homecare services for older people; a new Health and Care Centre in Enniskillen; reform of its community meals service; and the reform of its service for community equipment and home delivery of disposable continence products.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of patients transferred from the South West Acute Hospital to other hospitals; broken down by year since the hospital opened.

(AQW 1101/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The latest available data on the number of patients transferred from the South West Acute Hospital to other hospitals, broken down by year since the hospital opened, are provided in the following table.

Hospital	Financial Year			
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 ^P
South West Acute	843	890	878	796

Source: Western Health and Social Care Trust

^P 2015/16 data are provisional and subject to change

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health how independent representation from the Social Work sector is being made to the expert panel considering the best configuration of Health and Social Care services.

(AQW 1156/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Panel's work is informed by the presence of the Department's Chief Social Worker or the Health and Social Care Board's Director of Children and Family services, as expert advisers at all panel meetings. The panel has also met with and received written briefing from representatives from the N.I. Association of Social Workers. The views of social care staff have also been heard through their representatives within the main trade unions.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) how many accidental electrical house fires occurred in each month of the last three years; and (ii) what steps she is taking to reduce these fires.

(AQW 1157/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The table below lists a breakdown of accidental fires in domestic properties where the cause was believed to have been caused by electrical equipment, or electrical supply:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	38	27	34	18	23	24	17	15	23	11	28	17	275
2014	25	24	19	26	23	25	20	13	22	25	27	19	268
2015	31	34	23	22	14	16	15	9	16	24	18	25	247

- (ii) The Fire & Rescue Service continue to deliver community safety initiatives with the aim of preventing domestic electrical fires and to raise awareness of electrical safety among the public.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health to outline the future plans for each day care centres in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area; and what steps she has taken to meet with the staff, users and their carers in each facility.

(AQW 1166/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Belfast Trust outlined their recommendations for the future of mental health and learning disability day centres at a public meeting on 21 June 2016. These recommendations will now be submitted to the Health and Social Care Board before referral to me for a final decision. I have asked for this process to be expedited in order to provide certainty for everyone involved.

On 10 June I met with families and carers of Fallswater Learning Disability Day Centre service users. I also visited the Ravenhill Mental Health Day Centre, and met with service users and staff. I am committed to ensuring that the views of service users, their families and carers are paramount in any decision I take in relation to the future of learning disability and mental health day centres in Belfast.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the day centres in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area that she has visited; and (ii) when she plans to visit the remaining centres.

(AQW 1167/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Since I was appointed on 25 May 2016, I have met with families and carers of service users of the Fallswater Day Centre, and service users and staff at the Ravenhill Day Centre. Both visits took place on 10 June.
- (ii) I have a heavily committed diary at present, but would hope to visit the remaining day centres at various points in my term of office.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Health whether any of the monies from the June Monitoring Round will be allocated to reopen the Coronary Care Unit at the Downe Hospital.

(AQW 1178/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has no plans at present to reopen the coronary care ward in the Downe Hospital and so there will be no allocation of monies from the June Monitoring Round for that purpose.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health for an update on progress of the Multiple Sclerosis Society's Treat Me Right campaign.

(AQW 1197/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Health and Social Care in the North is addressing all four of the goals of the 'Treat Me Right' campaign as set out below.

1 Availability of licensed MS treatments

A recent report from the MS Society suggested that a MS patient living here is twice as likely to be taking a Disease Modifying Therapy (DMT) (68%) than a patient with the condition in Wales (30%), Scotland (36%) and England (40%). Currently the range of specialist treatments for MS include: Copaxone, Rebiff 22, Rebiff 44, Betaferon, Avonex, Pelgridy, Extavia, Tysabri, Fingolimod, Teriflunomide, Alemtuzumab and Dimethyl Fumarate. All of these regimes are routinely commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board and therefore available to patients here.

2 Treatment and review of MS Patients

With regard to regular reviews of treatment and care by MS specialists, it should be noted that not everyone with MS attends a neurologist. Some patients have chosen not to, some attend a general neurologist and others attend

a neurologist with specialist interest in MS. All Health and Social Care Trusts invite MS patients for regular reviews depending upon the individual patient's condition.

3 Information regarding the availability of new disease modifying drugs

At review clinicians will determine whether MS patients are on the right treatment for their stage of disease and discuss all treatment options with patients.

4 Patient role in decision making process

Commencement of disease modifying therapy and other treatment for MS patients is a shared process between clinicians and patients across all HSC Trusts. Discussion of treatment options is an integral part of the review process between patients and their MS specialists.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Health to outline the average waiting time for a diagnosis of autism in Upper Bann. (AQW 1199/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The average waiting time for a diagnosis of autism is not available.

Table 1 overleaf details the waiting time for an autism assessment at 30 April 2016 for the Southern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. These figures are collected at HSC Trust level and are therefore not available for Upper Bann.

Table 1 Waiting times from referral to initial autism assessment at 30 April 2016 for Southern HSC Trust

	Children's services	Adult services
0-4 Weeks	11	<5
>4 to 8 Weeks	17	<5
>8 to 13 weeks	11	5
>13-18 weeks	0	<5
>18-26 weeks	0	11
>6-39 weeks	0	9
>39-52 weeks	0	10
>52 weeks	0	17

Please note that <5 indicate a figure that has been suppressed to avoid personal disclosure

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Health whether she has any plans to relocate Health Service dental services from Newcastle to the Downe Hospital. (AQW 1223/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has no current plan to relocate community dental services from Newcastle to the Downe Hospital. The Trust is committed to ensuring that community dental services are delivered in line with best practice, to ensure high quality, safe services for patients and staff. This means that Trust-wide services and available facilities are periodically reviewed to ensure that clinical facilities are used to best advantage and within available resources.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health to outline the support individuals suffering from a gambling addiction can obtain from the National Health Service. (AQW 1227/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Support for people with gambling problems is community based and uses a motivational type approach. Community organisations including Gamblers Anonymous, Addiction NI, GamCare and Dunlewey Addiction Service all provide counselling, advice and support here. If someone has a mental health issue such as anxiety or depression arising from the consequences of gambling they would receive appropriate help for that condition.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health to outline the treatment and care tha clinicians are providing to adults who have been misdiagnosed with other illnesses when they have Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome. (AQW 1247/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not hold a central database of patients who have the Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and may have received an initial misdiagnosis.

Patients diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome are likely to be referred to a range of specialities including paediatric and adult rheumatology and orthopaedics, as well as availing of the physiotherapy and occupational therapy services. Depending

on how the condition presents, a range of specialities including vascular surgery, cardiology, dermatology and analgesia may be involved.

Mrs Cameron asked the Minister of Health when the results of the scoping paper, undertaken by the Public Health Agency and discussed by the Northern Ireland Screening Committee, on the implementation of the Human Papilloma Virus test for the cervical screening programme will be made public.

(AQW 1248/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The scoping paper submitted by the Public Health Agency (PHA) was discussed at the Northern Ireland Screening Committee's meeting held on 13th May 2016. Further information is needed on a number of issues before resource requirements or timescales for possible implementation can be given.

The PHA has been asked to submit an updated paper for discussion at the next NISC meeting which will be in approximately 6 months time. Once this information has been received and assessed, I will make a decision for the North of Ireland.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Health how many people have been diagnosed with cancer in Upper Bann since 2011.

(AQW 1249/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Latest information provided by the Cancer Registry in the north indicates that there were 2,273 cases of cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) diagnosed in the Upper Bann constituency between 2011 and 2014.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future of Roslea Health Centre.

(AQW 1267/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Following notice of the resignation of a single-handed practitioner at Roslea Medical Practice, the Health and Social Care Board advertised widely for a contractor to provide general medical services from the practice. Regrettably, no applications were received.

In order to secure the continued provision of services at Roslea, the Health and Social Care Board has held discussions with other GP practices in the area and arrangements have now been put in place to provide interim medical cover for patients in Roslea until a longer term solution can be agreed. To that end, the Health and Social Care Board will work with representatives from the British Medical Association's local GP Committee and with local GP practices to agree a plan to ensure the provision of sustainable GP services in South East Fermanagh. I will be seeking regular progress reports on this work.

In relation to the challenges facing rural practices more broadly, I am determined to take action to ensure that everyone in the north has access to safe and sustainable GP services. A review of GP-led services here has recently been completed, and I will be carefully considering the recommendations within that review.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to outline the process used by each Health and Social Care Trust to conduct internal financial audits.

(AQW 1268/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Internal financial audits for the HSC Trusts are conducted by the BSO's Internal Audit Service under the terms of a Service Level Agreement with each organisation. The BSO's Internal Audit Service undertakes its work in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and agrees an audit plan at the outset of each financial year with each organisation.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the total amount of expenditure on domiciliary care; and (ii) the number of care package recipients within the Western Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1270/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Table 1 below shows the total expenditure on domiciliary care in the Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust during each financial year.

Table 1: Domiciliary Care Spend in Western HSC Trust

Year	Domiciliary Care Spend ¹
2014/15	£34,929,743
2013/14	£33,931,638
2012/13	£31,018,261
2011/12	£30,122,041
2010/11	£28,798,256

Source: HSC Trust Financial Returns (TFR)

1 Includes direct payments for domiciliary care.

- (ii) Table 2 below shows the number of clients receiving domiciliary care services in the Western HSC Trust during a survey week in September each year.

Table 2: Clients Receiving Domiciliary Care in Western HSC Trust

Year	Clients Receiving Domiciliary Care ²
2015	4,379
2014	4,052
2013	4,705
2012	4,215
2011	4,449

Source: CC7b Community Information return

2 Excludes domiciliary care sourced through direct payments only.

This information is published annually in Domiciliary Care Services for Adults in NI and is available on the DoH website at the following web address: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/domiciliary-care>

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health to outline what steps her Department has taken to improve the uptake of cervical cancer screening across all age groups.

(AQW 1271/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I am pleased to report that over the past 10 years there has been an increase in cervical screening coverage rates for the North of Ireland. In 2005 the coverage rate was 71% and by 31 March 2015 the rate was 77%.

The target coverage for cervical screening is 80% and for some age-groups this target is being met. Work is ongoing to improve uptake in all age groups by promoting and supporting informed decision making.

My Department and the Public Health Agency (PHA) promote cervical screening in a range of ways including local media releases, social media and activities at key times of the year, such as during Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January and Cervical Screening Awareness week in June.

The Public Health Agency continually monitors the performance of the programme and has put in place a number of actions to maintain and increase uptake amongst groups where it remains low. This includes;

- the provision of information leaflets designed to meet the needs of the target population;
- focus group work with attenders and non-attenders to better understand barriers to attendance;
- the development of a video aimed at young women invited for cervical screening for the first time;
- the provision of information on a dedicated website; and
- working with the Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) to target groups of women who are less likely to participate in screening.

It is vital that people, when invited, participate in cancer screening programmes as these programmes are important public health initiatives aimed at reducing deaths from cancer in our population.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health what steps her Department is taking to support Cervical Screening Awareness Week.

(AQW 1272/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and the Public Health Agency (PHA) promote cervical screening through local media press releases and social media during Cervical Screening Awareness week.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health how the local uptake rate for cervical cancer screening compares to the rest of Europe.

(AQW 1273/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Not all countries have a universal cervical screening programme and so data is not available to compare local uptake with the rest of Europe.

The table below shows how the north of Ireland compares with England, Scotland and Wales at 31 March 2015. For both the north of Ireland and Wales, coverage is calculated as the percentage of women in a population eligible for screening at a given point in time who were screened adequately within the past 5 years. The Scottish and English programmes calculate coverage within the past 5.5 years.

Thousands and percentages

Country	No. of eligible women	No. of women screened within specified target period	Coverage (%)
North of Ireland	485.9	374.8	77.1
England	14,165.8	10,405.0	73.5
Scotland	1,122.8	1,465.0	76.6
Wales	753.8	587.7	78

Source for England figure: Open Exeter - PHOF, Health and Social Care Information Centre. See also Table 2 in Data Tables section.

Data is not available for the same time period for the south of Ireland. The most recent figures available show that coverage in the 5-year period was 77% at the end of August 2014.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of businesses deemed by each local council to have sold cigarettes to people aged under 18, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1274/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information relating to tobacco enforcement activity is collected by the Public Health Agency. This information is collected by legacy council group, rather than by individual councils, and is set out below for each of the last 5 years:

April 2011 – March 2016

Area	Number of premises where a sale was made to a child				
	Apr 2011- Mar 2012	Apr 2012 - Mar 2013	Apr 2013 - Mar 2014	Apr 2014 - Mar 2015	Apr 2015 - Mar 2016
Southern	6	1	1	1	15
Northern	6	8	15	19	27
Belfast	21	14	40	25	25
Eastern	6	14	18	12	21
Western	14	11	0	1	12
Total	53	48	74	58	100

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister of Health how she intends to reduce the waiting time for autism and Special Educational Needs assessments.

(AQW 1277/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and the Department of Education are currently in the process of setting up a new joint Special Educational Needs (SEN) Education and Health Interfaces Project Board to take forward a number of specific time-bound projects to make improvements to SEN processes, including timescales for statutory assessments. The first project will concentrate on improving the interfaces and cooperation between the Education Authority and the five Health and Social Care Trusts in relation to the statutory assessment process, building on collaborative work already undertaken over the past year. It is anticipated that the outputs from this work will also contribute to the implementation of commitments in the cross-departmental Autism Strategy and Action Plan to improve services and support for people with autism and their families. The Department of Education is represented on the Autism Strategy Inter-departmental Senior Officials Group which is chaired by my Department.

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister of Health to outline the co-operation that exists between her Department and the Department of Education regarding autism and Special Educational Needs assessments.

(AQW 1278/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and the Department of Education are currently in the process of setting up a new joint Special Educational Needs (SEN) Education and Health Interfaces Project Board to take forward a number of specific time-bound projects to make improvements to SEN processes, including timescales for statutory assessments. The first project will concentrate on improving the interfaces and cooperation between the Education Authority and the five Health and Social Care Trusts in relation to the statutory assessment process, building on collaborative work already undertaken over the past year. It is anticipated that the outputs from this work will also contribute to the implementation of commitments in the cross-departmental Autism Strategy and Action Plan to improve services and support for people with autism and their families. The

Department of Education is represented on the Autism Strategy Inter-departmental Senior Officials Group which is chaired by my Department.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health to outline (i) the current cancer awareness programme, in particular Sarcoma; (ii) sources of funding; and (iii) how it is allocated.

(AQW 1280/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The Public Health Agency (PHA) launched 'Be Cancer Aware', on Tuesday 24th February 2015. The campaign's aim is to promote early diagnosis of cancer by raising public awareness of cancer symptoms and encouraging people with cancer symptoms to make an appointment to see their GP.

Phase one of the campaign was aimed at improving public awareness of cancer in general. Phase two (2016-17) focuses on raising awareness of three specific cancer tumour sites: Lung, Breast, and Bowel. Phase Three will include other new tumour sites, the selection of which has yet to be determined.

The Campaign website www.becancerawareni.info includes a section on Sarcoma and the PHA plans to carry a range of PR and social media messaging during July 2016 linked to Sarcoma Awareness week to further raise awareness.

- (ii) Sources of Funding

The PHA has a baseline budget for Public Information Campaigns that is agreed with the DoH on an annual basis.

- (iii) How the funding is allocated.

The budget allocated to the Be Cancer Aware Campaign is agreed by the DoH as part of an overall Public Information Programme that was submitted by the PHA to the DoH and Government Advertising Unit for 2016/17. Campaign media buying is determined on the basis of a media strategy developed and agreed by the PHA and its contracted advertising agency.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the reasoning behind the decision taken in April 2016 to reduce the number of undergraduate training places for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy at Ulster University; (ii) the advice sought from Allied Health Professionals prior to the decision being taken; (iii) why the decision was taken during dissolution; and (iv) why the decision was taken before the expert panel had reached and published their recommendations on the future configuration of local health services.

(AQW 1287/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is committed to providing a highly trained workforce for the HSC, and will be investing over £85m in pre-registration training in 2016/17, including delivering 100 additional nursing places.

The funding available through my Department for pre-registration training is finite. Difficult decisions have to be taken regarding competing priorities that best match the needs of the Health and Social Care sector (the HSC).

523 more allied health professionals are employed in the HSC than in 2011, yet new graduates are still reporting having difficulty gaining employment locally. Clearly, it is not in the Department's interest to fund the training of health professionals who cannot get jobs in the HSC and when there are other pressing workforce demands.

My Department will shortly be taking forward a series of workforce reviews which, among other things, will assess the level of annual training commissions necessary to sustain an AHP workforce able to deliver optimal, standardised models of care across the region. It will also provide better alignment between the Department's investment in training commissions and the HSC's projected future staffing needs.

My Department notified the Ulster University of its planned student commissions in March this year. This is in line with the requirements of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health what action her Department will take following the amended motion passed in the Assembly on Monday 6 June 2016, that called for greater investment in, access to, and awareness of early intervention services for children and young people as well as adults in respect of drug misuse, given the increase in demand for such services.

(AQW 1288/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Under the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2, a full range of alcohol and drug education, early intervention, and treatment and support services are commissioned across all five Health and Social Care Trust areas. A number of these services are targeted specifically at children, young people and their families. A range of refreshed services was commissioned from 01 July 2015 and work is underway to improve awareness of these new services. Full details of all the current services are available at: <http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/services-near-you/>.

Each Trust area also has its own dedicated multi-sectoral Drug & Alcohol Co-ordination Team (DACT), and all DACTs are assisted by the DACT Connections Service to work with stakeholder organisations to raise awareness of substance misuse issues and to take forward priority actions as required.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of patients treated for cancer in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1296/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on the number of patients treated for cancer is not available. However, information is available on the number of people diagnosed with Cancer.

Number of cases diagnosed with cancer in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

Year of diagnosis	Total
2005	388
2006	412
2007	420
2008	444
2009	420
2010	464
2011	476
2012	473
2013	477
2014	516

Source: NICR

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future provision of services at the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 1297/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The development of future services at the South West Acute Hospital is a matter in the first instance for the Western Health and Social Care Trust. However, I am well aware of the potential contribution which the hospital could make to acute services for the population of the North and will ensure that all opportunities are fully explored.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister of Health to outline the services available to young adults with autism in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1306/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Young adults with Autism in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area can receive the following supports:

- Social Work assessment of their needs and signposting to relevant Trust, Statutory, Community and Voluntary services, care planning, and ongoing one to one support;
- Carers are offered and have access to Carers Assessments;
- Psychology assessment and a full range of short-term Psychological Interventions, including understanding their diagnosis, psychodynamic support, and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) interventions;
- Access to health improvement support and advice;
- Group interventions which could include social opportunities and understanding relationships;
- Volunteering/Mentoring opportunities within Autism Services;
- Access to initiatives, e.g., Careers Advice Pilot, which is running as a partnership between Autism Service and Careers Service.

In addition to the above support provided by Autism Services, young adults with Autism can also access Adult Mental Health Services and Adult Learning Disability Services as appropriate.

Mr Lyons asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the physiotherapy direct access scheme.

(AQW 1312/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The physiotherapy direct access scheme is an example of how services can be restructured and delivered to make best use of the available resources and ensure service sustainability for the future.

The scheme is aimed at increasing the choice, flexibility and control that services users have over the services they receive.

One of the positive impacts of the direct access scheme is a reduction in the lead time from the identification of need for physiotherapy, to triage and prioritisation of the treatment.

Mr Lyons asked the Minister of Health whether her Department intends to implement the physiotherapy direct access scheme.

(AQW 1313/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: A pilot scheme for direct access physiotherapy was introduced in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust on 15 June 2015, this was scheduled to run until 31 March 2016.

An evaluation of the pilot has demonstrated positive outcomes, however, anticipated patterns of demand had not normalised in line with UK patterns, in that demand has remained higher than prior to the pilot. On that basis the pilot project has been extended until the end of June 2016.

This will determine the extent to which the pilot has met its aims and will determine the way forward in regards to potential regional roll out.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health to detail where her Department will spend the £5 million allocated in the June monitoring round.

(AQW 1351/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The £5m capital allocation received in June Monitoring will be used to increase the investment programme and take forward ICT projects providing a screening system for new born hearing and an Ambulance Service replacement mobilisation system to ensure a reliable 999 response to patients.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through her Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1354/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Capital Investment is provided to HSC Trusts and the NI Fire and Rescue Service to develop and maintain the estate which is accessed by patients and clients across Northern Ireland on the basis of need and not by parliamentary constituency. Aside from minor works schemes for the maintenance and safety of the HSC estate and investment in ICT, I have provided details of capital projects in Fermanagh and South Tyrone for each of the last 10 years.

2015/16	Camera for Command Support Unit (NIFRS) based at Irvinestown
2014/15	Modular Ambulance Station at former Erne Hospital site
	South Tyrone Hospital - new CT scanner
	South Tyrone Hospital - infrastructure of the main hospital building including refurbishment work to upgrade the external façade of the main tower block
2013/14	Detection Identification & Monitoring (DIM) equipment for NIFRS
2011/12	The South West Acute Hospital was completed in 2012 and has an estimated capital value of £274m. This facility was procured through PFI.
	South Tyrone Hospital – new decontamination facility, and refurbishment of Admissions Ward
2006/07	South Tyrone Hospital - New respite care unit for adults with a learning disability

- (ii) Currently there is one project in progress, the replacement Ambulance Station in Enniskillen and one proposal for use of Financial Transactions Capital through the GP Loans Scheme for the Enniskillen Health and Care Centre.
- (iii) Future capital investment projects will be considered by my Department and the Executive as part of Budget 2017 which will conclude in the autumn.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health whether she intends to introduce a sugar tax.

(AQW 1357/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: On the 16th March 2016 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his intention to introduce a sugar tax from April 2018; this will also apply in the North of Ireland.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health for an update on establishing an air ambulance service.

(AQW 1358/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 366/16-21.

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health to outline the rate of cervical cancer for women over 50 in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1363/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below shows the incidence rate of cervical cancer for women over 50 for each of the last ten years.

Year of diagnosis	Number of cases	Rate per 100,000 population	2013 European age-standardised incidence rate per 100,000 population	95% confidence interval
2005	22	2.5	3.0	1.7 - 4.2
2006	27	3.0	3.7	2.3 - 5.1
2007	26	2.9	3.5	2.2 - 4.9
2008	33	3.6	4.4	2.9 - 5.9
2009	29	3.2	3.8	2.4 - 5.2
2010	28	3.0	3.6	2.2 - 4.9
2011	23	2.5	2.9	1.7 - 4.2
2012	22	2.4	2.7	1.6 - 3.9
2013	36	3.9	4.4	3.0 - 5.9
2014	22	2.3	2.6	1.5 - 3.7

Source: NICR

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health to outline discussions she has had with public health bodies to increase cervical screening uptake amongst women over 50.

(AQW 1364/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and the Public Health Agency (PHA) promote cervical screening in a range of ways including local media releases, social media and activities at key times of the year, such as during Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January and Cervical Screening Awareness week in June.

The Public Health Agency continually monitors the performance of the programme and has put in place a number of actions to maintain and increase uptake amongst groups where it remains low. This includes;

- the provision of information leaflets designed to meet the needs of the target population;
- focus group work with attenders and non-attenders to better understand barriers to attendance;
- the development of a video aimed at young women invited for cervical screening for the first time;
- the provision of information on a dedicated website; and
- working with the Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) to target groups of women who are less likely to participate in screening.

It is vital that people, when invited, participate in cancer screening programmes as these programmes are important public health initiatives aimed at reducing deaths from cancer in our population.

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the impact that increased uptake of cervical screening among women over 50 would have on incidence of cervical cancer in this age group.

(AQW 1365/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The aim of cervical screening is to prevent cancer from occurring in the first place, by checking for pre-cancerous changes in the cells lining the cervix. Any early changes can then be successfully treated.

It is vital when women are invited to make an appointment with their GP practice for a screening test, attend for their appointment as this remains the best way of significantly reducing the risk of developing cervical cancer. It is estimated that in a well-screened population, four out of five cervical cancers can be prevented.

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the barriers to increasing the uptake of cervical screening among women over 50.

(AQW 1366/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on barriers specifically to women over 50 is not available however in 2014/2015, the Public Health Agency commissioned a focus group study, across all ages, with attenders and non-attenders for breast and/or cervical screening. The main reasons cited for non-attendance at cancer screening were:

- Fear of the screening process or results
- Making an informed decision
- Inconvenience/too busy

■ Personal/peer experience

Given the findings from a PHA commissioned focus group study on the reasons for non-participation in cervical screening, it is thought that the barriers to participation are best addressed through a peer educator programme. The PHA is therefore working through the Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) to target those groups of the population who are less likely to participate in cancer screening to support them to make an informed decision.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health to outline the next steps for the physiotherapy self-referral pilot in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1379/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The pilot scheme for Direct Access Physiotherapy was introduced in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust on 15 June 2015 and was scheduled to run until 31 March 2016.

An evaluation of the pilot has demonstrated positive outcomes, however, anticipated patterns of demand have not normalised in line with patterns in Britain. On that basis the pilot project has been extended until the end of June 2016.

Further evaluation will determine the extent to which the pilot has met its objectives; this will help determine the way forward with regard to potential regional roll out.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health to outline the services available, on an ad hoc basis to carers who look after family members, (i) in the form of domiciliary or respite care when a carer looks after more than one person; and (ii) in the event that one needs to attend appointments or emergency services and the other one remains at home requiring supervision and their personal needs met.

(AQW 1380/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Carers are a vital part of the Department's vision of providing support for people to remain in their own homes and live independently for longer. I consider the provision of flexible appropriate support for carers to be a priority across the Health and Social Care (HSC) system. The role of a full time carer is one with a lot of responsibility attached, it is important that carers feel that flexible support is there if and when they need it.

All HSC Trusts have confirmed that they can and regularly do provide services to carers who care for more than one family member/friend, where one person requires attendance at a hospital appointment or emergency services. A range of services are available across HSC Trusts including extended domiciliary care, emergency support (including the provision of personal care), the provision of emergency short breaks which can be delivered in a person's own home or longer term within a range of nursing/residential home facilities.

In addition to assessing a carer's individual needs, the regional Carers Needs and Support Plan element of the Single Assessment Tool (NISAT), provides an important opportunity for carers to discuss and agree contingency arrangements to be adopted during an emergency situation.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health (i) whether there are services that are available to those carers who look after more than one family member and need to attend hospital appointments or emergency services with one of them; (ii) whether the Minister has any plans to introduce measures on an ad hoc basis that enable carers to look after family members that (a) need to attend appointments; and (b) those who must remain at home.

(AQW 1381/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Carers are a vital part of the Department's vision of providing support for people to remain in their own homes and live independently for longer. I consider the provision of flexible appropriate support for carers to be a priority across the Health and Social Care (HSC) system. The role of a full time carer is one with a lot of responsibility attached, it is important that carers feel that flexible support is there if and when they need it.

All HSC Trusts have confirmed that they can and regularly do provide services to carers who care for more than one family member/friend, where one person requires attendance at a hospital appointment or emergency services. A range of services are available across HSC Trusts including extended domiciliary care, emergency support (including the provision of personal care), the provision of emergency short breaks which can be delivered in a person's own home or longer term within a range of nursing/residential home facilities.

In addition to assessing a carer's individual needs, the regional Carers Needs and Support Plan element of the Single Assessment Tool (NISAT), provides an important opportunity for carers to discuss and agree contingency arrangements to be adopted during an emergency situation.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health whether the Suicide Liaison Officer post in the Western Health and Social Care Trust has been filled.

(AQW 1383/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHST) has recently appointed two Suicide Family Liaison Officers to cover the WHST area. At present one is in post and is covering the entire Trust area until the second takes up post in August.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health to detail the savings made from the temporary closure of the Emergency Department in Belfast City Hospital.

(AQW 1402/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: No financial savings have resulted from the temporary closure of the Emergency Department in Belfast City Hospital. The temporary closure by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust from November 2011 was made in response to concerns about the level of clinical supervision of doctors in training in the Belfast City and Royal Victoria Hospitals' emergency departments, and the subsequent impact on patient safety and delivery of training and support. This has enabled the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to ensure safe staffing levels at the Royal Victoria Hospital Emergency Department by consolidating the existing staff from three Emergency Departments to two.

The Health and Social Care Board has continued to invest significant additional resources to support Emergency Departments, unscheduled care services and related community care in Belfast and the adjoining South Eastern Trust areas.

This investment increased the number of consultants, nurses, middle grade medical staff, allied health professionals and other support staff. It has also supported the expansion of assessment units and discharge capacity in the community, all of which is aimed at improving patient flow.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health whether the Health and Social Care Board has met any other developers or organisations to discuss proposals regarding primary or community infrastructure in South Belfast.

(AQW 1403/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: A number of GPs within South Belfast requested that the HSCB meet with themselves and Benmore to talk through the process required to enable GPs to re-locate to an alternate site. In addition, Benmore have provided updates to the HSCB in relation to the plans that they have for the site. The HSCB has made no commitment at this stage to re-locate any services to the King's Hall site. Details of the meetings are set out in the table below.

Date	Who attended from HSCB	Agenda for discussion	Further action agreed
5th January 2016	Martin Kelly (PCID Programme Director) Jan Charman (PCID Project Manager)	Note: HSCB attended at request of GPs. The meeting was led by Benmore Developments. Following Award of Tender for Kings Hall site, Benmore Developments presented their vision for the site as a Healthcare Campus to local GP practices. This included proposal for Primary Care Centre, Private Hospital, Supported Living Centre, Multi-story Car Park and Hotel.	GP Practices to consider if they would be interested in moving to Kings Hall site following presentation.
22nd March 2016	Martin Kelly (PCID Programme Director) Caroline Brown (PCID Programme Manager) Jan Charman (PCID Project Manager)	(HSCB attended at request of GPs and to outline required process for GP practices to follow should they wish to apply to HSCB to relocate from existing premises to new premises) Benmore Developments presented on progress with design for Kings Hall development and highlighted timescales regarding planning process. Showed proposed space for GP's should they decide to relocate. HSCB shared details of the process which the GPs should follow if they wish to re-locate GMS services.	GP Practices to decide if moving to Kings Hall site was something they wished to explore further.
18th April 2016	Sloan Harper (Director of Integrated Care) Elaine Hunter (Head of Primary Care Infrastructure) Iain Deboys (Assistant Director Commissioning) Linda McIlroy (Business Services Manager, Belfast Locality)	Meeting requested by Benmore to provide update to the HSCB as to their plans for the King's Hall site, at which they hope to develop space to deliver healthcare services. (including General Medical Services, currently provided by the GPs based in Dunluce and Finaghy Health Centres). Benmore were advised that any re-location of health and social care services would follow due process and that the Local Commissioning Group would make decisions based on the needs of the population of South Belfast and with consideration of budgetary constraints of the HSCB.	None

Date	Who attended from HSCB	Agenda for discussion	Further action agreed
2nd June 2016	Valerie Watts (Chief Executive) Sloan Harper (Director of Integrated Care) Iain Deboys (Assistant Director Commissioning) Elaine Hunter (Head of Primary Care Infrastructure)	Benmore requested a meeting with the Chief Executive of the HSCB to provide a further update to the HSCB on the progress of their plans to develop the King's Hall site.	None

PCID: Primary Care Infrastructure Development

The HSCB is committed to exploring opportunities presented to them in relation to the improvement of healthcare provision. A GP practice within South Belfast requested that the HSCB attend a meeting between the GP and a care provider, to discuss a possible re-location of GP services into a development the provider was planning to take forward in South Belfast.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health whether the Health and Social Care Board met Benmore Healthcare Development regarding the King's Hall Primary Care Centre proposal; and if so, to detail (i) who attended the meeting; (ii) the agenda for discussion; and (iii) the further action agreed.

(AQW 1404/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: A number of GPs within South Belfast requested that the HSCB meet with themselves and Benmore to talk through the process required to enable GPs to re-locate to an alternate site. In addition, Benmore have provided updates to the HSCB in relation to the plans that they have for the site. The HSCB has made no commitment at this stage to re-locate any services to the King's Hall site. Details of the meetings are set out in the table below.

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2nd June 2016	Valerie Watts (Chief Executive) Sloan Harper (Director of Integrated Care) Iain Deboys (Assistant Director Commissioning) Elaine Hunter (Head of Primary Care Infrastructure)	Benmore requested a meeting with the Chief Executive of the HSCB to provide a further update to the HSCB on the progress of their plans to develop the King's Hall site.	None

PCID: Primary Care Infrastructure Development

The HSCB is committed to exploring opportunities presented to them in relation to the improvement of healthcare provision. A GP practice within South Belfast requested that the HSCB attend a meeting between the GP and a care provider, to discuss a possible re-location of GP services into a development the provider was planning to take forward in South Belfast.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health to detail how much has been spent on agency staff in each of the last three years, broken down per Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1409/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The amount spent on Agency staff by Health and Social Care Trusts in each of the last three financial years is given below;

Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT)	2013/14 £(m)	2014/15 £(m)	2015/16 £(m)
Belfast HSCT	£24.5m	£27.0m	£32.7m
Northern HSCT	£12.3m	£15.7m	£16.6m
South Eastern HSCT	£11.9m	£9.7m	£11.1m
Southern HSCT	£8.1m	£7.8m	£12.3m
Western HSCT	£12.3m	£15.7m	£18.4m
NI Ambulance Service	£0.62m	£0.61m	£0.56m

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health to outline how her Department plans to encourage more women to attend cervical screening appointments.

(AQW 1421/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and the Public Health Agency (PHA) promote cervical screening in a range of ways including local media releases, social media and activities at key times of the year, such as during Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January and Cervical Screening Awareness week in June.

The Public Health Agency continually monitors the performance of the programme and has put in place a number of actions to maintain and increase uptake amongst groups where it remains low. This includes;

- the provision of information leaflets designed to meet the needs of the target population;
- focus group work with attenders and non-attenders to better understand barriers to attendance;
- the development of a video aimed at young women invited for cervical screening for the first time;
- the provision of information on a dedicated website; and
- working with the Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) to target groups of women who are less likely to participate in screening.

It is vital that people, when invited, participate in cancer screening programmes as these programmes are important public health interventions aimed at reducing deaths from cancer in our population.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Health to detail the cost of the emergency services responding to a call by PSNI officers in the early hours of 5 June regarding a smell of gas in the Ardmeen Green area of Downpatrick.
(AQW 1423/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The estimated cost (excluding overhead costs) of the Fire and Rescue Service responding to a call by PSNI officers in the early hours of 5 June regarding a smell of gas in the Ardmeen Green area of Downpatrick is £312.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health (i) to detail the prevalence of diagnosed cases of and/or persons being treated for Fibromyalgia, broken down by per Health & Social Care Trust; and (ii) to detail specific social, environmental, or other factors that have been identified in the occurrences of Fibromyalgia.

(AQW 1439/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The prevalence of diagnosed cases of and/or persons being treated for Fibromyalgia is not routinely collected by the Department.

Environmental factors suggested in occurrences of this condition include intolerance to low levels of chemicals but there is little evidence to support this.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health Minister of Health for an update on the new radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin Area Hospital.
(AQW 1443/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Construction of the new Radiotherapy Centre and associated infrastructure is progressing on site with an anticipated handover of the building in late Summer 2016. This will then be followed by a period of client commissioning and specialist staff training with the commencement of service planned for Autumn 2016.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the hourly rate paid for domiciliary care; and whether she has plans for a regional rate.

(AQW 1444/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts sets its own hourly rate for domiciliary care, based on an assessment of local need and prevailing market conditions. Four Trusts increased their hourly rate by 5% in 2016/17, while Belfast Trust increased its hourly rate by 6.25%. I have no plans to establish a regional hourly rate for domiciliary care.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister of Health what is the standard minimum ambulance cover in the Bangor area on a Friday evening between 18.00 and 22.00; and whether this standard was met on the evening of Friday 20 May 2016.

(AQW 1447/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Ambulance Service (NIAS) provides ambulance cover on the basis of shift-based working patterns. The table below provides the actual cover in Bangor Ambulance Station on Friday 20 May 2016. However, the NIAS provides a regional service and will despatch the nearest and most appropriate vehicle to respond to 999 calls. This means that the response to an emergency call in a particular area may not necessarily be provided by an emergency response resource based in that area.

Type of resource	Hours	Cover
1 x A&E ambulance	08:00 – 20:00	Full crew
1 x A&E ambulance	10:00 – 20:00	Full crew
1 x A&E ambulance	19:30 – 07:30 (21st May)	Full crew
1 x Rapid Response Vehicle	14:00 – 00:00	Full crew

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health to detail the staff to patient ratio, excluding nurse in charge, for each medical-surgical ward in the Causeway Hospital and Antrim Area Hospital on Sunday 19 June between 0800 and 2000.
(AQW 1453/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested would require a manual exercise and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health what advice her Department has provided to hospital managers regarding staff to patient ratios following the Berwick Report.
(AQW 1454/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Berwick Report provided advice on patient safety issues identified in the NHS in England. It did not provide any recommendations in respect of the HSC in the north of Ireland. However, separate work is underway to identify appropriate staffing ratios for HSC that are safe and effective under the "Delivering Care" initiative commissioned by the Chief Nursing Officer.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Health to outline the membership of the suicide think tank in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 1457/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Membership of the suicide think tank in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area is outlined in the table below:

Suicide Think Tank Membership

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Director Adult Mental Health | ■ Divisional Clinical Director |
| ■ Occupational Therapist and Day Care Lead | ■ Governance Lead |
| ■ Team Manager, Primary Care Liaison Services | ■ Head of Primary Care and Specialist Services |
| ■ Consultant Lead Clinical Psychologist | ■ Team Manager, Recovery Services |
| ■ Health Improvement Officer, Performance & Service Improvement | ■ Suicide Liaison Officer |
| ■ Social Worker | ■ Service User Representative |
| ■ Service Improvement Manager | ■ Carer Representative |

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health when she will make a decision on the location of acute mental health services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and whether she will locate the services in Omagh.
(AQW 1470/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The business case for a second mental health inpatient unit in the West remains under consideration by my Department in liaison with the Western Trust. While my predecessor announced that Omagh was the preferred location for this facility, no final decision will be taken until the review of the business case has been completed.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health whether she has any plans to regulate further electronic cigarettes.
(AQW 1480/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department plans to prohibit the sale of electronic cigarettes to under 18s using powers granted under the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (NI) 2016. Regulations made under this Act will also make it an offence for an adult to purchase an e-cigarette on behalf of a child.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 926/16-21, to outline the decontamination.
(AQW 1532/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust will use the £1.7 million capital funding allocated this year for decontamination to procure additional dental equipment for the community and all prison sites, as well as podiatry equipment for the community.

This will ensure the Trust is complying with my Departments' Policy on Decontamination of Re-Useable Surgical Instruments which states that all decontamination activity within hospitals, community and general medical services must be carried out in Central Sterile Services Departments (CSSDs).

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health to outline the timescale for the completion of the Ulster Hospital Phase B redevelopment.
(AQW 1534/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Phase B redevelopment at the Ulster Hospital will complete in two stages. The first phase, the Generic Ward Block is due to complete in October 2016 and open to patients in Spring 2017. The Acute Services Block is expected to complete in Summer 2019 and open to patients early 2020.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to detail the total spend on agency workers by each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 1559/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT)	2011/12 £(m)	2012/13 £(m)	2013/14 £(m)	2014/15 £(m)	2015/16 £(m)
Belfast HSCT	£17.8m	£22.9m	£24.5m	£27.0m	£32.7m
Northern HSCT	£7.2m	£12.4m	£12.3m	£15.7m	£16.6m
South Eastern HSCT	£8.1m	£13.2m	£11.9m	£9.7m	£11.1m
Southern HSCT	£4.5m	£8.8m	£8.1m	£7.8m	£12.3m
Western HSCT	£10.2m	£10.7m	£12.3m	£15.7m	£18.4m
NI Ambulance Service	£0.39m	£0.59m	£0.62m	£0.61m	£0.56m

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of unfilled doctor and nursing posts in each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1562/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: This information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

My Department published a biannual Vacancy Survey report, covering all Health & Social Care vacancies, until March 2015. These can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/staff-vacancies>.

A new publication series taking advantage of the HSC's new recruitment system is planned.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to detail the total number of patients registered at GP practices in Portadown in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1563/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of patients registered at GP practices in Portadown in each of the last 5 years is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Number of patients registered at GP practices in Portadown, 2012 – 2016

Year	Number of patients registered on GP lists in Portadown*
2012	41,355
2013	42,073
2014	42,666
2015	43,885
2016	44,990

Source: Payment Calculation and Analysis System

* GP practices in the Portadown area have been defined as those located in Portadown; there are 8 GP practices located in Portadown, all within 'The Health Centre'.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the total amount of money spent on domiciliary care; and (ii) the number of care package recipients in the Western Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1574/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I refer the member to the recent answer provided to AQW 1270/16-21.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health whether she is considering introducing the Living Well approach.

(AQW 1579/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise the positive benefits of the Living Well model with its focus on health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and the role of the local community in helping to achieve those outcomes. My officials are working with colleagues in HSC and voluntary sector to run a pilot of the Living Well programme later this year in the Ballycastle and surrounding area. The evaluation of the impact of this pilot will then inform subsequent decisions on the wider application of the Living Well approach.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health whether she has plans to implement the Living Well approach in Ballycastle and across the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1655/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise the positive benefits of the Living Well model with its focus on health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and the role of the local community in helping to achieve those outcomes. My officials are working with colleagues in HSC and voluntary sector to run a pilot of the Living Well programme later this year in the Ballycastle and surrounding area. The evaluation of the impact of this pilot will then inform subsequent decisions on the wider application of the Living Well approach.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through her Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1663/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Capital Investment is provided to HSC Trusts and the NI Fire and Rescue Service to develop and maintain the estate which is accessed by patients and clients across Northern Ireland on the basis of need and not by parliamentary constituency. Aside from minor works schemes for the maintenance and safety of the HSC estate and investment in ICT, I have provided details of capital projects in Fermanagh and South Tyrone for each of the last 10 years.

2015/16	Camera for Command Support Unit (NIFRS) based at Irvinestown
2014/15	Modular Ambulance Station at former Erne Hospital site
	South Tyrone Hospital - new CT scanner
	South Tyrone Hospital - infrastructure of the main hospital building including refurbishment work to upgrade the external façade of the main tower block
2013/14	Detection Identification & Monitoring (DIM) equipment for NIFRS
2011/12	The South West Acute Hospital was completed in 2012 and has an estimated capital value of £274m. This facility was procured through PFI. South Tyrone Hospital – new decontamination facility, and refurbishment of Admissions Ward
2006/07	South Tyrone Hospital - New respite care unit for adults with a learning disability

- (ii) Currently there is one project in progress, the replacement Ambulance Station in Enniskillen and one proposal for use of Financial Transactions Capital through the GP Loans Scheme for the Enniskillen Health and Care Centre.
- (iii) Future capital investment projects will be considered by my Department and the Executive as part of Budget 2017 which will conclude in the autumn.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health how many doctors were on duty for the Doctor on Call service in Omagh on each weekend (i) in 2015; and (ii) 2016 to date.

(AQW 1704/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: GP Out of Hours services in the Western Trust area are provided by Western Urgent Care across five bases – Altnagelvin, Enniskillen, Limavady, Omagh and Strabane.

The numbers of doctors on duty each weekend in 2015 and 2016 in Omagh are not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. The numbers of GPs on duty in the Omagh base during a typical weekend, during 2015 and 2016 up to 1st June, are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Planned number of GPs on duty during a typical weekend during 2015 and 2016 to date

Out of Hours base	Time	Planned number of GPs
Omagh	00:00-08:00	1
	08:00-11:00	2
	11:00-14:00	3
	14:00-23:00	2
	23:00-24:0	1

Source: Western Urgent Care

Also, as GPs can work sessions of varying durations during out of hours provision, the number of doctors on duty each weekend would not provide any valuable analysis with regard to service provision. The number of GP hours worked each

weekend, with the percentage of planned hours worked, provides a much better indication of service delivery; the numbers of GP hours worked each weekend are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

For the Omagh base in 2015, 89.6% (4,053.5 hours) of a total 4,524 planned GP hours were worked. In 2016 to date, 89% (1,697.3 hours) of a total 1,914 planned hours were worked.

Table 2: Number of GP hours worked in Omagh Out of Hours base on each weekend in 2015

Weekend (2015)	GP hours worked	Weekend (2015)	GP hours worked	Weekend (2015)	GP hours worked	Weekend (2015)	GP hours worked
Omagh		Omagh		Omagh		Omagh	
3-4 Jan	77.5	4-5 Apr	82.0	4-5 Jul	72.5	3-4 Oct	82.5
10-11 Jan	82.5	11-12 Apr	84.0	11-12 Jul	82.0	10-11 Oct	73.5
17-18 Jan	77.0	18-19 Apr	79.5	18-19 Jul	67.0	17-18 Oct	82.5
24-25 Jan	78.5	25-26 Apr	80.0	25-26 Jul	71.5	24-25 Oct	83.5
31 Jan-1 Feb	79.5	2-3 May	79.0	1-2 Aug	69.0	31 Oct-1 Nov	71.5
7-8 Feb	78.5	9-10 May	82.5	8-9 Aug	70.5	7-8 Nov	79.5
14-15 Feb	79.5	16-17 May	79.5	15-16 Aug	79.5	14-15 Nov	82.5
21-22 Feb	79.5	23-24 May	78.0	22-23 Aug	76.5	21-22 Nov	76.5
28 Feb-1 Mar	72.5	30-31 May	81.5	29-30 Aug	72.0	28-29 Nov	79.5
7-8 Mar	79.5	6-7 Jun	82.5	5-6 Sep	76.5	5-6 Dec	76.5
14-15 Mar	73.5	13-14 Jun	79.5	12-13 Sep	82.5	12-13 Dec	76.5
21-22 Mar	74.5	20-21 Jun	80.5	19-20 Sep	76.5	19-20 Dec	79.5
28-29 Mar	79.5	27-28 Jun	77.5	26-27 Sep	82.5	26-27 Dec	73.0

Source: Western Urgent Care

Table 3: Number of GP hours worked in Omagh Out of Hours base on each weekend in 2016

Weekend (2016)	GP hours worked	Weekend (2016)	GP hours worked
Omagh		Omagh	
2-3 Jan	71.5	2-3 Apr	76.5
9-10 Jan	72.5	9-10 Apr	79.5
16-17 Jan	83.5	16-17 Apr	76.5
23-24 Jan	82.5	23-24 Apr	73.5
30-31 Jan	78.5	30 Apr-1 May	72.8
6-7 Feb	76.5	7-8 May	76.5
13-14 Feb	79.5	14-15 May	69.5
20-21 Feb	79.5	21-22 May	77.5
27-28 Feb	79.5	28-29 May	76.0
5-6 Mar	77.5		
12-13 Mar	79.5		
19-20 Mar	76.5		
26-27 Mar	82.0		

Source: Western Urgent Care

Department for Infrastructure

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the A5 Road Project.
(AQW 91/16-21)

Mr Hazzard (The Minister for Infrastructure): On 16 February 2016 the then Department for Regional Development (DRD) published for consultation the Notice of Intention to Make Vesting Orders (draft Vesting Orders) for the following phases of the scheme:

- Phase 1A - New Buildings to north of Strabane;
- Phase 1B - south of Omagh to Ballygawley; and
- Phase 2 - north of Strabane to south of Omagh.

The Notice of Intention to Make a Direction Order (draft Direction Order) for the length between New Buildings and Ballygawley and a new Environmental Statement (ES) covering the full extent of the scheme between New Buildings and Aghnacloy were also published at that time. The consultation period extended to 4 April 2016 during which time 972 representations were received. A further consultation was carried out on a revised Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Environmental Statement. This commenced on 18 April 2016 and extended to 2 June 2016. A small number of further representations were received during this time.

A Public Inquiry has been programmed for autumn 2016, to be administered by the Planning Appeals Commission, and the Inspectors Report is then expected around May 2017. My Department will then consider the recommendations of this Report in detail before I make a decision on whether to proceed with the scheme and make the necessary statutory Orders (Direction Order, Vesting Order and Stopping-Up Order).

Subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory processes, I am hopeful that construction can commence in late 2017 on Phase 1A (between New Buildings and north of Strabane) in line with the 'A Fresh Start' Agreement.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he plans to target additional funds to road maintenance, including resurfacing and grass cutting.
(AQW 433/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £8m Capital for structural maintenance activities including resurfacing and reconstruction and £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting etc.

This additional funding will immediately be used to enhance services and deal with any backlogs of work that have built up, and a portion of this additional funding will be targeted towards a second grass cut.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will make funds available to continue the dualling of the A26 from Drones Road to Ballymoney.
(AQW 455/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department is currently progressing a balanced programme of strategic road improvement (SRI) schemes across the north. This programme emanates from a number of strategic policy documents including; the Investment Strategy, the Regional Development Strategy, the Regional Transportation Strategy and the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan. At present, the SRI programme does not contain a proposal to continue the dualling of the A26 between Glarryford and A44 Drones Road to Ballymoney.

The New Approach to Regional Transportation sets out a high level framework to guide future investment decisions. In line with that, my Department is progressing the development of new Transport Plans which will set out a long-term programme of investment. This will provide an opportunity to consider schemes, such as the dualling of the A26 from Drones Road to Ballymoney, for inclusion in the programme.

It is expected that when complete in summer 2017, the current 8km scheme between Glarryford and A44 Drones Road will greatly improve road safety and journey times on the A26 route between Ballymena and Ballymoney.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans he has to improve cycling infrastructure and facilities for Civil Servants.
(AQW 549/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Bicycle Strategy sets out proposals to improve cycling infrastructure for everyone, including civil servants and a number of schemes have recently been undertaken to provide safe space for cycling in Belfast city centre. Implementation of the measures included in the strategy will create a community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for everyday journeys.

There is an established Cycle to Work scheme in each Government Department which is available to civil servants all year round. It has enjoyed a good level of uptake. I continue to support the Cycle to Work Scheme and my Department promotes

it across the civil service and to all employers. As a salary sacrifice scheme it is an option for all workplaces and I would encourage every employer to consider putting a Cycle to Work scheme in place to benefit their staff.

I am keen that my Department will do what it can to improve facilities to promote cycling among its employees and I would encourage my Executive colleagues to do likewise.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure if he will ensure funding for cycling equating to at least £10 per head of population.

(AQW 553/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Bicycle Strategy, published in August 2015, identifies the need for sufficient resources to drive increased levels of cycling. The strategy acknowledged that a cycling budget of at least £10 per person per year, which would equate to an annual spend of around £18 million per annum, is highly ambitious. However, I am committed to making the case for cycling investment and it is my aim to invest to encourage more active travel and active lifestyles.

The first five-year Bicycle Strategy Delivery Plan will set out in more detail how I will invest in cycling in the north over the next five years. However, this will be impacted on by the funding made available to my Department through the Budget 2016 process which will allocate funding for the period 2017-21.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure when the Loughdoo, Tullymally, Dunevelly and Drumarden Roads on the Ards Peninsula will be repaired.

(AQW 566/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that my Department's TransportNI operate a cyclic routine inspection regime on all adopted roads including those referred to in her question.

A reduced level of maintenance service is currently being implemented by TransportNI due to budgetary constraints. As a consequence only the highest priority defects are being repaired across the entire road network.

I can confirm that Loughdoo Road was inspected recently and a number of recordable defects were noted for repair under the current reduced level of service. I understand that these defects have now been repaired. The other roads referred to by the Member are not due to be routinely inspected for another three months and any recordable defects will be repaired thereafter.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure what percentage of his Department's capital budget will be spent on the (i) A5; and (ii) A6, in each of the next five years.

(AQW 607/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following June Monitoring my Department's capital for 2016-17 is £386.9m. However, capital budgets for the years 2017-18 to 2020-21 have not yet been set and these will be considered due the impending Budget 2016 process. As part of Budget 2015, the Executive agreed to provide funding certainty for a number of flagship projects which included the A5 and A6. As such allocations were made covering the five years 2016-17 to 2020-21. The allocations for these projects following June Monitoring are set out in the table below, but the percentage against total capital can only be provided for 2016-17.

		2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m	2019-20 £m	2020-2021 £m
A5	Allocation	5.4	40.0	53.0	55.0	68.0
	% of budget	1.4%				
A6	Allocation	21.0	57.0	60.0	60.0	60.0
	% of budget	5.4%				

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the level of support available for victims of flooding that do not have insurance cover.

(AQW 609/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: In January 2016, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development introduced a Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme. This Scheme is designed to encourage owners of residential properties, located within known flood prone areas, to modify their properties to make them more resistant to the ingress of flood water. At the launch of the Scheme a commitment was made, by the then DARD Minister, to take forward an extension of the Scheme to non-domestic properties. The Department for Infrastructure is currently moving forward with the necessary business case.

Recent developments in flood insurance have resulted in the establishment of 'Flood Re' which is a not-for-profit flood reinsurance scheme, owned and managed by the insurance industry. Flood Re will help ensure that domestic properties, at the highest risk of flooding, can access affordable cover for the flood element of household property insurance. Further details in relation to Flood Re can be found at www.floodre.co.uk.

Following the severe flooding experienced last year the Minister of the Environment activated a Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance for domestic properties affected by flooding. This scheme covers those properties affected from 7 November 2015 until 31 January 2016. It includes a payment of £1,000 to householders as practical assistance; to those who have suffered severe inconvenience, to help make homes habitable as quickly as possible. It is not a compensation payment and is available to households with or without insurance.

In addition a Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance was agreed by the Executive for non-domestic properties. This scheme includes individual small businesses (including farm businesses), recreational and community facilities and places of worship affected from 7 November 2015 until 31 January 2016, that meet the schemes eligibility criteria.

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Infrastructure if he will consider converting the hard shoulder on the M2 into a bus lane to improve travel times from Antrim to Belfast.

(AQW 612/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There are currently two sections of the M2 city bound with part time bus lanes located at:

- Ballycraig Road Bridge (between junction 5 (Templepatrick) and junction 4 (Sandyknowes)), to junction 4 (Sandyknowes); and
- Junction 4 (Sandyknowes) to Hightown Road overbridge (between junction 4 (Sandyknowes) and junction 2 (Greencastle)).

The stretch of M2 downstream of Sandyknowes, between Hightown Road overbridge and junction 2 (Greencastle), has reduced hard shoulder widths adjacent to the overbridges at Bellevue and Greencastle. This significantly limits the options for any further hard shoulder running without substantial investment to widen / alter these bridges. There are therefore no plans to convert the hard shoulder along this section.

My officials, however, are currently developing proposals to implement a busway on the M2 city bound hard shoulder between junction 2 (Greencastle) and Junction 1b (Duncrue Street). This would be a temporary traffic management measure associated with the proposed York Street Interchange scheme, to help alleviate traffic congestion by encouraging a modal shift to public transport for travel into Belfast at peak times during the 3 year construction period. Bus passengers will benefit from faster and more reliable journey times into the city.

Currently, this busway scheme is being designed with construction planned to commence in 2017 subject to the availability of funding.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the proposed A5 stretch from south of Omagh to Ballygawley.

(AQW 633/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: In its Budget 2016/17 the Executive made allocations for a single year, however, the nature of some capital projects means it is important to provide certainty over a longer time span. The Executive therefore agreed a commitment to the seven Flagship projects, including the A5, with indicative funding allocations between 2016-17 and 2020-21.

Subject to the successful completion of statutory procedures the funding profile for the A5WTC would permit the New Buildings to north of Strabane section (Phase 1a) to commence construction in 2017 with an estimated completion date of 2019. It would also suggest that the South of Omagh to Ballygawley section (Phase 1b) of the scheme could commence in the latter part of the five-year budget period.

I am currently considering how funding could be increased to expedite delivery of the A5 scheme.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the changes Transport NI has made since the November Monitoring Round to ensure that essential road maintenance is carried out.

(AQW 661/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department received a Resource allocation of £16.5m in November monitoring to enable road maintenance activities, including winter service, to be provided until end of the 2015/16 financial year. This funding was directed towards a reduction in the backlog of street lighting repairs, pothole repairs and additional gully emptying.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how road maintenance costs are spent in (i) Omagh; and (ii) Enniskillen, broken down by management, labour, plant and materials, over each of the last ten years.

(AQW 662/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department's road maintenance works are undertaken by a combination of the Departments internal contractor, TransportNI's Operation & Maintenance team, and external contractors who have been successful in tendering for measured term contracts to undertake work of this nature.

Due to commercial sensitivity factors I must advise that I am unable to answer your question in the format requested; the level of data in your request could place my Department at a disadvantage when tendering for future measured term contracts.

Road maintenance works in Omagh and Enniskillen are completed by my Department's, TransportNI Western Division. The table below details expenditure on structural maintenance of the road network within Western Division split by internal and external contractor's total expenditure in the last 10 years, it is not possible to split this information by town or District Council.

Table: Structural Maintenance in TransportNI Western Division

	West external contractors	West internal contractor	Total
Year	£'k		
2006-2007	8,708	8,773	17,481
2007-2008	10,980	8,677	19,657
2008-2009	6,896	9,447	16,343
2009-2010	14,570	9,215	23,785
2010-2011	17,282	9,197	26,479
2011-2012	25,127	10,381	35,508
2012-2013	21,119	9,406	30,525
2013-2014	28,009	9,843	37,852
2014-2015	24,491	10,166	34,657
2015-2016	10,312	7,960	18,272

From 2014-2015 TransportNI's Divisional Boundaries were altered to reflect Local Government Reform's changes to Council boundaries; Western Division from 2014-2015 included Derry City Council.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the road maintenance budget for (i) Enniskillen; and (ii) Omagh, broken down by expenditure by area, over each of the last ten years.

(AQW 663/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department maintains records of expenditure on structural maintenance of the road network by District Council rather than by town.

The table below shows expenditure in the pre Local Government Reform (LGR) District Councils of Fermanagh District Council and Omagh District Council for the years 2006-07 to 2014-15. For Financial Year 2015-16 the expenditure is for the post LGR District Council of Fermanagh & Omagh.

The member should note that my Department's accounts for 2015-16 have not yet been laid before the Assembly and are currently subject to audit and as such the expenditure figures are draft and may be subject to change.

Table: Structural Maintenance by Council

	Fermanagh	Omagh	Total
YEAR	£'k		
2006-2007	4,522	3,458	7,980
2007-2008	4,578	4,424	9,002
2008-2009	4,638	2,971	7,609
2009-2010	4,951	4,922	9,873
2010-2011	6,869	4,262	11,131
2011-2012	9,869	6,143	16,012
2012-2013	7,890	5,797	13,687
2013-2014	9,306	8,612	17,918
2014-2015	6,573	5,462	12,035
2015-2016		7,751	7,571

Recent reports to Councils outlining completed and proposed works are on the DfI internet site and hyperlinks to relevant Council Reports over the last 4 years are provided below. The 2016-2017 report will be uploaded on following a meeting with the Council which is scheduled for Monday 20th June 2016.

2015

Fermanagh & Omagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-fermanagh-and-omagh-district-council-2015>

2014

Fermanagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-fermanagh-district-council-2014>

Omagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-omagh-district-council-2014>

2013

Fermanagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-fermanagh-district-council-2013>

Omagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-omagh-district-council-2013>

2012

Fermanagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-fermanagh-district-council-2012>

Omagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-omagh-district-council-2012>

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether Transport NI has conducted any road safety surveys on Lurgan Road, Banbridge in relation to the safety of pupils attend Milltown Primary School; and whether there are any plans for traffic calming measures to be introduced within the vicinity of the school to help enhance road safety.

(AQW 694/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can confirm that my Department's TransportNI has carried out assessments at this location resulting in the provision of flashing safe routes to schools signs and red patches on the carriageway at Milltown Primary school. These measures serve to benefit the pupils attending the school and were installed in 2013.

I can further advise that an assessment for additional measures was completed by my traffic engineers in November 2015. The outcome indicated a low priority when compared with other locations so there are no additional measures proposed at this time.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the roadworks scheduled in Upper Bann.

(AQW 695/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My TransportNI has developed an extensive resurfacing work programme which will maintain the integrity of the road network in Upper Bann. In addition to this Network Maintenance work, a number of Network Development schemes have been developed which will enhance safety and improve traffic flow. These works are all detailed in the annual report to council and are available on the Departmental website.

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/corporatereports>

You will also be aware that the extension to Millennium Way in Lurgan started on site on Monday 23 May 2016. I was pleased to visit the site on Thursday 26 May as one of my first engagements as Minister. This work represents a significant investment in the road network in Upper Bann and works will continue on this project throughout the year.

I have detailed below the works planned for 2016/2017:

Network Maintenance**Asphalt Resurfacing planned for 2016/2017**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ■ A3 Armagh Road, Portadown | ■ A50 Banbridge Road, Gilford |
| ■ A3 Northway, Portadown | ■ B2 Mullahead Road, Portadown |
| ■ A4 Dungannon Road, Portadown | ■ C151 Killicomaine Road, Portadown |
| ■ A26 Flush Place, Lurgan | ■ C351Ballygowan Road, Banbridge |
| ■ A26 Church Street, Banbridge | |

Surface Dressing planned for 2016/17

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Brankinstown Road | ■ Drumneath Road |
| ■ Brookvale Road, Flough Road | ■ Lough Road |
| ■ Fernhill Road, Ballylisk Lane | ■ Corcullentragh Road |
| ■ Gravel Lane | ■ Knocknamuckly Lane |
| ■ Pier Rampart, | ■ Tiscallen Lane |
| ■ Ballynamoney Lane | ■ Church Road |
| ■ Off Brookagh Road | ■ Gaudybridge Road |
| ■ Mullaghafermaghan Road | ■ Cranagh Road |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| ■ Lackan Road | ■ Hill Road |
| ■ Gregorlough Road | ■ Glen Road |
| ■ Ballela, Bleary Road | ■ Kilkinamurray |
| ■ Corbracky Lane | ■ Sugar Island Road |
| ■ Moss Road | ■ Brankins Island Lane |
| ■ Off Ballynerry North Road | ■ Rampark Road |
| ■ Moytown Road | ■ Annaloiste Road |
| ■ Derrymore Road | ■ Annesborough Road |
| ■ Sentry Box Road | ■ Ballynamanga Road |

Network Development

- Meadow Lane Portadown – alterations to the traffic signal controlled junction layout to improve safety
- Russell Drive, Lurgan - New PUFFIN crossing completed 7/6/16
- Moyallen Primary School – part time 20mph speed limit

My Department will also continue to submit bids to future monitoring rounds for additional funding to deliver more work.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the weed spraying programme for North Down in the current financial year.
(AQW 698/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that my Department's TransportNI intends to undertake a selective programme of weed control in North Down this financial year.

For clarification, due to budgetary resource pressures weed control will be directed at those areas most affected ie flagged footways within housing developments.

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Infrastructure what measures will be taken at the junction of Bellshill/Gracehill/Aughrim Road, Magherafelt to ease and allow for safe traffic flow.
(AQW 699/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I understand you met with officials from my Department on 3 June 2016 to discuss your concerns regarding safety at the Bellshill Road/Gracefield Road/Aughrim Road junction.

The issues at this location are primarily associated with restricted visibility for vehicles exiting Bellshill Road turning right and moving straight across into Gracefield Road.

In the current financial year a scheme to upgrade the signing and lining at this location is planned. This will include the provision of new advanced junction warning signs mounted on yellow background plates, slow markings on the carriageway, edge of carriageway markings along Aughrim Road on both approaches to the junction, and renewal of the junction and road markings. The scheme will also include moving the stop line forward and this will improve visibility for motorists exiting Bellshill Road and for motorists approaching the junction along the Aughrim Road. These measures are designed to provide motorists with advanced warning of the hazards together with improved visibility.

My Department also has a proposal to improve visibility at the location by realigning the Bellshill Road further away from the Orange Hall. This scheme is not however programmed at present but will be considered, along with other requests, for inclusion in future programmes.

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline what action he will take to remove the barriers, including costs, for those with disabilities to have equal access to public transport.
(AQW 701/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I realise that in spite of the gains made in recent years more work is required to remove remaining barriers to public transport and make transport accessible to all. I plan to publish later in the summer a new Accessible Transport Strategy that will identify the actions that are required to help remove these barriers. This follows a recent public consultation on the need for a new Accessible Transport Strategy.

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Infrastructure how he intends to fund the completion of a western bypass around Ballyclare.
(AQW 711/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Ballyclare Bypass, or Western Relief Road, including the associated bridge infrastructure, has been identified in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 as being required to support development proposals in the area. Therefore it is termed as a developer driven road and it is the responsibility of developers to build it.

This is a non-strategic road scheme, which developers will be responsible for delivering as part of the overall development of the area. As such, the Ballyclare Relief Road will not be funded from the public purse and is not programmed for delivery by my Department.

In accordance with the principles of the Regional Transportation Strategy, the major road works programme is concentrated on the Strategic Road Network, which comprises Ireland's busiest roads linking the Belfast Metropolitan Area to the main provincial towns and cities.

I am aware that the Neptune Group has bought this land. My officials will assist where possible, however, it has to be borne in mind that there are planning approvals in place and the new developer through his 'due-diligence' for the purchase will be aware of these. The Neptune Group is currently taking forward proposals as approved to develop the lands at the Templepatrick Road end of the Relief Road along with the associated roads infrastructure.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure what he will do to improve cycling infrastructure in Belfast in 2016-17.
(AQW 715/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: By March 2017, I plan to have implemented a 2.5 kilometre cycleway between the Westlink and Titanic Quarter Station which leads to the Ballymacarrett Walkway and the Comber Greenway. Work is progressing on a new segregated section from the Grosvenor Road to the city centre and plans are being currently being developed eastwards to Island Street.

As well as exploring other potential routes for safe, attractive space for bicycle users to other parts of the city, my Department is also exploring opportunities to improve high standards of cycling infrastructure while delivering all other transport interventions.

I plan to consult on a draft Bicycle Network Plan for Belfast later in the summer which will provide a framework for the delivery of cycling measures for the city over the next ten years. My aim is to give people the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle, especially for short journeys.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Infrastructure how many times the Belfast to Portadown railway service has been interrupted by security alerts in each of the last two years.
(AQW 736/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Translink's Safety Management Incident System records detail of security alerts affecting the Belfast to Portadown railway service. By calendar month this shows 5 incidents in 2014 and 6 in 2015.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether road repairs will be completed on the (i) Killmorekee Road, Lisnaskea; (ii) Innishrooske, Lisnaskea; (iii) Tirriffey and Derryelvin Road, Newtownbutler following winter flooding.
(AQW 737/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: During the severe flood event of December 2015 / January 2016, many roads were flooded across the North with over 50 roads flooded and closed at various times across Fermanagh.

My Department was successful in securing additional capital funding through the Executive's Flooding Fund and £625k of this has been allocated to deal with flooding issues in Fermanagh.

As you will appreciate the closure of some roads is more disruptive than others and it has been decided that the available funding will be used at locations where the greatest benefit to the largest number of road users is to be achieved. This funding is therefore being targeted at works on the B127 New Bridge Road at Share, B533 Wattlebridge Road at Derrykerrib, C436 Inishmore Road, C444 Boho Road and U6525 Wellington Road at the entrance to the Bus Depot.

The minor roads you have mentioned are all lightly trafficked and there are no plans to carry out any further work at these locations at this time. However all of the flooding locations will be kept under review and will be considered for inclusion in future programmes of work should additional funding become available.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the progress of the Ulster Canal regeneration.
(AQW 739/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Work on the first phase of the restoration of the Ulster Canal, from Upper Lough Erne to Castlesaunderson commenced in September 2015. This phase includes the dredging of the River Finn and the provision of a new bridge and canal section at Derrykerrib. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in 2017.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether her Department has considered adopting greenways located in Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and what funding streams are available to pursue such projects.
(AQW 740/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department is currently developing a strategic plan for greenways which I intend to publish later this year. This plan will provide a framework to assist local councils in the development of their own greenway schemes. I am also continuing with the delivery of the competitive small grants programme for greenways which can provide councils with access to funding to help them draw up feasibility studies and scheme designs.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the roads repairs on (i) Innishmore Road, Lisbellaw; (ii) Derrylin Road, Lisnaskea; and (iii) Watterbridge Road, Newtownbutler following the winter flooding.

(AQW 741/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am pleased to advise that funding has been allocated to my Department as part of June monitoring to enable these schemes to be delivered.

The highest priority Flood Alleviation scheme is on B127 New Bridge Road Lisnaskea, near the Share Centre. While a number of solutions were considered the preferred option is for a piled concrete slab construction. Design work on this option is now ongoing and it is hoped to commence work in October 2016.

Work on C436 Inishmore Road and B533 Wattlebridge Road, which involves raising the roads, is expected to be carried out in August/September 2016. Progression of the schemes at Derrylin Road and Wattlebridge Road are subject to successful acquisition of land.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Infrastructure how he plans to alleviate the traffic problems associated with the A1 dual carriageway at Hillsborough roundabout.

(AQW 754/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My officials are aware that during a short period in the morning peak there are queues on the A1 dual carriageway due to traffic accessing the Hillsborough roundabout from Hillsborough.

From a traffic management perspective my Department has considered a number of measures to improve the efficiency of the existing junction at peak times. A free-flow lane, similar to the one provided at the A1/A101 roundabout further north was assessed as a possibility. However, due to the high speed of traffic in off-peak hours and the complex nature of this junction, this option was ruled out on safety grounds. The feasibility of installing traffic signals at the roundabout was also considered. I am informed by officials that informal consultation with residents' groups within Hillsborough and yourself has indicated that such a proposal would not find favour.

As you may also be aware, longer term larger scale options to connect the A1 to the M1, by-passing or grade separating the Hillsborough Road roundabout have been developed to a preliminary stage. The Executive is currently focused on delivering its Capital Flagship projects. This includes the A5 and A6 road schemes, the Belfast Transport Hub and Belfast Rapid Transit, as well as York Street Interchange. As such there is currently insufficient funding to continue development work on the proposed M1/A1 Sprucefield Bypass scheme at present. Progress of this scheme will depend on future budget settlements and Executive priorities.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Infrastructure, given the current backlog in the Blue Badge Unit, to outline the guidelines for people with an expired blue badge and no replacement.

(AQW 755/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The following guidance is provided on the NIDirect website:

"The Blue Badge Unit is currently dealing with a 12 week backlog of applications. All applications are being processed as quickly as possible. You can continue to use your existing badge provided it has an expiry date after 1st March 2016 and you have submitted a re-application form. Our Traffic Attendants are aware of this and you will not be penalised for using your expired badge. However, this only applies in Northern Ireland and does not apply on private roads and car parks."

The Department has communicated with the Department of Health and the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry about the need for these organisations to inform businesses and private car park operators of the blue badge expiry date situation.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline how many street lights are currently non-operational in (i) Portadown; (ii) Lurgan; and (iii) Banbridge.

(AQW 756/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Since April 2015, TransportNI responded to lighting defects reported by the public or by public representatives.

On 9 June 2016, the numbers of reported street lighting defects awaiting repair were:

- Craigavon Section (including Portadown and Lurgan): 140 defects.
- Banbridge Section (including Banbridge Town): 43 defects.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment of the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis; and what action can be taken by a person who feels that they have been discriminated against by a private hire taxi company who have repeatedly failed to provide a wheelchair accessible taxi.

(AQW 774/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: A review of wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs) in Northern Ireland commissioned by the former Department of the Environment in 2013 found that some 6.2% of the taxi fleet in Northern Ireland were wheelchair accessible taxis. In the

Belfast city, 10.7% of available taxis are wheelchair accessible, dropping to some 8.7% in the Belfast metropolitan area. The proportions are much lower in other urban districts and rural districts, being 3% and 2.2% respectively.

The review found that there is a significant shortfall in availability of WATs in rural areas, particularly at daytime during weekdays. The research has indicated that the new legislation, with an enhanced specification, will result in the provision of around 80 new WATs across Northern Ireland, with the majority of these operating in the Belfast Metropolitan Area.

The new Regulations will help the Department monitor the supply of WATs throughout the North as, for the first time, these will be licensed beyond solely the Belfast area. This new information will be important in determining the extent of supply issues and help inform our future policy approach to address undersupply.

With respect to your case of a person who feels discriminated against by refusal to provide a wheelchair accessible taxi, the Disability Discrimination Act (the DDA) makes it unlawful for transport service providers, including taxi operators, to discriminate against disabled people in the way they provide, or do not provide, their services. If consumers or operators are in any doubt about their rights or duties under the DDA, they may wish to consult the Equality Commission's Code of Practice on the provision and use of transport vehicles or contact the Commission for more information.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the impact the most recent changes to the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 has on wedding cars.

(AQW 783/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The most recent changes for the taxi industry in general, and for the wedding car industry more specifically have been the introduction of a new Taxi Licence test (including new categories of licence). This is a continuation of wedding cars being regulated alongside taxis under the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, which already required the vehicles and drivers to be licensed.

In the new taxi regime, all vehicles which were currently licensed as a wedding car automatically transfer into the Class C category, a category specifically designed to accommodate cars undertaking work like weddings or funerals etc. Class C vehicles are exempt from some of the other major changes within the Taxi industry, such as new requirements for taximeters, printers, roof signs and adherence to maximum fares.

The Class C category will permit more types of wedding cars to be licensed than was the case under the old regime, including 2 door and convertible vehicles, something the industry has sought for a number of years.

A further change that was made in October 2014, but only comes into force from 1 September 2016 relates to the requirement for all taxi drivers, including wedding car drivers, to undertake period training prior to renewing their Taxi Driver's Licence. The requirement is that they undertake approximately 7 hours training per year, a proportion of which must be relating to Disability Awareness.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on plans to buy and refurbish the Waterside train station.

(AQW 787/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Translink is continuing to negotiate with the owners of the old site in relation to its purchase. In the meantime it has appointed Integrated Design Team Leaders to take forward a Feasibility Study, to look at two options:

- A new station on the current site; and
- Redevelopment of the old original Waterside Train Station.

Translink has created initial conceptual designs but more work is needed on both options. It is hoped that an Economic Appraisal will be submitted to my Department towards the end of 2016.

My Department's initial application for funding towards the development of a new multi-modal transport hub in the North West under the Sustainable Transport Objective of the INTERREG VA programme was approved on 8 March.

Following approval of this initial application my Department is now engaged in the process of developing a second, more detailed application which will be submitted to the Managing Authority for assessment by the 22 August.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure what actions his Department will take during 2016-17 to progress research into coastal management and defences; and to ensure that any research includes consultation with coastal erosion groups such as the Ards Peninsula Coastal Erosion Group.

(AQW 829/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am very aware of the issues relating to coastal erosion and coastal management, and my Department has some important roles to play in addressing these issues.

I welcome the initiative taken by the former Minister for Regional Development last year in establishing a Coastal Management Forum, and I look forward to working with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to build on this. This Forum has brought together relevant organisations including local councils, the National Trust and Government agencies under the chairmanship of Ministers. An outcome from the Forum has been bids by some councils for funding to commission research into coastal management issues. I understand that the National Trust is also seeking to commission

some research. The Coastal Management Forum will seek to ensure that the outcome of any research will be shared with all relevant parties including local interest groups.

My Department is currently engaged with the Ards Peninsula Coastal Erosion Group (APCEG) and I commend the achievements of this group in highlighting the issues of coastal management. There is an important role to be played by community based groups in addressing coastal management issues and my Department will continue to engage with APCEG and any other like minded groups as appropriate.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans he has to address the flooding issues at Hyacinth Avenue, Ballykelly.

(AQW 866/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have been advised that NI Water has completed its Ballykelly drainage area model to assist in determining the cause of the Hyacinth Avenue flooding issue. This model is being used to assess the current and future drainage needs of the Ballykelly area and to identify solutions.

The implementation of a suitable solution to the flooding issue in Ballykelly will be subject to a viable engineering option and the necessary funding being available.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will ensure that the damage caused to private property by the recent flooding at Hyacinth Avenue Ballykelly will be repaired.

(AQW 867/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I, along with NI Water, regret the distress and inconvenience experienced by residents of Hyacinth Avenue, Ballykelly, following flooding on Tuesday 7 June 2016, due to localised heavy rainfall.

I have been advised by NI Water that a full clean up of the area was carried out following the flooding incident and that any claims which are received will be given urgent consideration.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure how advanced is the model to devise a solution for the flooding issues at Hyacinth Avenue, Ballykelly.

(AQW 868/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have been advised by NI Water that the Ballykelly Network Model was completed in September 2015 and a draft consultant report, including high level solutions, was received at the end of April 2016.

The draft report is currently under review by NI Water with some further detailed work required to verify flooding mechanisms. NI Water hopes to conclude this further detailed work by the end of July 2016.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much of the £13.1 million allocated for the A5 in the 2016/17 budget has been spent to date.

(AQW 886/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The £13.2m included in the budget allocation for 2016/17 was identified at a point in time as the amount necessary to progress design and development of the full A5 Western Transport Corridor scheme in the current financial year.

The Fresh Start Agreement to commence construction on the first section of the scheme between New Buildings and north of Strabane in 2017 with a view to completion by 2019 means that around £5.4 million of the £13.2 million will now be required in the current financial year.

Approximately £450k has been spent on the scheme to date this year, largely on consultant fees in preparation for a Public Inquiry which is scheduled to begin in October. This Inquiry relates to the recently published draft Vesting, Direction and Stopping-Up Orders as well as the Environmental Statement for the entire scheme. I am currently looking at options to maximise delivery on the A5 scheme over this mandate.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the A5 project.

(AQW 887/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: On 16 February 2016 the then Department for Regional Development (DRD) published for consultation the Notice of Intention to Make Vesting Orders (draft Vesting Orders) for the following phases of the scheme:

- Phase 1A - New Buildings to north of Strabane;
- Phase 1B - south of Omagh to Ballygawley; and
- Phase 2 - north of Strabane to south of Omagh.

The Notice of Intention to Make a Direction Order (draft Direction Order) for the length between New Buildings and Ballygawley and a new Environmental Statement (ES) covering the full extent of the scheme between New Buildings and Aghnacloy were also published at that time. The consultation period extended to 4 April 2016 during which time 972 representations were received. A further consultation was carried out on a revised Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the

Environmental Statement. This commenced on 18 April 2016 and extended to 2 June 2016. A small number of further representations were received during this time.

A Public Inquiry has been programmed for autumn 2016, to be administered by the Planning Appeals Commission, and the Inspectors Report is then expected around May 2017. My Department will then consider the recommendations of this Report in detail before I make a decision on whether to proceed with the scheme and make the necessary statutory Orders (Direction Order, Vesting Order and Stopping-Up Order).

Subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory processes, I am hopeful that construction can commence in late 2017 on Phase 1A (between New Buildings and north of Strabane) in line with the 'A Fresh Start' Agreement.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the proposed one-way system at the Holy Family Primary School, Omagh.
(AQW 888/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The legislative process to provide the one-way system is currently underway. Subject to successful completion of the legislative process it is expected that the one-way system will be in place in September 2016.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment on how a potential European Union exit will impact on future funding streams for his Department.
(AQW 889/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Notwithstanding the result of the imminent EU Referendum, I will ensure that my Department remains focused on delivering key infrastructure projects within its future financial allocations.

In the event of a 'leave' vote succeeding any consequent exit would be a protracted process that will be underpinned by unilateral policy, statutory and fiscal negotiations; as such, I do not expect those projects already in receipt of EU co-financing to be detrimentally affected. I have in the meantime instructed my officials to proceed with preparations for future applications in a 'business as usual' manner.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the residential streets in West Tyrone that not yet adopted by Transport NI.
(AQW 890/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Please see enclosed a list of live developments sites for the West Tyrone Constituency. Please note that the development addresses provided are those used in the bond and agreement documentation and that these are based on the address submitted as part of the planning permission. In some cases these now differ from the development name adopted by the developer.

I should perhaps take the opportunity to clarify that a live site is a phase of development that has commenced and as part of its planning permission, has received a determination in accordance with the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980. The stage of construction of these sites varies significantly from site to site with in some cases only house foundations being in place while other developments are largely complete.

In order to make best use of the resources available to the Department and ensure that those resources are used to progress the adoption of sites which have the greatest impact on members of the public, officials have developed a prioritised list of backlog sites; the list pertaining to the West Tyrone area is also enclosed.

The definition of a backlog site is centered around 80% occupancy of the dwellings with the length of time that developments have been 80% occupied being a further consideration. Officials also consider the severity of defects within these developments when deciding on priorities which are classified as follows:

- Priority 1- backlog site for more than 5 years
- Priority 2 – backlog site for more than 3 years
- Priority 3 – backlog site.

Officials work closely with developers to try and get them to complete development roads to an adoptable standard. While the majority of developments go through the process relatively smoothly, it sometimes becomes evident that a developer is incapable or unwilling to complete the work and in such cases the Department will consider enforcement proceedings with resources directed towards the highest priority backlog sites.

I hope this information is helpful but if you require any further clarification, Departmental officials in TransportNI Western Division would be happy to discuss with you.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the proposed weed spraying programme for West Tyrone in the current financial year.
(AQW 918/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The electoral area of West Tyrone straddles two TransportNI Section Office areas namely Derry & Strabane Section Office and Fermanagh & Omagh East Section Office. As a result weed control in the constituency is undertaken by different external contractors.

Work instructions in the Derry City and Strabane area have been issued and spraying commenced in the Derry City centre on 4 June 2016 and in Strabane town centre on 18 June 2016. Weed spraying will be rolled out to all other areas within the council area over the next four weeks weather permitting.

In the Fermanagh & Omagh East area the commencement of weed control has been delayed due to the need to procure and initiate a new 5-year contract. A contractor has recently been appointed and weed spraying in the Omagh area is expected to commence within a matter of weeks.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the funding available through his Department for town centre regeneration.

(AQW 919/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not hold a specific budget for town centre regeneration as responsibility will rest with the Minister for the Department for Communities (DfC). Local authorities would be the lead partner, however if the regeneration required improvements or new road/street light infrastructure, then my officials would be invited to join the project boards. DfC can also make a transfer of budget to my Department in monitoring rounds to enable agreed regeneration works to be carried out.

In addition, works carried out by my Department to resurface roads, footways, create cycle ways, replace street light installations with LED lanterns, together with a range of transport projects contribute to town centre regeneration.

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether the necessary funding is in place to enable contracts to be awarded to undertake weed spraying and verge cutting in Strabane.

(AQW 921/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can confirm that sufficient funding for weed control is in place this year within the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. Work instructions have been issued and spraying commenced in the Derry City centre on 4 June 2016 and in Strabane town centre on 18 June 2016. Weed spraying will be rolled out to all other areas over the next four weeks weather permitting.

You will be aware that additional funding has been allocated to my Department following June monitoring and this will allow an improved service across a range of routine maintenance operations. In relation to grass cutting we will now be able to cut grass twice across all areas as required during 2016/17. Additional cutting at sightlines may be carried out as required.

Grass cutting within West Tyrone has been on-going for two weeks within the Council area and is progressing satisfactorily.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure why the broken street lamps in Bloomfield Estate, Bangor are yet to be fixed.

(AQW 922/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I would refer to my answer to AQW 199/16-21 on the same matter.

In addition, I would emphasise that since April 2015, TransportNI no longer carry out night scouting operations to locate defective street lights and as such only specific defects reported by the public or public representatives are scheduled for repair.

Whilst my Street Lighting Sections do not have the resources to carry out ad hoc surveys, I have made an exception in this case and can advise that an additional 29 defective lights have been identified in this area which had not been previously reported to my Department. These have now been added to the repair schedule and will be dealt with in due course.

By way of further explanation I would also advise that 11 of these defective lights are located on footpaths which are not accessible from the road by our normal repair equipment. Following a recent safety incident, the Department's Street Lighting contractors are reviewing their equipment and safe working methods in this type of location so repairs here will take a little longer to complete.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure when is the scheduled date of the first grass cut by Transport NI for the Bangor area.

(AQW 924/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that the first grass cut in the Bangor area is already underway.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department bided for funding for grass and weed maintenance in the June Monitoring round.

(AQW 925/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of the June Monitoring Round, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m which will be used to programme a second grass cut as well as to enhance other essential maintenance activities. Although no element of the June Monitoring allocation relates to weed control, within existing resources a programme of weed control is being taken forward, including dealing with noxious and invasive weeds.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 42/16-21, whether the policy of permitting small dogs/animals is solely at the discretion of the driver.

(AQW 929/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Translink's current Dog/Animal Policy states that:

"Dogs/Animals deemed as dangerous by an authorised member of staff will not be carried on any service."

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 42/16-21, whether it is Translink's policy that small dogs/pets travelling on public transport must sit on a seat and are not permitted to travel on either the owner's lap or the floor of the vehicle.

(AQW 930/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The relevant sections of Translink's current Dog/Animal Policy state that:

"At the discretion of the Company, or an authorised person, small dogs or animals may be carried free of charge on ordinary Metro, Ulsterbus and Goldline services at the owner's risk. All dogs must be kept on a leash, and kept under a seat throughout the entire journey."

"Dogs/Animals should be of a size that they can be kept under a seat or around the feet of the owner without causing an obstruction."

"Dogs/Animals must be clean, adequately controlled and kept on a leash at all times, unless contained in an appropriate container."

"Dog/Animal must travel on the floor throughout the journey, and if found to occupy a seat/table, the owner will be liable to a penalty charge."

The policy was subject to customer consultation.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 42/16-21, to outline (i) his Department's; and (ii) Translink's definition of a small dog.

(AQW 931/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The carriage of dogs is an operational matter for Translink. The relevant section of Translink's current Dog/Animal Policy state that:

"Dogs/Animals should be of a size that they can be kept under a seat or around the feet of the owner without causing an obstruction."

"Dogs/Animals must be clean, adequately controlled and kept on a leash at all times, unless contained in an appropriate container."

The policy was subject to customer consultation.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) for an update on the proposed transfer of ownership of Cairn Wood to Forestry Service; and (ii) to outline the current plans for the Ballysallagh reservoirs.

(AQW 948/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: This is an operational matter for NI Water (NIW), which has an obligation to dispose of property that is no longer in use. Ballysallagh Upper reservoir and catchment, which includes Cairn Wood, and Ballysallagh Lower have been identified as surplus to NIW requirements.

NIW has informed me that the sale on the open market of the lands which include Ballysallagh Upper reservoir, has been put on hold while Forest Service interest is being considered. A decision is expected on this shortly.

NIW has also advised me that an interest expressed on Ballysallagh Lower reservoir, following the invitation to the public sector, has been withdrawn and that it has no immediate plans to advertise Ballysallagh Lower on the open market.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) whether the provisions of the Belfast Water Act 1899 still apply to the land at Woodburn Forest; and (ii) if so, to outline how petroleum exploration can be permitted given the stipulations of sections 15(2) and 15(3).

(AQW 949/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: It is my understanding that the Belfast Water Act 1899 was repealed by the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1973.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Infrastructure when grass cutting will be undertaken in South Antrim.

(AQW 951/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am pleased to advise work is well underway on both the rural and urban grass cutting programme within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council area. The first cut of our urban grass, which commenced on 9th May 2016, is now complete and work is already underway on a second urban cut. Rural grass cutting commenced on the 23rd May 2016 and it is expected to be complete by mid July 2016.

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Infrastructure for her assessment of the findings of the Ricardo report on the cost benefit analysis of wind power; and the SONI report confirming 1800MW of wind power capacity has already been approved, given the level of current approvals, in relying on the economic contribution of the project as a deciding factor in planning approval for C/2011/0459/F.

(AQW 975/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: A Notice of Opinion to approve this application was issued on 30 October 2015. Subsequently the Department received notification from Causeway Coast & Glens District Council on 17 November 2015 requesting to appear before the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) under Section 29(7) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, for the purpose of making representation on the Department's opinion to approve the application.

That hearing is set to commence at the end of August 2016. It is expected that this independent hearing will take account of all relevant matters before making a recommendation to the Department. The final decision will rest with the Minister for Infrastructure. Therefore I do not consider it to be appropriate to comment on these specific issues in advance of the independent hearing.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister for Infrastructure what level of responsibility his Department has in funding a Narrow Water bridge; and whether other Executive Departments will contribute any funding to the scheme.

(AQW 984/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: A Fresh Start: the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan commits that the NI Executive and the Irish Government will undertake a review of the Narrow Water Bridge project with a view to identifying options for its future development. On behalf of the Executive and working with colleagues in Dublin, my Department has been tasked with taking the lead on this work and a report on options will be presented to the next North South Ministerial Council planned for July.

This will enable Ministers collectively to determine how best the Narrow Water Project should be taken forward and I look forward to working my Executive colleagues and the Dublin government on progressing the Narrow Water Bridge.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the planned road improvements for the Dunloy area for the next five years.

(AQW 994/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am pleased to advise that work has been progressing well on the construction of the A26 Frosses Road dualling scheme. The remaining work, approximately 40% of the total, is expected to be completed by summer 2017, bringing the total invested in the scheme to approximately £55M.

With regard to other road improvements associated with minor works, traffic measures and structural maintenance I am unable to be specific at this time as delivery over the next five years will very much depend on the capital budgets available and the results of in-year bids. However I can confirm that asphalt resurfacing works are planned on Bridge Road between the village and the Primary School. Footway resurfacing works are also planned to be carried out on Bridge Road footway from Tullaghans Road to the Parish Centre, along with Phase 2 of the footway widening on Garryduff Road.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure outline the road improvements made in the Dunloy area in the last five years.

(AQW 995/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The following road improvements have been made in the Dunloy area in the last five years:

Resurfacing schemes were carried out at the following locations: U/C120 Station Road, C89 Tullaghans Road at 2 locations, Mc Camphill Park Footways, Braeside Park Footways/steps, C89 Tullaghans Road (at Mullan Road), C89 Tullaghans Road (at No.93), U/C119 Galdanagh Road (near Tullaghans), Carness Drive Footways, B16 Main Street/Garryduff Road, Dunloy, U/C153 Boyds Road, U/C122 Anticur Road, U/C122 New Road Phase 1, B16 Bellaghy Road/Park Footway, Hawthorne Terrace Footways Phase 2, U/C143 Bridge Road (at No.93), U/C119 Galdanagh Road (north of railway), Bellaghy Road, U/C Glenbuck Road, U/C120 Bridge Road (at Presbytery Lane).

In addition footway widening work was carried out at B16 Garryduff Road (village northwards) and a Minor Works scheme was completed at the junction of the B93 Killagan Road and B16 Bellaghy Road to improve visibility for vehicles emerging from the junction.

I trust the above information is useful.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail whether his Department has considered relocating the Sydenham railway station closer to Belfast City Airport.

(AQW 1001/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Departments priorities are to maintain and improve passenger capacity and remove bottlenecks on the existing rail network. This does not preclude new halts where passenger demand justifies it and additional finance is obtainable.

Translink has considered on a number of occasions in the past alternative rail access arrangements to service George Best Belfast City Airport, but there have been constraints given the infrastructure of the surrounding area and difficulties involved in acquiring adjacent land to facilitate any such development.

There is no funding identified for this in current budgets and no formal feasibility study has been undertaken. Regular bus services run to and from the Airport.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to the Crocknaboy Road, Greencastle, County Tyrone, to outline (i) on what grounds a proposal was made to recommend the abandonment of the road; (ii) whether any decisions been made as to how the proposed abandoned road may be used; and (iii) whether his Department will revoke the abandonment proposal following sufficient objections confirming the road is still in regular use.

(AQW 1004/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I would confirm that no decision to abandon Crocknaboy Road, Greencastle has been made at this time. By way of background TransportNI were approached by consultants acting on behalf of the gold mining company Dalradian, to consider abandonment of a portion of the Crocknaboy Road in Greencastle to facilitate development.

Without making any commitments as to the conclusion, TransportNI agreed to take forward this proposal and commenced the required consultation process. The public consultation exercise is ongoing and ends on the 25th July.

After this exercise is complete officials will compile a report outlining all the issues and this will be given due consideration before further decisions are made in relation to the requested abandonment.

I hope this clarification is helpful.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for her assessment of the impact a change in taxi meter regulations will have on rural populations.

(AQW 1005/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The introduction of taximeters and a maximum fare was introduced to increase transparency and consumer confidence through the creation of a fair and transparent charging regime. It will help protect customers from being overcharged for taxi journeys and will also help drivers erroneously accused of overcharging.

In developing the proposals for the level of maximum fare, PA Consulting Services/Transport Research Institute carried out a significant level of research in both rural and urban areas in the North of Ireland on the costs of providing a taxi service. Their report concluded that there was no significant difference in the costs of providing a taxi service between urban and rural areas and that it would be appropriate, therefore, to set a single maximum fare across the whole of the North.

Current rates in rural areas can be significantly lower than in urban areas and the setting of a maximum fare, rather than imposing a regulated or fixed fare throughout the North, will allow drivers to choose to continue to set the rates as they do currently.

I understand that specific concerns were raised with former Minister Mark Durkan, who had responsibilities for taxi regulation, by rural operators regarding not being adequately compensated for dead miles (i.e. those miles that the driver must travel to and from for a customer in order to undertake the booking). Following discussions with rural operators and the Consumer Council amendments were made to the relevant Regulations to provide an exemption from the use of the taximeter and adherence to the maximum fare when the journey involves excessive dead miles. It is intended that this exemption will address the issue of taxi supply in rural areas whilst still enhancing consumer protection.

In relation to financial implications, the cost of purchase and fitment of a taximeter and a receipt printer is likely to be around £220 and £200 respectively with a proposed fee of approximately £35 to be paid for the taximeter test. The taximeter test fee will be paid in Year 1, and only thereafter when a taximeter is replaced or the fare changed or the seal broken, rather than every year.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the progress on the proposed realignment of the Barnailt Road / Lisnakilly Road junction, Limavady.

(AQW 1017/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The detail of the adjustments to the line markings at the junction to improve the stacking room on the Barnailt Road approach to Lisnakilly Road is currently being developed. It is hoped to programme the work for later this financial year subject to the availability of finance.

I trust this clarifies my Department's position on this matter.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the names of unadopted roads and streets in Upper Bann.

(AQW 1023/16-21)

Mr Hazzard:

The Hollows	Lurgan
Devel at Cornakinnegar link Road	Lurgan
Cornakinnegar Road, St Teresas P.S	Lurgan
Development at Old Portadown Road	Lurgan
Off Rectory Park	Lurgan
Kiln Road 5 No. houses	Lurgan
Shimna Walk/Pollock Mews	Lurgan
Development at Banbridge Road	Lurgan
Development at Gilford Road	Lurgan
Footway link Gilford Road	Lurgan
Kiln Lodge	Lurgan
Development at Demense Avenue	Lurgan
Devel adj to 48 Derrymacash Rd	Lurgan
Development at Derrytrasna Lane	Lurgan
Development at No. 2 Aghalee Road	Lurgan
Development at Deans Walk	Lurgan
Parking bays at Drumnamoe Gardens	Lurgan
Development at College Walk	Lurgan
Development at Eastway	Lurgan
Proposed housing at Ardmore Road	Lurgan
Development at Kilmore Road	Lurgan
Lilburn Hall	Lurgan
Lilburn Hall (phase 2)	Lurgan
Development at Ashford Grange	Lurgan
Beechfield Avenue (St 1 snagged)	Lurgan
Development at Francis Street	Lurgan
Development at Tannaghmore Primary School	Lurgan
Hillcrest	Lurgan
Glen Park	Lurgan
Rear of 7 Bowens Lane	Lurgan
Rectory Park	Lurgan
Deerings Wood	Lurgan
Development at Lough Road	Lurgan
Willow Common	Lurgan
Development at Bowens Lane	Lurgan
River Glade Manor	Lurgan
Belvedere (St 11-14 snagged)	Lurgan
Development at Banbridge Road	Lurgan
Ashgrove Close/ Drive	Lurgan
Derryloiste Meadows	Lurgan
Hazel Grove	Lurgan

The Hollows	Lurgan
Toberhewny Lodge	Lurgan
Charles Baron Lodge	Lurgan
Development at Derrymacash Road	Lurgan
Woodvale Gate	Lurgan
Headington Drive	Lurgan
Breagh Drive	Lurgan
James St/ Market St	Lurgan
Super Value, Gilpenstown Road	Lurgan
Boconnell Lodge	Lurgan
Dwelling at Gilford Road	Lurgan
Development at Avenue Road	Lurgan
Carrickvale Manor	Lurgan
Lake Street townhouse	Lurgan
Develop at the Hollows, Gilford Road	Lurgan
Wheelchair ramp Upper Mourne Road	Lurgan
Development at Derrytrasna Road	Lurgan
Development at 31-35 Lough Road	Lurgan
Development at Gilpinstown Road	Lurgan
Development at Annesborough Road	Lurgan
Development at Woodford Park	Lurgan
5No Dwellings at Drumcree Road	Portadown
Development at Drumcree Road	Portadown
Carnreagh, Drumnagoon Road	Portadown
Carnreagh (Phase 2)	Portadown
Lynedale Manor, Kernan Road	Portadown
Development Old Gilford Road	Portadown
Obins Street Flats	Portadown
Timakeel Manor, Moy Road	Portadown
Ballyhannon Lodge	Portadown
Development at Princess Way	Portadown
Development at Shaerf Drive	Portadown
Ulsterville Street	Portadown
Development at Breagh Road	Portadown
Ashgrove Manor, Ashgrove Road	Portadown
Development at Mahon Road (St 1)	Portadown
Development at Obins Street	Portadown
Single dwelling at Moy Road	Portadown
Development at Lurgan Road	Portadown
Bocombra Manor, Old Lurgan Road	Portadown
Development at Gilford Road	Portadown
Development at Mahon Road	Portadown

The Hollows	Lurgan
Breagh Road	Portadown
Orchard Meadows, Loughgall Road	Portadown
66B Gilford Road, Portadown	Portadown
Development at Moy Road	Portadown
Development at Drumnagoan Road	Portadown
Development at Upper Church Road	Portadown
Proposed devel at Loughgall Rd	Portadown
Beaumont Avenue, Lurgan Rd	Portadown
Drumnagoan Rd, Drumford Meadows	Portadown
Obin Street, Corcrair	Portadown
Development at Mahon Road	Portadown
Ballybay Meadows, Loughgall Road	Portadown
College Manor	Portadown
Bocombra Hill (Stage 3)	Portadown
Parking at Garvaghy Park	Portadown
Development at Corcrair Walk	Portadown
Development at Upper Church Road	Portadown
Development at Bannfoot	Portadown
Ballynacor Meadows, Carbet Road	Portadown
Dwelling house at Ballyhannon Rd	Portadown
Keelmount Mews, Scotch Street	Portadown
Breagh Drive, Carn Industrial Estate	Portadown
Development at Princess Way	Portadown
Development at Scotch Street	Portadown
Development at Obin Street	Portadown
Drumnagoan Road, new verge	Portadown
Development at Tandragee Road	Portadown
Lisnisky Lodge, Old Lurgan Road	Portadown
Lisnagrilly Hall, Long Lane	Portadown
Bannfoot Village Dev (Farryview)	Portadown
Development at Long Lane (Stage 1)	Portadown
Development at Tandragee Road	Portadown
Bachelor's Avenue, Killycomaine	Portadown
Development at Loughgall Road	Portadown
Dev at Old Lurgan Rd/Lisnisky Lane	Portadown
Development at Moy Park	Portadown
The Old Rectory, Loughgall Road	Portadown
Development at Obin Street	Portadown
Development at Lisnisky Lane	Portadown
Development at Drumnacanny Rd	Portadown
Additional Parking, Ulsterville Grove	Portadown

The Hollows	Lurgan
Devel at Ballyhannon Rd, Linden Gate	Portadown
Development at Birches Road	Birches
Devel at Clonmakate Rd (50 houses)	Birches
Development at Birches, Ballynarry	Birches
Development at Cloncarrish Road	Birches
Development at Robinsontown (Ph 2)	Birches
Development at Robinsontown	Birches
The Birches, Phase 2	Birches
Development at Clonmakate Road	Birches
Moyraverty Green	Craigavon
Lismore Manor	Craigavon
Carrigart Manor	Craigavon
61 Drumgor Road	Craigavon
Rear 643-654 Ardowen	Craigavon
Cedar Wood, Calvertstown Rd, Bleary	Craigavon
Old Fort Lodge	Craigavon
Carrigart Crescent	Craigavon
Development at Moyraverty Road	Craigavon
Mandeville (Invest N.I.)	Craigavon
Development at Rathmore	Craigavon
Devel at Highfield Rd North Omniplex	Craigavon
Footpath fronting private dwelling	Craigavon
Courtyard, Drumnabreeze Rd	Magheralin
Ballynadrone Meadows, Steps Rd	Magheralin
Broomhill Grove	Magheralin
McMullen Glass Systems (R.T.L.)	Magheralin
Development at Lurgan Road	Magheralin
Broomhill Court Yard	Magheralin
Development at Steps Roads	Magheralin
Development at Old Forge	Magheralin
Development at Main Street	Waringstown
Development at Waring Terrace	Waringstown
Development at Moss Road	Waringstown
Moss View, Moss Road	Waringstown
Brae Manor, Dunkirk Road	Waringstown
Development at Dunkirk Road	Waringstown
Development at Dunkirk Road, Ph 2	Waringstown
Development at Cambrai Road	Waringstown
Monree Hill	Donaghcloney
Winona Manor	Donaghcloney
18-24 Moygannon Road	Donaghcloney

The Hollows	Lurgan
Dromore Road, Gamblestown	Donaghcloney
Laurelvale Grove	Donaghcloney
Strawhill	Donaghcloney
Development at Strawhill	Donaghcloney
Development at Liddels Mill	Donaghcloney
Development at Inn Road	Doolingstown
Development at Regency Avenue	Doolingstown
Development at Derrymore Road	Aghagallon
Development at Lurgan Road	Aghagallon
25 No. dwellings at Derrymore Road	Aghagallon
2 No. Dwellings, Colane Road	Aghagallon
Development at Barankinstown Road	Aghagallon
Play Park New Entrance	Aghagallon
Development at Parknasilla Way	Aghagallon
Development at Derrymore Road	Aghagallon
Dev at Derryola Road, Gawleys Gate	Aghagallon
Old Railway Close,	Castlewellan
Castlewellan Road	Banbridge
Millmount Villas	Banbridge
Oak Lodge	Banbridge
Ballynakeagh	Banbridge
Ballymoney Road	Banbridge
Lotus Green	Banbridge
Glencar Meadows	Banbridge
Edenmore	Banbridge
Rowanvale	Banbridge
Grove Hill	Banbridge
Rathfriland Road	Banbridge
Summerhill	Banbridge
Townsend Street	Banbridge
Gowanvale Drive	Banbridge
Tullyniskey Road	Dromore
Milebush Manor	Dromore
Jubilee Road	Dromore
Cambric Court	Dromore
Chancellors Court	Dromore
Linen Way	Dromore
Old Railway View	Dromore
Church Street	Dromore
Quillyburn Manor	Dromore
Drumlin View	Dromore

The Hollows	Lurgan
The Demense	Dromore
Barbrook Court	Dromore
Newry Road	Rathfriland
Carn Valley	Rathfriland
The Slopes	Rathfriland
Glenview	Rathfriland
Hunters Hill Road	Gilford
Chestnut Brae	Gilford
Castle Hill Park	Gilford
Stramore Road	Gilford
Gilford Community Centre	Gilford
Rockvale	Kinallen
Kinallen Mews	Kinallen
Ashbridge Manor	Kinallen
Banbridge Road	Kinallen
Dolmen Park	Leitrim
Kinallen Road	Dromara
Greenan Grove	Loughbrickland
Newbridge Integrated School	Loughbrickland
Roeshill	Lawrencetown

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his officials will investigate why the damaged (a) wall at Red Bay Peir; and (b) road side hedge at Tavnahan Cottages in Cushendall have not yet been addressed.

(AQW 1033/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My officials within TransportNI have now investigated the delay in repairing both the damaged wall at Red Bay Pier and the road side hedge at Tavnahan Cottages in Cushendall. It appears that the delay has been caused by the TransportNI appointed Contractor being engaged in other maintenance activities on the road network.

I am pleased to confirm, that I have instructed my officials to prioritise these repairs and the Contractor will commence work, on site, on 18th June 2016.

I trust you find this acceptable.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Infrastructure how often grass verges at road junctions will be cut to ensure that sightlines are maintained.

(AQW 1036/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: With the opening budget available it was the intention of my Department's TransportNI to carry out one full cut of grass areas under its maintenance control, with additional cutting of sightlines carried out as required to ensure road safety is maintained.

The Member will be pleased to hear that additional funds for roads maintenance have been allocated as part of the June monitoring round. A portion of this additional funding will be targeted towards a second grass cut.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the average waiting time for processing a blue badge application following receipt by his Department.

(AQW 1037/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Blue Badge Unit is currently dealing with a 12 week backlog of applications. All applications are being processed as quickly as possible. Badge holders can continue to use their existing badge provided it has an expiry date after 1st March 2016 and they have submitted a re-application form. Our Traffic Attendants are aware of this and have been instructed only to enforce contraventions where blue badges are out of date before 1st March 2016. However, this only applies in Northern Ireland and does not apply on private roads and car parks.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the number of outstanding blue badge applications still to be processed, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1038/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: On 13 June 2016 there were 7,010 outstanding Blue Badge applications. The Department does not keep records of Blue Badge applications broken down by constituency and therefore cannot provide this information.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on his Department's long term plans for the Craigantlet Reservoir.

(AQW 1047/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: This is an operational matter for Northern Ireland Water (NIW), which has an obligation to dispose of property that is no longer in use. The impounding reservoirs in the Craigantlet area are Ballysallagh Upper and Ballysallagh Lower reservoirs, and both have been identified as surplus to NIW requirements.

NIW has informed my Department that Forest Service has expressed an interest in acquiring Ballysallagh Upper reservoir and that the sale on the open market has been put on hold while Forest Service interest is being considered. A decision is expected on this shortly.

NIW has also advised that an interest expressed on Ballysallagh Lower reservoir, following the invitation to the public sector, has been withdrawn and that it has no immediate plans to advertise this reservoir on the open market.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on his Department's long term plans for the old Translink Depot in Donaghadee.

(AQW 1050/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As previously advised in response to AQW 620/16-21, the site of Translink's former bus depot in Donaghadee is currently on the open market, for potential development. Translink is expected to operate in line with relevant guidance for the disposal of surplus assets. Translink has produced an Asset Management Plan which has been incorporated into the Departmental Asset Management Plan 2015-2020.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 52473/11-16, for an update on the progress of the Safer Routes to School Scheme for Killyman Primary School; and whether Laghey Primary School will be included in the scheme.

(AQW 1053/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Killyman Primary School Safer Routes to School project is included in the Draft Local Transport & Safety Measures Programme (LT&SM) 2016-2018 for the Mid Ulster District Council area. Delivery is currently provisionally planned for the 2017/18 financial year but this will ultimately depend on the level of capital funding made available to my Department over the next two years.

At this time there are no plans to include the Laghey Primary School in the scheme. However this position will be reviewed when future programmes are being developed.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure when the safety review at Cullybackey rail halt will be completed.

(AQW 1062/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Translink has tendered for the qualified risk assessment and discussions are planned with the selected bidder to gauge next steps. At this stage Translink expects that the safety risk assessment will be completed by August this year and it will then consider options. I have asked Translink to keep me informed of developments and timelines.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure when a new park and ride facility will be provided in Cullybackey.

(AQW 1063/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Translink has commenced work towards the construction of a Park and Ride facility at Cullybackey Railway Station.

A detailed design review and risk assessment, including a CCTV survey of the interaction of vehicles and pedestrians at the existing crossing, has raised concern that additional traffic introduced by the Park and Ride facility could potentially cause blocking over the automatic crossing. This assessment, combined with increased crossing incidents, has led Translink to conclude that the level crossing at Cullybackey Station should be upgraded before the Park and Ride project is commissioned. The crossing upgrade involves significant railway signalling alteration works which could take some time to complete.

Translink has tendered for the qualified risk assessment and discussions are planned with the selected bidder to gauge next steps. At this stage Translink expects that the safety risk assessment will be completed by August this year and it will then consider options. I have asked Translink to keep me informed of developments and timelines.

The estimated completion date of the Park and Ride facility is now 2019/20.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the total number of passengers using (i) Ballymoney; (ii) Ballymena; and (iii) Culleybackey rail halts in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1064/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The relevant passenger flow statistics for the named stations / halts are as outlined in the table below.

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Ballymoney	432,051	410,642	318,678	294,867	269,961
Ballymena	763,834	709,166	572,418	525,001	484,303
Cullybackey	124,422	111,588	84,959	73,216	66,040

Statistics for 2015/16 are still in course of preparation.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline how he will ensure that the junction of Station Road and the A26 will be safe for those travelling on the A26 when the end of Station Road is not salted during the winter.

(AQW 1065/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department officials advise that the Station Road, Glarryford is currently on the salted road network and will remain so during the A26 Frosses Road dualling scheme and also once the new road layout is complete.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the number of blue badges issued in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1072/16-21)

Mr Hazzard:

Financial year	Total number Blue Badges issued
2011/12	38,391
2012/13	36,694
2013/14	41,244
2014/15	39,634
2015/16	40,023

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail (i) what consultation took place between the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the people of Castlederg on the terrorist memorial erected in the Hillview Estate, Castlederg; (ii) what cross community exercise will be implemented as a result of any consultation; and (iii) any discussions that took place between planners from Derry and Strabane District Council in relation to this memorial.

(AQW 1081/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to:

- (i) Their staff has spoken to Elected Representatives and Community Representatives. These discussions have explored alternative ways to recognise the past.
- (ii) They will be consulting with the Good Relations staff from the Local Council as to the most appropriate way forward.
- (iii) There has been communication between the Planners and the Housing Executive in 2015 relating to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for update on the upgrade of the Derry to Belfast railway line.

(AQW 1119/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can provide you with the following up-to-date position on progress of the Derry to Belfast railway line:

The passing loop at Bellarena, including the two new platforms, has been constructed and the down direction platform is now in operational use.

The platform extension at Castlerock has now been completed.

The detailed signaling and telecoms design has now been completed and approximately 50% of the signaling and telecoms infrastructure has been installed.

A line closure is planned for November 2016 to test and commission the signaling and telecoms works which enables trains to and from Derry to pass each other at the passing loop.

The overall project is on programme and is due to be substantially completed by 31 December 2016.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans are in place to deal with the periodic flooding of sections of Newtownbreda Road in South Belfast.

(AQW 1132/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have been advised by NI Water that an investigation into out of sewer flooding on the Newtownbreda Road was completed in May 2016. The report confirms that out of sewer flooding occurs as a result of incapacity in the sewerage system and includes a concept option for a capital project to reduce the flood risk at this location. Work is ongoing to inform this option, including initial ground investigation work, which is planned to commence in July 2016.

Following completion of this ground investigation, NI Water will be in a position to confirm if the concept option for the proposed solution is viable.

Mr K Buchanan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline who has responsibility for verge grass cutting inside a (i) 30 mph zone and; (ii) outside a 30mph zone, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1152/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department's TransportNI is responsible for cutting grass on all areas of the public road network, including grass verges both inside and outside 30mph limits.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline his plans for the expansion of the enforcement team dealing with taxi legislation.

(AQW 1163/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) has primary responsibility for the regulation of the taxi industry. Enforcement officers conduct a wide range of checks on vehicles, drivers and operators, both at the roadside and at commercial premises, to assess compliance with relevant legal provisions and licensing requirements. DVA adopts a risk based approach to its compliance and enforcement activities to ensure that its resources are targeted against the most non-compliant operators and drivers. The introduction of new taxi legislation will not alter this approach and as such there are no plans to expand the taxi enforcement team at this time. However, this position will be kept under review as the new taxi legislation takes effect.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much of the departmental monies from the June Monitoring Round will be allocated in South Down.

(AQW 1177/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £8m Capital and £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting etc.

My Department's TransportNI does not allocate funding on a constituency basis.

TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity i.e. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure, given the reduction in the number of cuts to roadside verges and central reservations in both urban and rural settings, whether he plans to ensure that Transport NI complies with the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

(AQW 1180/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: With the opening budget available, my Department's TransportNI planned to carry out one full cut of grass areas under its maintenance control, with additional cutting of sightlines carried out thereafter to ensure road safety is maintained. A programme of weed control is also being undertaken, including dealing with the treatment of Noxious weeds to ensure the Department meets its legislative requirement.

The Member will be pleased to hear that additional funds for roads maintenance have been allocated as part of the June monitoring round. A portion of this additional funding will be targeted towards a second grass cut.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline (i) when the reduction of the speed limit announced by Transport NI on a stretch of the A2 adjacent to Groomsport from 60mph to 50mph will be implemented; (ii) the reason for the delay; and (iii) if he plans to revisit this speed limit reduction to consider a limit of 40mph as previously suggested by local residents and elected representatives.

(AQW 1183/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise that the Order for the making of the new 50mph speed limit on A2 Groomsport By-Pass has now been made. A formal Notice will be published in local papers shortly. The new 50mph speed limit signs can then be erected allowing PSNI to carry out enforcement.

The legislative process can be lengthy and this Order was delayed due to Purdah and the setting up of the new Assembly.

My Department has no plans to revisit this speed limit reduction. Speed limits are assessed in line with criteria set out in the Setting Speed Limits in Northern Ireland Policy and must be rational and appropriate for the individual road and environment. A 40mph speed limit is only considered where the area is partially built up on both sides of the road with individual direct accesses along approximately 50% of the frontage. This is not the case on Groomsport By-Pass, where there is limited direct access and no frontage development.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline (i) the maintenance works planned for the Sydenham bypass; and (ii) whether his Department intends to upgrade the bypass to a three lane carriageway.

(AQW 1185/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The footways and carriageways on Sydenham By-pass are inspected by my Department's TransportNI on a monthly cyclical basis and any actionable defect which is considered to be hazardous to the public is identified and programmed for repair. A minor resurfacing scheme is planned this financial year for the Sydenham By-Pass at its junction with Dee Street, however implementation of this scheme is subject to the necessary finance and resource being available.

My Department does have a proposal in its Strategic Road Improvement programme to upgrade the bypass from a dual two lane carriageway to a dual three lane carriageway. This is now at the third stage of a three stage development process:

- Stage 1 concluded in May 2008 with the selection of the Proposed Corridor;
- Stage 2 concluded in February 2010 with selection of the scheme Preferred Option;
- Development of Stage 3, which is subject to funding, will involve a detailed assessment of the Preferred Option and consultation with key stakeholders. When complete the outcome of this will result in the publication of the Statutory Orders: the draft Direction Order, Environmental Statement and Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order.

At this time the Executive has identified a number of Flagship Projects where indicative funding has been agreed for future budget periods. Unfortunately the Sydenham Bypass upgrade / widening is not one of these projects and its progression is dependent on the availability of finance through future budgetary settlements.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline (i) the investigations his Department has made into the cause of recent flooding in Ballykelly; and (ii) what action will be taken to prevent future flooding.

(AQW 1187/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have been advised that NI Water has completed its Ballykelly drainage area model to assist in determining the cause of the Hyacinth Avenue flooding issue. This model is being used to assess the current and future drainage needs of the Ballykelly area and to identify solutions.

The implementation of a suitable solution to the flooding issue in Ballykelly will be subject to a viable engineering option and the necessary funding being available.

Ms Archibald asked the Minister for Infrastructure, following the allocation of funding in the June Monitoring Round, to outline whether his Department will be reviewing the maintenance of rural roads; and increasing the regularity of grasscutting.

(AQW 1188/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Member will be pleased that, as part of the June monitoring round, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m which will be used to programme a second grass cut as well as to enhance other essential maintenance activities which will have a positive impact on rural roads.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure how many electric car charging points have been out of order; and how long they were out of order, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1193/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: On 30th July 2015, the then Minister for Regional Development Danny Kennedy and the former Environment Minister Mark H Durkan announced that responsibility for the operation, maintenance and development of the public charge point network for electric vehicles users in Northern Ireland had transferred to the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).

I have, therefore, arranged for your questions to be sent directly to the Head of Regulation and ecarNI in ESB and requested that a detailed response to the issues you have raised be sent to you directly.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail (i) how many claims have been made over the last five years for damage caused by road defects; and (ii) the amount of money paid by the Department, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1198/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department cannot provide the information in the format you requested. This is because the management information system used by TransportNI records claims information on the basis of the TransportNI section offices, which broadly align to the new council areas. In addition, the NICS accounting system does not differentiate between the causes of incidents which result in claims.

Table 1 details the number of vehicle damage claims received and the amount of compensation paid by the Department for Regional Development per TransportNI Section Office over the last five financial years. These figures include claims for

damage incurred on the footway and carriageway due to defects and other issues. In addition, as the Department for Regional Development's 2015/16 Annual Accounts have not yet been audited, the compensation figures include projected 2015/16 figures (which could be subject to change).

Table 1: Vehicle damage claims from 2011/12 to 2015/16

Transport NI Section Office	Number of claims received	Compensation paid £
Antrim & Newtownabbey	574	117,465
Ards & North Down	599	58,661
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (East)	429	42,796
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (West)	426	54,404
Belfast North	192	22,085
Belfast South	264	25,943
Causeway Coast & Glens (East)	112	22,308
Causeway Coast & Glens (West)	203	31,737
Fermanagh & Omagh (East)	368	38,258
Fermanagh & Omagh (West)	267	43,720
Lisburn & Castlereagh	955	92,131
Derry & Strabane	299	43,851
Mid & East Antrim	532	64,664
Mid Ulster (North)	665	99,441
Mid Ulster (South)	316	43,569
Newry Mourne & Down (East)	422	78,395
Newry Mourne & Down (West)	851	128,387

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the frequency that weed spraying and grass cutting operations are carried out in Upper Bann.

(AQW 1203/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following June monitoring an additional £5m has been allocated to the Department for routine road maintenance activities. This will allow TransportNI to enhance the level of services which it can provide, including grass cutting.

I am pleased to advise that the first grass cut is already under way in Upper Bann and the additional funding will allow grass to be cut twice across all areas during 2016/17.

In terms of weed control, I can confirm that a full program of weed spraying has commenced in the Upper Bann area with further spraying as required throughout the season.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) he is aware of the complaints being received by public representatives regarding the condition of roadside and central reservation areas of grass, under the control of Transport NI in both rural and urban settings, that currently are only receiving one cut per season; (ii) he has plans to increase the frequency of cutting; and to outline the reasons for the current situation.

(AQW 1207/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The provision of grass cutting services, along with many other routine maintenance activities, has been adversely affected by budgetary constraints in my Department over the last two years.

I fully acknowledge the difficulties that the reduced service has had on road users and I am aware of the complaints being received by members of the house.

As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m which will be used to programme a second grass cut as well as to enhance other essential maintenance activities.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an indicative date when parking restrictions will be put in place to cover the new parking space configuration in Abbey Street and High Street, Bangor.

(AQW 1216/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department is currently processing legislation for parking and waiting restrictions in Bangor town centre to facilitate the new kerbline arrangements resulting from the Public Realm works undertaken by Ards and North Down Council and the Department for Social Development, now known as Department for Communities.

All necessary road markings and traffic signs have been provided as part of the Public Realm works. However, the supporting legislation for the parking restrictions has yet to be completed. On completion of this process, enforcement will be carried out by my Department's Parking Enforcement Attendants.

The Notice of Intention for the parking and waiting restrictions in Bangor town centre was published in local papers on Thursday 9 June 2016. This offers the opportunity for the public to make representation or object to the proposals within a 22 day period. If the Department receives no objections to the proposals then enforcement of the new layout can commence.

If formal objections are received to any of the proposals during this process, these will need to be carefully considered.

Unfortunately, I am unable to indicate a timescale when this legislative process will be completed because this is dependant on the validity of any objections received during the ongoing consultation process.

Resumption of parking enforcement cannot take place until the legislative process is complete.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much of the £25 million allocated in the June Monitoring Round will be spent on the repair of potholes in North Down.

(AQW 1228/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the repair of potholes, cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting etc.

My Department's TransportNI does not allocate funding on a constituency basis.

TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity i.e. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much of the £25 million allocated in the June Monitoring Round will be spent on grass cutting in North Down.

(AQW 1229/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the repair of potholes, cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting etc.

My Department's TransportNI does not allocate funding on a constituency basis.

TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity i.e. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much of the £25 million allocated in the June Monitoring Round will be spent on weed spraying in North Down.

(AQW 1230/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the repair of potholes, cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting etc.

Although no element of the June monitoring allocation relates to weed control, within existing resources a programme of weed control is being taken forward.

My Department's TransportNI does not allocate funding on a constituency basis.

TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity i.e. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure, following the £25 million allocation to his Department following the June Monitoring Round, whether there will now be two grass cuts per year for North Down instead of one.

(AQW 1232/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of the June monitoring round, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m which will be used to programme an additional grass cut, as well as to enhance other essential maintenance activities. This means that grass verges will be cut twice this year.

Mr Poots asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment on the impact of NCP traffic management on town centre business.

(AQW 1233/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise that traffic management and parking restrictions within Town Centres aims to make these areas commercially viable and accessible for all users.

This usually means a combination of measures, including short duration limited waiting parking (either Pay & Display or free) to encourage a turnover of spaces and prevent all day parking by commuters together with other restrictions and facilities such as, single and double for road safety reasons and to maintain traffic progression, loading and disabled bays.

As you will appreciate in order to operate effectively and as intended, an appropriate level of enforcement is required and this is carried out on a routine basis in line with available resources.

As such, my Department has developed a Parking Enforcement Protocol to ensure consistency in car parking enforcement operations. The Parking Enforcement Protocol Document sets out the rules and procedures for Traffic Attendants to issue Penalty Charge Notices fairly and consistently. It also provides general information on parking enforcement, including the approach to be taken by Traffic Attendants and the processes in place to allow drivers to challenge any tickets which they believe may have been issued incorrectly.

Should you have a specific issue or location in mind, I would be happy to have officials investigate further.

Mr Aiken asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 61/16-21, whether he will consider financing a dual carriageway link from the M2 to the International Airport.

(AQW 1242/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: While I cannot give a commitment to funding at this time I am committed to improving connectivity across the north to our ports and airports, including the Belfast International Airport.

In support of that, work is currently underway within my Department to develop a new suite of Transport Plans which will set out a long-term programme of investment and identify key priority schemes. I can confirm that as part of this work my Department will consider the relative merits and funding priority of a number of schemes including strategic connections to the Belfast International Airport.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister for Infrastructure, following the June Monitoring Round, to outline the funding that will be allocated to grass cutting in Upper Bann.

(AQW 1250/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £8m Capital and £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting etc.

My Department's TransportNI does not allocate funding on a constituency basis.

TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity i.e. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will reinstate the grass cutting policy of two cuts per year in rural areas and five cuts in urban areas.

(AQW 1257/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of the June monitoring round, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m which will be used to programme an additional grass cut, as well as to enhance other essential maintenance activities. This means that rural grass verges will be cut twice this year.

I hope the Member will welcome the restoration of the second cut in rural areas, however, within the funding envelope available it is not possible to reinstate the five cuts per year in urban areas.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much extra funding, available through the June Monitoring Round, will be released to Transport NI for (i) grass cutting operations; (ii) weed killing operations; (iii) gully emptying; and (iv) street lighting maintenance.

(AQW 1258/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the repair of potholes, cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting and street lighting.

The additional £5m for Resource maintenance activities is to be targeted as follows:

Patching £k	Grass cutting £k	Gully Cleaning £k	Road Marking £k	Street Lighting £k	Total £k
3100	300	600	500	500	5000

Although no element of the June monitoring allocation relates to weed control, within existing resources a programme of weed control is being taken forward.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail all departmental road maintenance expenditure in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1266/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not maintain a record of expenditure in the format requested, however I can provide the member with information on road maintenance expenditure in TransportNI's Western Division.

The constituency of Fermanagh & South Tyrone would be in TransportNI's Western Division and the expenditure is detailed in the table below, however the member should note this Division would also cover the constituencies of West Tyrone, Mid Ulster and Foyle.

Division	2011-2012 £'k	2012-2013 £'k	2013-2014 £'k	2014-2015 £'k	2015-2016 £'k
West	35,508	30,525	38,072	34,691	18,272

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline under what legislative authority was a retrospective Environmental Impact Assessment screening conducted on the exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons at Woodburn Forest after development consent had been already granted.

(AQW 1279/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Woodburn Permitted Development Notification to drill an exploratory well under Permitted Development Rights was assessed under Part 16 of the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1993.

The exploratory drilling operations fell within the threshold listed in Schedule 2, Column 1(2)(d) of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2012 and therefore the proposals required an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Determination to be carried out under the same regulations.

An Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) screening determination was undertaken by the Department for the exploratory drilling proposed at Woodburn Forest, Carrickfergus.

This was not retrospective as officials completed the EIA determination prior to confirming permitted development rights for the project in December 2013.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the projected costings to deliver the Narrow Water Bridge project.

(AQW 1283/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: It is not possible at this stage to set out projected costings to deliver the Narrow Water Bridge Project.

A Fresh Start: the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan commits that the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government will undertake a review of the Narrow Water Bridge project with a view to identifying options for its future development. On behalf of the Executive and working with colleagues in Dublin, my Department has been tasked with taking the lead on this work and a report on options will be presented to the next North South Ministerial Council planned for July.

This will enable Ministers collectively to determine how best the Narrow Water Project should be taken forward and allowing for work to be undertaken on establishing robust costings. I look forward to working my Executive colleagues and the Dublin government on progressing the Narrow Water Bridge.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Infrastructure what steps he will take to ensure TransportNI officials work closely with their counterparts in local councils to (i) improve the efficiency of grass cutting; and (ii) reduce the risks to motorists when grass verges remain uncut.

(AQW 1286/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department's objective in cutting grass on its lands is to prevent overgrowth onto footway and carriageway surfaces and the obstruction of sightlines and traffic signs. Therefore grass cutting operations are carried out by my Department for road safety reasons and not for cosmetic or amenity purposes.

However, some District Councils wish to have a higher standard of grass maintenance within their boundary than is provided by my Department. This is usually for aesthetic and amenity reasons. In previous years, some Councils have accepted responsibility for grass cutting in certain areas and have been reimbursed by my Department for the value of the work my Department would have undertaken.

As a result of the Resource budget pressures over past two years my Department has not been in a position to reimburse councils for this work. However, I understand that some councils are continuing with grass maintenance and I welcome this.

Following the June monitoring round an additional £5m has been allocated to my Department for routine maintenance activities. This will allow TransportNI to enhance the level of services which it can provide, including grass cutting. The additional funding will allow grass to be cut twice across all areas during 2016/17. In the interests of road safety sightlines at bends and junctions will continue to be cut more frequently as required.

I can assure the member that I will continue to engage positively with Executive colleagues to secure the necessary funds for routine maintenance services.

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail his Department's procedure for the adoption of roads in new housing developments, including how this relates to the phasing of the build.

(AQW 1289/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The adoption procedure for roads in new housing developments (known as the Private Streets function) undertaken by TransportNI is subject to the regulations contained within the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 and the Private Streets (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. The Private Streets legislation is designed to protect householders and ensure that streets are completed to the proper standards.

The function and process may be described under the following five main steps:

- 1 Determination;
- 2 Bond and Agreement;
- 3 Construction and Inspection;
- 4 Adoption; and
- 5 Intervention

The phasing of new housing developments falls under step 2 (Bond and Agreement) and is determined by the developer, and agreed by the Department, to ensure that a road network serves the housing being built.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the current number of (i) potholes filled in and (ii) outstanding potholes, across all roads in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 1299/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: TransportNI does not hold information by electoral area. The electoral area of Fermanagh & South Tyrone straddles two TransportNI Section Office areas, namely Mid Ulster South and Fermanagh & Omagh West Section Offices. The information that has been provided below are combined figures for the two Section Office areas although you should note that only part of the Mid Ulster South Section Office area is included in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone electoral area.

The numbers of carriageway potholes cannot be identified but the number of surface defects (which includes potholes and other surface defects such as cracking and depressions) recorded across these 2 Section Office areas between 1 April 2016 and 17 June 2016 inclusive was 1450, of which 790 have been recorded as repaired. This indicates that 660 defects are still outstanding although in practice the figure is less than this as there is a backlog of recording repairs that have been completed.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether planning enforcement notices have been issued to HBSC in relation to its ownership role regarding an illegal landfill site at Mobuoy Road, Campsie.

(AQW 1323/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There have been four enforcement notices served on land at Mobuoy Road, Campsie.

In terms of the legal requirement, legislation states that a copy of an enforcement notice must be served (a) on the owner and on the occupier of the land to which it relates; and (b) on any other person having an estate in the land, being an estate which, in the opinion of the Department, is materially affected by the notice.

HSBC were considered by the Department of the Environment at the time of serving the Notices, to have an estate in the land – however it subsequently came to light that this was incorrect and that they did not have an estate in the land nor were they the registered owners of the land.

The Department of the Environment acknowledged this error with HSBC.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department has initiated or intends to initiate criminal proceedings against HBSC in respect of its failure to act in accordance with planning enforcement notices issued to it in respect of the illegal waste dump at Mobuoy Road, Campsie.

(AQW 1324/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My response to your previous query, AQW 1323/16-21 refers.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure when a decision will be taken on which taxis are permitted to use bus lanes in Belfast.

(AQW 1335/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has commissioned a study into the use bus lanes to help inform a decision on future access permissions for taxis. The study will survey a number of routes in Belfast with bus lanes to provide up-to-date information on how these routes are currently being used by all modes of traffic currently permitted to use the bus lanes.

The survey work was completed at the end of May and my Department expects to receive a copy of the study report by the end of June 2016. When I have considered the report's findings and the potential impact of any change to the current taxi access arrangements on all bus lane users, I will decide which classes of taxi will be permitted access to bus lanes.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how his Department will spend the £5.3 million given for Road Maintenance in the June monitoring round.

(AQW 1352/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the repair of potholes, cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting and street lighting. A further £0.3m of resource has been allocated for flood alleviation measures.

The additional £5m for road maintenance activities is to be targeted as follows:

Patching £k	Grass cutting £k	Gully Cleaning £k	Road Marking £k	Street Lighting £k	Total £k
3100	300	600	500	500	5000

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure detail where the £22.9 million allocated to his Department in the June monitoring round will be spent.

(AQW 1353/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am pleased to welcome the £22.9m capital allocation and the £5.3m resource allocation to my Department in the June monitoring round. The below table summarises the detail of the £22.9m Capital.

Capital	£m
Roads Structural Maintenance	8.0
York Street Interchange	4.0
Millennium Way, Lurgan	3.5
Translink – 18 Double Decker Metro Buses	2.8
Flood Prevention	1.5
Planning Portal	1.1
Waterways Ireland – Critical condition navigation infrastructure repairs	1.0
TransportNI Fleet items	1.0
Total Capital	22.9

The allocations will allow my Department to contribute to the maintenance of the existing roads network while progressing new roads projects at York Street Interchange and Millennium Way, Lurgan. Public transport is supported through the purchase of new buses enhancing the current stock. Flooding will also be addressed with the focus on those areas severely affected by the flooding incidents during autumn/winter 2015. Other funding will support the electronic planning system used by my Department and the 11 councils, provide funding to Waterways Ireland for critical repairs to the navigation repairs for the Erne system and Lower Bann, and important replacement of TransportNI operational fleet which will ensure more efficient performance.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how his Department has informed members of the public on the changes to taxi regulations.

(AQW 1361/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The public were informed of these changes through a Publicity and Communications Strategy. Information was targeted at the public on the key changes, as follows:

- Pre 31 May 2016, 200 A3 posters were distributed throughout, targeted at a wide range of public facing venues; these included leading supermarket stores, railway stations, NI Tourist offices, libraries, hospitals, courthouses, council

offices and sports centres, Credit Unions (IRE) and theatres. They were targeted to reach all county towns and cities within Northern Ireland, as well as a number of provincial towns, to ensure a wide geographical spread.

- A1 posters are on display within DVA Test Centre test halls (at waiting areas); DVA undertakes in excess of 1,000,000 MOT tests each year; A1 posters are also on display at DVA HQ in Corporation Street, at Operations Testing HQ at Balmoral Road, and at our licensing centre at County Hall, Coleraine.
- The poster information has been included on the MOT reminder notice from June 2016 for a 6 month period; and
- All relevant taxi information on NI Direct web pages has been updated to reflect the changes.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) for an update on the Belfast Bike scheme; and (ii) whether there are plans to expand docking stations.

(AQW 1362/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Department for Regional Development provided a £1 million capital grant to Belfast City Council in order to implement the Belfast Bike Share Scheme. The scheme is owned and operated by the City Council and it is responsible for the development and any proposed expansion of the scheme.

The scheme has been in operation since the end of April 2015. In the first year of operation there were almost 200,000 hires and an additional three docking stations were opened (one in Titanic Quarter and two at Queen's University). A more detailed update on the scheme and plans for its expansion can be obtained from the Chief Executive at Belfast City Council.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much was spent on road resurfacing in each constituency in the last two financial years.

(AQW 1369/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not maintain a record of expenditure in the format requested, however I can provide the member with information on road resurfacing expenditure in the North by each of TransportNI's Divisions.

Division	2014-2015 £'k	2015-2016 £'k
East	7,411	3,039
North	11,896	5,082
South	16,328	7,176
West	18,374	5,754

TransportNI's Division are coterminous with District Council boundaries; the table below details which Councils are in which Division.

Division	Councils
EAST	Belfast City Council Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
NORTH	Newtownabbey & Carrick Council Mid & East Antrim Council Causeway Coast & Glens Council
SOUTH	Ards & North Down Council Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Council Newry, Mourne & Down Council
WEST	Derry City & Strabane Council Fermanagh & Omagh Council Mid Ulster Council

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the criteria and policy used to decide which roads are to be resurfaced.

(AQW 1370/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department's TransportNI undertakes an annual programme of carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing works, subject to the availability of financial resource.

Article 8 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 places a duty on my Department's TransportNI to maintain all public roads and footways in a safe and serviceable condition. To this end, TransportNI operates a system of regular safety inspections to ensure that essential response maintenance is identified and completed, as necessary.

In accordance with the Roads Maintenance Standards for Safety, TransportNI inspects the condition of public roads and information collected, along with consideration of a number of other factors including road usage, general surface condition, structural deformation, public enquiries and public liability claims is used in the preparation and prioritisation of TransportNI's annual reconstruction and resurfacing programme.

These programmes are subsequently presented by TransportNI to the various District Councils at their Spring/Autumn meetings.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline, in order of priority, the list of roads that are in need of resurfacing. (AQW 1371/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department sets its resurfacing priorities by initially targeting available funding at the main strategic road network and roads carrying the greatest traffic volumes. Remaining funds are then used to treat other roads on a priority basis reflecting both the structural condition of the road and traffic volumes.

TransportNI sets out details of its planned priority resurfacing works in the Spring report to District Council. Council reports are publically available at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 187/16-21, whether the completed report will be shared with those that have expressed an interest in the site. (AQW 1374/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Survey Report relates to properties in St. Lucia Historic Core. The Historic Core is owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Department for Infrastructure officials are seeking MoD agreement to share the report with potential serious developers at the appropriate stage in the disposal process.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the requirements in place for the removal of wind turbines once they are made redundant or are no longer operational. (AQW 1375/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: When granting approval for wind farms, it is common practice for the planning authority to attach a planning condition to the planning permission requiring the removal of above ground structures after a specified time period or in the event that they are no longer producing electricity. The condition also requires that the land is restored in accordance with a scheme agreed with the planning authority.

A Planning guidance document 'Case officer guidelines for processing of wind farm applications' is also available in relation to wind energy development. This guidance contains advice on sample planning conditions including a removal and restoration condition.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 243/16-2, for an update on the answer. (AQW 1382/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am aware of the issues around the Buncrana Road scheme and the benefits that it would bring to that part of the city. The Executive's indicative budget for the period 2017/18 – 2020/21 is targeted towards the Flagship Projects which include the A5 and A6 projects, both of which will greatly benefit the North West.

The potential for advancing the Buncrana Road improvement scheme has not altered in the intervening period since your previous query. The final allocations in the Budget for 2017/18 – 2020/21, which is to be agreed later this year, may provide opportunity for a review of my Department's priorities. Furthermore my Department is progressing the development of new Transport Plans in line with The New Approach to Regional Transportation, which will set out a long-term programme of investment. This will provide an opportunity for schemes, such as the A2 Buncrana Road scheme, to be considered for funding, along with other existing and proposed schemes elsewhere in the north of Ireland.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the South Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme. (AQW 1400/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I would refer the member to my answer in AQW 472/16-21.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the additional support he will provide to those residents not eligible for the Homeowners Flood Protection Scheme due to works planned in their area in the next five years. (AQW 1401/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme is an innovative approach to manage flood risk, developed by Rivers Agency, on behalf of the Inter-Departmental EU Floods Directive Steering Group. This scheme provides assistance to those homeowners most vulnerable from flooding who wish to install individual property protection to help reduce the impact of flooding. The scheme is aimed at striking a balance between investment in infrastructure to alleviate flooding and investment in the Grant Scheme, therefore the eligibility criteria will not consider applications from areas where my department is investing in infrastructure improvements that will be completed within 5 years.

However, each of the applicants has received a copy of the Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) 'Household Flood Plan' which provides them with helpful advice on what to do before, during and after flooding. RCRG has also met with a number of communities across Northern Ireland to help them develop their 'Household Flood Plan', but also to develop a 'Community Flood Plan'. A four stage Community Engagement Plan was developed with the objectives of:

- Explaining the potential and limitations of Community Resilience;
- Briefing communities on resilience information available, particularly from the Met Office;
- The facilitation of self-help initiatives, including remote sandbag storage; and
- Reviewing and validating all elements of the Community Engagement Plan to help the community communicate effectively in an emergency and work together.

I understand that the RCRG has met with residents in over 15 locations including the Finaghy area who have suffered from flooding in the past and is currently helping to develop a further group in the Orchardville area.

Rivers Agency will also continue to maintain its designated watercourses and infrastructure as necessary and we will respond to reports of flooding, working with other key stakeholders involved in flood response to minimise the impacts of flooding.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the current programme for dealing with weeds on footpaths and roadsides.

(AQW 1410/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Whilst my Department has no specific statutory obligation to remove weeds, other than in relation to the control of noxious weeds, TransportNI has policies and procedures in place in relation to weed control, aimed at ensuring the safety of road users and preventing the deterioration of the road pavement.

It is acknowledged that it is practically impossible to eliminate weed growth and consequently TransportNI, like most other road authorities, programmes chemical applications to footway surfaces, kerb edges and drainage channels on an annual basis, as a curative measure. In rural areas, the most effective method of weed control is by cutting before the weeds can flower.

Within the resources available for 2016/17 a programme of weed control is currently being taken forward.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the budget for the spraying of weeds on footpaths and roadsides for the financial years (i) 2011-12; (ii) 2012-13; (iii) 2013-14; (iv) 2014-15; and (v) 2015-16.

(AQW 1411/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not analyse its expenditure in the format requested. The spraying of weeds on footpaths and roadsides forms part of my Departments annual programme of environmental maintenance activities and I can provide you with that expenditure in the last 5 years.

Environmental maintenance includes, Grass Cutting, Weed Spraying, Tree Maintenance and Emergency/Other Environmental Maintenance.

	2011-12 £'k	2012-13 £'k	2013-14 £'k	2014-15 £'k	2015-16 £'k
Environmental Maintenance	6,714	6,569	6,607	6,451	5,768

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the current budget for the spraying of weeds on footpaths and roadsides.

(AQW 1412/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department undertakes the spraying of weeds on footpaths and roadsides as part of its annual programme of environmental maintenance activities.

Environmental maintenance includes grass cutting, weed spraying, tree maintenance and emergency/other environmental maintenance.

My Departments budget for environmental maintenance in 2016-17 is currently some £6.5m. This includes the successful outcome of June Monitoring which permitted me to allocate a further £0.3m to environmental maintenance.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment of the current programme for dealing with weeds on footpaths and roadsides; and to outline his plans to review and improve the system.

(AQW 1445/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Whilst my Department has no specific statutory obligation to remove weeds, other than in relation to the control of noxious weeds, TransportNI has policies and procedures in place in relation to weed control, aimed at ensuring the safety of road users and preventing the deterioration of the road pavement.

I am aware that the financial constraints of recent years, and the reduction of services related to weed treatment, have had a significant impact on the appearance of our towns and villages and across the road network generally.

Within existing resources available for 2016/17 a full programme of weed control is currently being taken forward.

The effectiveness of treatment is monitored by TransportNI staff on a regular basis. This ensures areas requiring further treatment are identified and dealt with accordingly. I am therefore satisfied that the procedures and systems in place are robust and I have no plans to review.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department plans to take responsibility for the peace bridge in Londonderry; and to outline any issues which may be preventing this occurring.

(AQW 1461/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can confirm that my Department agreed to adopt the Peace Bridge during the early stages of project development subject to several conditions being met. These conditions and other concerns raised by my officials have now been addressed and I am pleased to confirm that the adoption process is now underway. It is anticipated that the structure will be adopted within a matter of weeks.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the cost of providing the dual cycle/pedestrian footpath between the Gransha Road and Donaghadee Road roundabouts on East Circular Road, Bangor.

(AQW 1468/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The cost of providing the dual cycle/pedestrian footpath between the Gransha Road and Donaghadee Road roundabouts on East Circular Road, Bangor was £220,000.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Infrastructure who has responsibility for tree cutting at derelict houses.

(AQW 1504/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: In relation to tree or hedge maintenance, overgrown trees and hedges on lands adjoining the road are the responsibility of the adjacent landowner.

In instances where overgrown trees or hedges are identified as causing a danger, the Department will contact the landowners requesting that the trees or hedges are cut. If the landowners fail to respond the Department can instigate legal action to have the danger imposed by the overgrown tree or hedge addressed, although this action is not usually required.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail (i) whether Infrastrata cut a terminal core in the Carboniferous basement; (ii) the bottom hole location by Irish National Grid, including its geographic latitude and longitude; and (iii) what was the final total vertical depth and final measured depth.

(AQW 1566/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Jurisdiction of the Infrastrata drilling at Woodburn is a matter for Mid and East Antrim Council. All details of the drilling is held by them.

The member should contact the Council to obtain this information.

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) for an update on the progress of the Enniskillen bypass; and (ii) whether he will ensure it is progressed during his tenure.

(AQW 1575/16-21)

Mr Hazzard:

- (i) The preferred alignment for the A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass was announced in June 2015.

A consultant has recently been appointed to assist my Department's officials progress the project through the next stage of the scheme development including the production of the Environmental Statement and the draft Statutory Orders (Direction Order and Vesting Order).

It is anticipated that I will be in a position to announce the publication of the draft Orders and Environmental Statement in mid 2017 and to progress the statutory consultation process which may require a public inquiry. Depending on the outcome of this process my Department may be in a position to make the Direction Order in early 2018 which will define the line of the new road and provide planning protection.

- (ii) Unfortunately budget allocations to date have not been sufficient to allow the A4 Enniskillen Bypass to progress to construction. My Department is however progressing the development of new Transport Plans in line with The New Approach to Regional Transportation, which will set out a long-term programme of investment. This will provide an opportunity for schemes, such as the A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass scheme, to be considered for funding, along with other existing and proposed schemes elsewhere in the north of Ireland.

The estimated total project cost is put at £30m.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether traffic speed assessments has been carried out on the Scarva Road, Banbridge; and to outline the results of any such assessments.

(AQW 1597/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can confirm that my Department's TransportNI carried out a traffic survey at this location 27th September 2010. The mean speed recorded over 24 hours was 30.9mph.

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he plans to develop greenways for walking and cycling in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 1658/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department is currently developing a strategic plan for greenways which I intend to publish later this year. This plan will provide a framework to assist local councils in the development of their own greenway schemes. I am also continuing with the delivery of the competitive small grants programme for greenways which can provide councils with access to funding to help them draw up feasibility studies and scheme designs.

Department of Justice

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether she plans to extend the assistance and support for a reflection and recovery period to victims of forced labour where an element of trafficking has not been identified.

(AQW 1128/16-21)

Ms Sugden (The Minister of Justice): Work is already underway to extend support under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to victims of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour in Northern Ireland who have not been trafficked.

This will mean that all potential victims of so called 'modern slavery' who are recovered in Northern Ireland and who are referred into the NRM will be eligible for equivalent support and assistance. It will ensure that there is parity of treatment for all potential victims of these offences, regardless of whether their case involves human trafficking.

I have asked my officials to work with their counterparts in the Home Office to put in place the necessary arrangements to implement this change as quickly as possible.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the support facilities available for male and female victims of domestic abuse; (ii) how many female abusers have been arrested and subsequently charged with offences relating to domestic abuse in the last three financial years; (iii) how many male abusers have been arrested and subsequently charged with offences relating to domestic abuse in the last three financial years; and (iv) what discussions she has had with the Department of Health in relation to children that have been victims of domestic abuse.

(AQW 1147/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Supporting victims of domestic violence and abuse is delivered through the recently published Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy. As Minister of Justice providing support for male and female victims of crime is high on my priorities. The Victim Charter, which was placed on a statutory footing in November 2015, advises victims of crime about their entitlements and the standards of service and support that they can expect when they come in contact with the criminal justice system.

The Victim Charter builds on good work that has been done to date including the introduction of the Victim and Witness Care Unit that provides a single point of contact for victims to receive information about their case and have their needs assessed for additional support. This support may include special measures to enable the victim to give better evidence at court such as giving evidence by video link or behind screens. The Care Unit can also refer victims to other specialist support services.

My Department provides £2.2m in funding for support services available to all victims and witnesses of crime, including victims of domestic violence. These services are delivered by Victim Support NI and the NSPCC Young Witness Service and include emotional and practical support, provision of information, advocacy support, assistance with claiming Criminal Injuries Compensation, help with making a victim personal statement and support for adult and child prosecution victims and witnesses called to give evidence at court.

My Department, in partnership with Department of Health and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, also funds the 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline service which is open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence.

The Member will be aware that there is no specific offence of domestic abuse. My Department however is currently analysing the response to a recent consultation on creating an offence relating to coercive and controlling behaviour within an intimate relationship. Regarding the specific information requested in parts (ii) & (iii), this is not available from databases held by my Department. However the Police Service for Northern Ireland has published trends in domestic abuse incidents and crimes which are informative. These can be accessed through:

https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic_abuse_incidents_and_crimes_in_northern_ireland_2004-05_to_2014-15.pdf.

As domestic abuse is likely to be a priority, I will seek an early opportunity to discuss collaborative working on this issue.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to outline the facilities available in tribunals in courthouses or elsewhere for disabled attendees (i) that require higher seating; (ii) seating with arms; and (iii) improved lighting.

(AQW 1149/16-21)

Ms Sugden: When the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) write to appellants to notify them of their hearing, appellants are asked to advise of any mobility or other requirements.

If tribunal users make NICTS staff aware that specific seating or lighting arrangements are required NICTS will work to ensure the requested arrangements are put in place or a suitable alternative is provided.

The Appeals Service (TAS) routinely uses venues that are not within the court estate to hold hearings. It is the responsibility of the Department for Communities to ensure those venues are suitable for those with a disability. TAS undertakes an annual Health & Safety Risk Assessment of all venues, including courthouses, used for the hearing of benefit appeals before the Appeals Tribunal. The last assessment conducted in September 2015 noted the provision of chairs with arms, chairs without arms, weight-bearing chairs and appropriate lighting at all venues. The assessment did not specifically reference height adjustable chairs. The next assessment is scheduled to be undertaken in September 2016.

TAS staff, when made aware of specific requirements, will endeavour to provide those or a suitable alternative that accommodates the appellant.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of prison officers that have retired as a result of an injury on duty; (ii) the average age of officers that have retired as the result of an injury on duty; and (iii) the gender breakdown of the officers concerned, for the financial year ended March 2016.

(AQW 1150/16-21)

Ms Sugden: It is not possible to confirm how many Prison Officers have retired in the financial year ending March 2016 as a result of an injury on duty, along with their average age and gender breakdown.

The Occupational Health Service (OHS) confirms if an employee meets the criteria for retirement on medical grounds. The OHS does not confirm the nature of the employee's medical condition as this information is confidential.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice for an update on Strabane Courthouse.

(AQW 1217/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The decisions on rationalising the court estate were taken by my predecessor following public consultation in 2015.

These decisions are now the subject of judicial review proceedings in the High Court in Belfast. Consequently it is not my intention to proceed with any closures, including the closure of Strabane hearing centre, pending the outcome of those proceedings. As the rationalisation of the court estate is now the subject of legal proceedings it would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Mr Poots asked the Minister of Justice to detail legal aid costs, broken down annually from 2011 to 2016.

(AQW 1235/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The costs of legal aid have been provided in the table below. The figures are per each financial year (1 April – 31 March) and are inclusive of both operating costs and the legal aid payments. The 2015/16 expenditure is unaudited.

	NILSC 2010-11	NILSC 2011-12	NILSC 2012-13	NILSC 2013-14	NILSC 2014-15	LSANI 2015-16
Expenditure	98,010	107,333	107,090	107,288	111,393	95,841

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many courthouses have heating and air conditioning centrally controlled by the NI Courts and Tribunal Service estate; (ii) to outline why it is not in the control of the individual courthouse; and (ii) whether local control will be given.

(AQW 1290/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) does not centrally control heating or air conditioning for any courthouse. Responsibility for central control rests with the Energy Unit within Properties Division of the Department of Finance.
- (ii) Whilst Properties Division retains responsibility for central control, 19 courthouses do have local access control to the heating systems and air conditioning systems (if available) in their respective locations. Omagh courthouse is the only courthouse that does not have access control as it has an electric heating system.
- (iii) There are no plans to change the current arrangements.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice in relation to central heating being on and no air conditioning at Dungannon Court House in recent weeks, to outline (i) what date was the matter first reported; (ii) how many complaints have been received per day since that date; (iii) what is causing the delay in rectifying the situation; and (iv) whether this constitutes a health and safety issue.

(AQW 1291/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) The first concern regarding the heating in Dungannon Courthouse was raised with Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) on 3 June 2016.
- (ii) Since that date the issue has been raised a further four times, once on 7 June 2016 and three times on 10 June 2016.
- (iii) A request was made to Properties Division of the Department of Finance on 7 June; this was escalated to a high priority request on the 10 June. The temperature was reduced on 10 June. No further issues have been raised about the temperature in Dungannon courtrooms.
- (iv) There is no maximum workplace temperature under Health and Safety law. However, there is a duty to provide a comfortable working environment and NICTS aims to keep all buildings in the estate between 21-23°C to ensure comfortable working conditions for staff and court users.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how much the NI Courts and Tribunal Service has approved or set aside for the expansion of court facilities which are to take on the matters of courthouses and hearing centres earmarked for closure; ND (ii) which court houses and services are to be expanded and in what manner.

(AQW 1292/16-21)

Ms Sugden: While the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is not expanding any courthouses, work is underway to refurbish staff accommodation at Omagh, Newry and Antrim courthouses. In addition, approval has been given to update the electrical supply at Omagh courthouse and to lower the Judicial and court clerk benches in Court 3. This work, which forms part of the NICTS capital works programme, will enhance the facilities for those attending these venues and improve the environment for the staff working there. The estimated cost of the work at these three locations, excluding professional fees and VAT is £85,000.

NICTS is considering the provision of an additional dock facility at Dungannon courthouse at an estimated cost of £5,000 excluding professional fees and VAT. To date this work has not been approved.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether her Department can provide or place in the NI Assembly library the 2013 report on NI Prison Service absenteeism by Jackie Bates Gaston.

(AQW 1293/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The report was prepared for internal use by the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Board. It was not an official publication therefore it is not considered appropriate to place this in the NI Assembly library.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Justice to detail all unpaid legal aid bills from the (a) Criminal proceedings; (b) Civil proceedings; and (c) the Childrens Court in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1316/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The figures provided in the table below have been taken from the Trade Payables and Fund Accruals as detailed in the Annual Report and Accounts for the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission from 2006/07 to 2014/15.

The 2015/16 figures will be published in the Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland Annual Accounts; they are currently in the process of being audited.

Financial Year	Total
2006/07	4,066
2007/08	629
2008/09	1,956
2009/10	1,800
2010/11	1,062
2011/12	1,150
2012/13	7,651
2013/14	1,497
2014/15	1,558

Financial Year	Total
2015/16	1,471

Figures are '000s

The figures in the above table include the total unpaid legal aid bills from Criminal proceedings, Civil proceedings and Children's court. The Agency does not break this information down into these categories.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice ,in relation to Dungannon Courthouse, to outline (i) whether it remains on the winter heating schedule as of June 2016 and if so to state why; (ii) the recorded temperature of the courtrooms on 10 June 2016; (iii) the correct or preferable temperature in the courtrooms; (iv) whether Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service been alerted to concerns of poor working conditions through no air conditioning and increased humidity; and (v) what action will be taken.

(AQW 1340/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) From 1 June until 30 September 2016 all buildings in the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) estate are operating the summer heating schedule.
- (ii) A temperature reading of 27.5 °C was taken in one of the courtrooms in Dungannon Courthouse on 10 June.
- (iii) NICTS aim to keep all buildings in the estate between 21-23°C to ensure comfortable working conditions for staff and court users.
- (iv) Concerns were raised on 3 and 10 June 2016.
- (v) This matter was reported to the Energy Unit, Properties Division of the Department of Finance on 7 June; this was escalated to a high priority request on the 10 June. The temperature was reduced on 10 June. No further issues have been raised about the temperature in Dungannon courtrooms.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline when her Department expects new guidance on human trafficking to be released by the Public Prosecution Service.

(AQW 1342/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is independent of my Department. However I have been advised that, as the result of the commencement of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, the PPS issued updated internal guidance to staff on the legislation and its implementation.

I can also advise that the PPS issued additional guidance to prosecutors on the issue of the consideration of cases submitted by police where a suspected person may be a potential victim of human trafficking. This guidance included the application of the statutory defence under section 22 of the Act, as well as the application of the public interest in cases where section 22 may not apply.

The overarching existing PPS policy document for Prosecuting Cases of Human Trafficking, which was published in September 2013, was under review to consider the changes required as the result of the legislation as well as the considerable structural and organisational changes within the PPS. I understand that work to redraft this policy was subject to final decisions in relation to restructuring and to final changes to the revised Code for Prosecutors.

The restructuring of PPS is now complete, including the establishment of a Serious Crime Unit. The Serious Crime Unit is staffed by experienced Senior Prosecutors and will now deal with all human trafficking cases that are submitted by police. Further, the public consultation on the revised Code for Prosecutors is also complete and final publication of same is expected shortly. I understand therefore that it is expected that work can continue on revising the existing Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Human Trafficking to reflect all the required changes.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice ,in relation to the funding provided by her Department to the Prison Officers Association, whether the annual audited accounts are supplied to her Department in the same manner as required for similar funding to the Police Federation of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1343/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Prison Officers Association is not required to supply annual audited accounts to the Department.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Justice to detail where the £3 million allocated to her Department in the June Monitoring Round will be spent.

(AQW 1349/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The £3 million provided to the Department of Justice in the June Monitoring Round, has been allocated as follows:

- £1 million to the Northern Ireland Prison Service; and
- £2 million to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the bids made by her Department for the June monitoring round.
(AQW 1350/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Department of Justice submitted three bids at June Monitoring as follows:

- Northern Ireland Prison Service - £1 million;
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service - £2 million; and
- Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland - £6.6 million, based on the most recent forecast.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Justice to outline (i) the provisions in place to protect whistleblowers after a specific accusation; (ii) the safeguards in place to protect their name from being known in the workplace; and (iii) the actions taken if that name becomes known in the workplace where the specific allegation has been made.

(AQW 1386/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Department of Justice, including its Agencies, adheres to the Public Interest Disclosure "Whistleblowing" policy as laid down in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) HR Handbook, Chapter 6.01 "Standards of Conduct", paragraph 4 and Annex 3.

This policy makes provision for departmental specific procedures/guidance for raising concerns about possible wrongdoing.

The Department has duty of confidentiality to a third party and all those involved will be clearly advised of the necessity of maintaining this. If someone requests that their identity is not disclosed we will not do so without their consent, unless required by law. However there are times where a matter cannot be resolved without revealing an identity. In such cases, discussion will take place with the individual on how the matter can best proceed.

Where evidence of non-compliance with the policy has been identified the department will consider the matter under the procedures laid out under NICS discipline policy.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Justice how many requests for case reviews have been submitted from members of the armed forces, Northern Ireland Prison Service or Royal Ulster Constabulary relating to unsolved incidents prior to the Belfast Agreement; and what progress has been made in facilitating these case reviews.

(AQW 1388/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland is operationally independent of my department. However, I have been informed by the Police Service that since February 2016, 35 such complaints have been recorded by PSNI. A review with regard to these cases is still ongoing.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether she will consider tougher sentences for the selling of drugs.

(AQW 1426/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Sentencing in individual cases is a matter for the independent judiciary. Where an offence is committed under the influence of drugs, the principles underlining sentencing indicate that this should be treated as an aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sentence.

You will be aware, from the answers provided to your questions AQW/51977/11-16, AQW/52072/11-16 and AQW/52073/11-16 on the 22 December 2015, of the legislative framework for illicit drug control, which is a reserved matter.

In addition, on 26 May 2016, the Westminster Government introduced additional provisions under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 to address the challenges of illicit drug abuse by creating a blanket ban on the production, distribution, sale and supply of psychoactive substances in the United Kingdom.

The Psychoactive Substances Act states that possessing any psychoactive substance with intent to supply, supplying or offering to supply, producing, importing or exporting, dependant on the offence committed, carries a penalty of either up to 6 months imprisonment and or a fine, or up to 7 years imprisonment and or a fine.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether she will consider tougher sentences for knife crime.

(AQW 1427/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I am pleased to note that knife and sharp instrument crime offences for 2015/16 are at their lowest level since 2007 and down almost 15% on the previous year. I am concerned however, that there were 8 homicides involving knives or sharp instruments in 2015/16 which is an increase of 5 from the previous year.

Existing penalties available to the courts for knife crime are stringent. For the majority of knife possession crimes, a maximum penalty of up to 4 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine is available to the Judiciary.

Earlier this year the then Minister of Justice made changes to the law to make it possible for an offence under section 20 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 (inflicting bodily injury, with or without weapon) to be referred to the Court of Appeal by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland where he considers the sentence imposed to be unduly lenient.

These changes were included in The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Reviews of Sentencing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 which came into operation on 1 April 2016.

I welcome this recently introduced legislation and I remain open to considering any additional proposals which may strengthen our ability to reduce incidences of knife crime.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Justice to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through her Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1432/16-21)

Ms Sugden: All the (i) completed, (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects in Fermanagh and South Tyrone that were funded through the Department of Justice (DOJ), including its Agencies but not its arm's-length bodies, since its formation in 2010 are detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	Dungannon Court Office	Enniskillen Court Office
2010-11	Building Improvements Security Enhancements	Building Improvements
2011-12	Building Improvements	Building Improvements Security Enhancements
2012-13	Building Improvements Security Enhancements	Building Improvements Security Enhancements
2013-14	Building Improvements Security Enhancements	Security Enhancements
2014-15	Building Improvements Security Enhancements	Building Improvements Security Enhancements
2015-16	No completed or in progress capital projects	Building Improvements
The following work is ongoing:		
2016-17	Building Improvements	Building Improvements

There are currently no planned capital projects beyond the 2016-17 financial year.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the proposed court house and/or hearing centre closures being challenged by Judicial Review; and (ii) whether expansions of the neighbouring courthouses, due to take in cases prior to the outcome of Judicial Review proceedings, are still to commence.

(AQW 1440/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) The proposed closures of Ballymena, Lisburn and Strabane Courthouses are being challenged by Judicial Review. In view of this no courthouses will close pending the outcome of the legal proceedings.
- (ii) While the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is not expanding either Antrim or Omagh courthouses, work is underway to refurbish staff accommodation at both locations. In addition, approval has been given to update the electrical supply at Omagh courthouse and to lower the Judicial and court clerk benches in Court 3.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister of Justice to outline (i) the future plans for the usage of Woburn House, Millisle; and (ii) if any representations have been made for, and consideration given to, potential community use of the facility.

(AQW 1446/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Woburn House was declared surplus to requirements by the Northern Ireland Prison Service and my Department has no plans to use the building.

The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) Asset Management Unit obtained vacant possession of Woburn House in December 2015 and it is handling the disposal of the site.

My Department received an enquiry on behalf of a charitable organisation about the prospect of using some of the vacant houses on the Woburn House site in October 2015. The organisation was asked to contact SIB directly if they wished to pursue their interest in Woburn House.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) prosecutions; and (ii) convictions have been recorded under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 in each of the last five calendar years.

(AQW 1491/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The most recent five year period for which information in relation to convictions for offences recorded under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 is available, is 2010 – 2014.

Convictions for offences under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985

Year	Convictions
2010	1
2011	8
2012	-
2013	2
2014	5

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to convictions which included at least one count of the offence specified.
- 2 The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.
- 3 Figures relate to initial disposals at court: disposals as a result of appeals are not included.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many victims of human trafficking have successfully claimed compensation under the criminal injury compensation scheme in each of the last five calendar years; and how much money they received from the scheme.

(AQW 1495/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Victims of human trafficking were specifically identified on Compensation Services records from 2013 onwards. Details of claims made before 2013 may not be accurate. Since 2013 two claims have been awarded criminal injury compensation. One victim received £22,500 in 2013 and another received £16,500 in 2014.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 944/16-21; to outline (i) how her Department monitors the number of incidents of assaults on children if there is no specific record kept of convictions of assault on a child under the age of 14; and (ii) in the absence of such monitoring how she can ensure the current law and sentences handed down are protecting children.

(AQW 1511/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I provided a detailed account of the law on assault in answer to question AQW/944/16-21 to Lord Morrow on 4 July. The framework of offences mentioned in that answer is designed to protect against the risk of violent offending, no matter what the age of the victim. The range of sentences within this framework ensures that appropriate sanctions are available for offences against children, where the age and vulnerability of the victim is an aggravating factor. The question of what is an appropriate sentence in every individual case is, however, a matter for the judiciary, taking account of the circumstances and factors arising.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Justice to outline the differences in law between Northern Ireland and England and Wales around the rehabilitation of offenders.

(AQW 1521/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 ('the 1978 Order') makes it possible for a range of convictions to become 'spent' and for the person to be treated as if they have never been convicted.

The period that must pass before a conviction can become spent is called the rehabilitation period and these are set out in the 1978 Order. In Northern Ireland, a sentence of imprisonment of six months or less has a rehabilitation period of seven years; a sentence of imprisonment of between six months and 30 months has a rehabilitation period of ten years; and a sentence of imprisonment of over 30 months can never become spent and must always be declared. Other sentences where prison is not involved have lesser periods.

There are, nevertheless, certain jobs and professions where applicants must always declare their convictions, even if they are considered spent. These are known as 'excepted' employments or professions and they are specified in the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979 ('the 1979 Order'). These positions can include working or coming into contact with children or vulnerable people; working in financial institutions; in the medical world; and in law enforcement, amongst others, where a particular conviction could have a strong bearing on an individual's suitability for employment in that area.

Both Orders are kept under review and while only relatively minor changes have been made to the 1978 Order in recent years, the 1979 Order has been amended and updated on a number of occasions, most notably in 2014 to give effect to a 'filtering' scheme to remove certain old and minor convictions and other disposals from criminal record certificates.

While there is no requirement for our rehabilitation law to maintain parity with other jurisdictions, I am aware of the changes made in England and Wales to bring sentences of imprisonment of between 30 months and 48 months into the rehabilitation regime and to shorten other rehabilitation periods so that, in some circumstances, a conviction can be considered spent at an earlier stage.

In maintaining a regime whereby convictions can become spent in Northern Ireland, a three-way balance must be struck between allowing a person to put their past behind them; the needs of employers in the recruitment process; and on occasion being alert to public trust and public protection.

Changing the law in this area is therefore both complex and cross-cutting. My officials are examining the impact of the changes made in England and Wales and are keeping this matter under review. If the need for reform is established, I will wish to engage with my Executive colleagues on the best way forward.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Justice what developments have taken place in legislation surrounding the rehabilitation of offenders in Northern Ireland subsequent to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979.

(AQW 1522/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 ('the 1978 Order') makes it possible for a range of convictions to become 'spent' and for the person to be treated as if they have never been convicted.

The period that must pass before a conviction can become spent is called the rehabilitation period and these are set out in the 1978 Order. In Northern Ireland, a sentence of imprisonment of six months or less has a rehabilitation period of seven years; a sentence of imprisonment of between six months and 30 months has a rehabilitation period of ten years; and a sentence of imprisonment of over 30 months can never become spent and must always be declared. Other sentences where prison is not involved have lesser periods.

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Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Justice what steps have been taken to ensure that Northern Ireland maintains parity with the amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 made by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 in England and Wales.

(AQW 1523/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 ('the 1978 Order') makes it possible for a range of convictions to become 'spent' and for the person to be treated as if they have never been convicted.

The period that must pass before a conviction can become spent is called the rehabilitation period and these are set out in the 1978 Order. In Northern Ireland, a sentence of imprisonment of six months or less has a rehabilitation period of seven years; a sentence of imprisonment of between six months and 30 months has a rehabilitation period of ten years; and a sentence of imprisonment of over 30 months can never become spent and must always be declared. Other sentences where prison is not involved have lesser periods.

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regime and to shorten other rehabilitation periods so that, in some circumstances, a conviction can be considered spent at an earlier stage.

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Changing the law in this area is therefore both complex and cross-cutting. My officials are examining the impact of the changes made in England and Wales and are keeping this matter under review. If the need for reform is established, I will wish to engage with my Executive colleagues on the best way forward.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice to detail the assets confiscated from the proceeds of crime that have been allocated to community groups, per constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1556/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Assets Recovery Community Scheme allocates money to community groups through Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) or Department of Justice Agencies. Records are maintained on this basis and it is therefore not possible to provide a breakdown according to constituency areas.

Details of allocations made in the last three years can be found on the Department of Justice website at: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/asset-recovery-community-schemes>

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1013/16-21, what assurances she can give that the disposal of the rest of the Desertcreat site will not have an impact on the Fire and Rescue Service training college, including its ability to carry out training on live fires.

(AQW 1567/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) has identified the area of the site that best fits a new facility to provide its training needs. The Policing Board is fully engaged with NIFRS, and only the portion NIFRS deem to be surplus will be considered for disposal by the Board. I can, therefore, give the assurance that disposal of the surplus area would not have a detrimental impact on the NIFRS training college.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to provide, or place in the Assembly library, a copy of the NI Civil Service Code of Conduct as applied to the Prison Service.

(AQW 1606/16-21)

Ms Sugden: A copy of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Professional Code of Conduct has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 723/16-21, whether she will reconsider this matter in the interests of public safety and to ascertain whether reoffending could have been prevented, particularly as prison licensing was a factor.

(AQW 1607/16-21)

Ms Sugden: In responding to the Member's previous question I considered all the circumstances of this case including the offences committed and his supervision arrangements in the community prior to the commission of the offences. Having re-examined the facts I remain of the view that there was no failure in his risk assessment or management on licence or supervisory opportunity missed which might have prevented their occurrence.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice to outline how long after the Loughinisland report and its findings were published did she first comment on it publically.

(AQW 1610/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Department of Justice does not routinely comment publically on reports by the Police Ombudsman. That said, the Ombudsman published his report on Loughinisland on 9 June and, in response to a media enquiry, I issued a statement that day. I issued a further statement on 20 June and also commented publically on the report in the Assembly Chamber on 21 June in during Oral Question Time.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many cases are currently within the courts system in which a default PSNI address is given for the defendant(s), broken down per court division, including (a) Magistrates; and (b) Crown Court.

(AQW 1664/16-21)

Ms Sugden: It is not possible to obtain this information from the NICTS Integrated Court Operation System (ICOS). Consequently an extensive manual exercise would be required at disproportionate cost.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the findings of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report into civil legal aid expenditure, whether she will remove the current ban on releasing figures paid in cases.

(AQW 1665/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Department does not apply a ban on releasing figures paid in civil legal aid cases. The Department reviews all requests in line with legislation which governs disclosure of information to ensure compliance with its statutory obligations.

Information cannot be released if there is a statutory prohibition on the release of information. In relation to civil legal aid, for applications received before 1 April 2015, the release of information is governed by Article 24 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (NI) Order 1981. For applications received on or after 1 April 2015, the release of information is governed by the Civil Legal Services (Disclosure of Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Justice for her assessment of whether (i) initiatives like Action for Community Transformation have played an important role in transitioning one time paramilitaries; (ii) these initiatives should be supported in future; (iii) funding can be found for these initiatives to continue; and (iv) she will visit this initiative in the near future.

(AQW 1698/16-21)

Ms Sugden: While I am not in a position to comment specifically on the role of Action for Community Transformation, having not worked with them directly, I believe initiatives that support people to make a genuine and complete transition to more positive pathways can play an important role. The Panel on disbanding paramilitary groups highlighted the need to provide support for transition and we will consider how that might be addressed through the Executive's action plan for tackling paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime.

The Executive and UK Government are each providing £25m over five years to contribute to tackling continued paramilitary activity. Funding will be available to support delivery of the Executive action plan, and allocation of the funding will be considered by a Cross Departmental Programme Board.

I will of course consider any invitation I receive, subject to my diary commitments.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice how she intends to address cross-border crime.

(AQW 1705/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Tackling cross-border criminality is principally an operational matter for the two police forces and other law enforcement agencies.

Law enforcement in Northern Ireland has always co-operated with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland to tackle the threat posed by criminals. In addition the establishment of a new Joint Agency Task Force under the Fresh Start Agreement is enhancing the operational response to cross-border criminality. It has agreed initial priorities for law enforcement in both jurisdictions and has undertaken a number of operations.

There are, of course, other initiatives against criminality near the border but the Task Force marks a significant development.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the equal pay dispute in relation to the PSNI, Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Office personnel.

(AQW 1706/16-21)

Ms Sugden: This is a matter for the Minister of Finance who in response to an Oral question on Monday 20 June provided an update to the Assembly.

I am very sympathetic for all those affected and I welcome the Finance Minister's commitment to an early decision on the issue.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1055/16-21, whether the district judge or deputy district judge makes the decision and issues a ruling on whether a case proceeds as a Preliminary Investigation or Mixed Committal at magistrates court.

(AQW 1813/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The District Judge or Deputy District Judge will make the decision and issue a ruling on whether a case proceeds as a Preliminary Investigation or Mixed Committal at Magistrates' Court.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether a risk assessment is conducted on the suitability of bail addresses prior to the release of convicted sex offenders either following a sentence or on bail; (ii) whether a risk assessment of community management whilst released is conducted; (iii) who or which agency conducts these risk assessments; and (iv) whether such assessments are mandatory in all instances of this nature.

(AQW 1815/16-21)

Ms Sugden:

- (i) The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) is involved in completing a risk assessment of all proposed addresses (including bail addresses) only if the convicted sex offender is subject to statutory supervision by PBNI. If the convicted

sex offender is not subject to statutory supervision by PBNI, the matter is the responsibility of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. I am committed to respecting the independence of the Police Service. You may, therefore, wish to direct this element of your question to the Chief Constable.

- (ii) PBNI complete risk assessments prior to an offender being released from prison and at regular intervals while in the community.
- (iii) PBNI is responsible for completing risk assessments in respect of all offenders who are subject to statutory supervision by PBNI.
- (iv) Risk assessments are not legally mandatory however the PBNI's standards of practice require that they are completed.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice which agency is responsible for supervising or monitoring terrorist offenders released on licence.

(AQW 1877/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Individuals who are sentenced to 12 months or more imprisonment, under the sentencing arrangements introduced in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, are subject to post-release supervision on licence by Probation Board for Northern Ireland and, where appropriate, the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Department for the Economy

Mr Aiken asked the Minister for the Economy what progress has been made in building a energy grid with North/ South and East/ West interconnection to support renewable targets, provide security of supply to industry and to connect to the British Isles and European energy markets.

(AQW 11/16-21)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister for the Economy): Since November 2007 we have shared a single, wholesale electricity market, known as the Single Electricity Market (SEM), with the Republic of Ireland (RoI). The proposed North South Interconnector will enhance the efficiency of SEM, support the dispatch of renewables on the grid and contribute to long term security of supply for Northern Ireland (NI).

Northern Ireland also connects with Great Britain through the Moyle Interconnector which runs from Islandmagee to South Ayrshire.

At European level wholesale electricity markets are being revised to harmonise arrangements for trading of electricity. The Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM) project, led by the Regulatory Authorities in NI and RoI, is delivering the required changes to SEM.

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for the Economy to outline the actions he intends to take following the recent announcement of seventy job losses at Seagate Technologies.

(AQW 274/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Seagate is a key employer in the North West, with circa 1,400 staff and is an important company in the context of the overall Northern Ireland economy. Its decision to reduce its workforce by 5%, 70 jobs, is naturally worrying for staff and disappointing to us all.

Invest NI, together with other relevant agencies, will undertake to work with those impacted by the announcement to assist with sign posting to alternative job opportunities or address any re-training needs.

Invest NI maintains regular contact with Seagate's management, meeting on at least a quarterly basis, to review progress and to discuss how the company's presence can be maintained and strengthened where possible.

The company has confirmed that the current actions have become necessary as a result of changes in demand levels within the industry Seagate operates, however it remains committed to its Northern Ireland operation and is, indeed, making good progress with its £34million R&D project announced in 2014.

Invest NI has been in contact with the company on several occasions since the announcement and will continue to work with management as they implement the redundancy process. Future opportunities to strengthen the company's presence in Northern Ireland will continue to be explored although it is recognised that these may be limited given the pressures within the Hard Disc Drive storage market.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister for the Economy what plans he has to ensure equal access to broadband and telephone networks across rural communities in South Down.

(AQW 302/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: I would re-iterate that my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland and,

primarily in rural areas. It is expected that a number of these will be in the South Down constituency, however, until the infrastructure has been brought into service, it is not possible to quantify the number or precise location of premises that will benefit.

Under the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) the contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until Autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

Where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

As a reserved matter the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband across Northern Ireland. However, DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for the Economy for an update on providing improved broadband for Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 387/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Up to March 2016 the NI Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), reported that it passed some 6,800 premises in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The contract with BT has a clawback (gain share) mechanism which compels BT to return part of the investment when adoption of the new service passes beyond the 20% mark in related areas. The final amount will not be known until autumn when plans can be developed to use any funds owed to help further improve the coverage of faster broadband connectivity across Northern Ireland.

In the meantime, my Department is currently managing a contract for the delivery of the Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP) which, by 31 December 2017, will provide access to superfast broadband, with speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second (Mbps), to a further 39,000 premises, both business and residential across Northern Ireland, including Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

It is important to recognise that, where fixed-line broadband is not viable, there are other technology alternatives available, including fixed wireless and satellite. With regard to satellite broadband DfE has a scheme in place, under the auspices of the NIBIP, which allows consumers with a broadband connection of less than 2Mbps, to access a subsidy towards the cost of having a satellite broadband service installed from a list of registered providers, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria. Details of the scheme can be found at: www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/satellite-broadband-support-scheme-northern-ireland

In addition to my Department's initiatives, at a national level and given that telecoms is a reserved matter, the UK Government intends to introduce a Universal Service Obligation for broadband which will give people a legal right to request an affordable connection with a speed of 10 Mbps from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold by 2020.

These initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the coverage of broadband services across Northern Ireland. The telecoms industry will also continue to make its own investment in infrastructure where it is economically viable for them separate to these initiatives and DfE will continue to keep a watching brief on progress and will consider the need for further public sector intervention should the need arise.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for the Economy how his Department is promoting tourism in East Derry.

(AQW 537/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Both Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland include the East Londonderry area in their marketing campaigns, with the Causeway Coastal Route, one of our most important assets, featuring heavily in promotional campaigns.

Tourism Ireland marketing activity has included:

- TV and online advertising in France and Germany reaching 26 million potential visitors
- A TV campaign in the US
- Billboard ads in Metro stations in Paris
- Promotion of the route at international media and trade networking events, and
- At trade and consumer shows and co-operative marketing with air and sea partners, and tour operators.

Locations such as Mussenden Temple and Downhill Strand, the Roe Valley Country Park, Limavady and Binevenagh Mountain are highlighted in Tourism Ireland's Causeway Coastal Route itinerary on its suite of international websites which attracts over 16.5 million unique visitors each year.

The Tourism NI autumn 2014 Campaign and spring 2015 Campaign targeted the Republic of Ireland market and featured extensive coverage of the Causeway Coastal Route. The Route continues to feature in many Tourism NI itineraries for visiting international media with stops included at Dunluce Castle, Gortmore Viewing Point and Binevenagh Mountain.

Tourism Ireland is currently rolling out its third major Game of Thrones campaign in partnership with HBO, to promote Northern Ireland as a filming location for Game of Thrones. The campaign includes a series of 10 intricately carved doors depicting moments inspired by Season 6 of the show (made from the wood of fallen trees at the Dark Hedges) which have been placed in locations across Northern Ireland – including at Frank Owen's Bar in Limavady.

A mixture of short films and images from the campaign has been rolled out on social media in ten markets and elements of the campaign will also be rolled out by Tourism NI in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Mussenden Temple, Downhill Strand, Portstewart Strand and Binevenagh Mountain, all Game of Thrones filming locations, are highlighted online.

Both organisations continue to showcase Northern Ireland as a 'must see' destination for golf. The Open will be back in Northern Ireland at Royal Portrush in 2019, after an absence of 68 years, and will present an invaluable opportunity to showcase it to prospective visitors and golfers around the world.

In addition to Royal Portrush, the constituency includes Quality Assured Clubs Castlerock and Portstewart. All of these clubs featured in Tourism Ireland's social media video, The Ultimate Round, which has attracted in excess of over 100,000 engagements and also feature in its presentations to buyers at Golf Trade Shows.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for the Economy how many people from Upper Bann attend university, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 728/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: The table overleaf details the number of students from the Upper Bann area enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) during 2014/15, broken down by electoral ward.

Table 1: Number of students from the Upper Bann area enrolled in UK HEIs during 2014/15, by electoral ward

Ward Name	Number of Enrolments 2014/15
Aghagallon	210
Annagh	65
Ballybay	35
Ballydown	205
Ballyoran	90
Banbridge West	80
Bleary	160
Brownstown	90
Church	25
Corcrair	55
Court	65
Derrytrasna	240
Donaghcloney	140
Drumgask	90
Drumgor	65
Drumnamoe	75
Edenderry (Banbridge)	50
Edenderry (Craigavon)	95
Fort	85
Gilford	50
Kernan	235
Killycomain	60
Knocknashane	110
Lawrencetown	100

Ward Name	Number of Enrolments 2014/15
Loughbrickland	90
Magheralin	205
Mourneview	60
Parklake	100
Seapatrick	115
Taghnevan	105
Tavanagh	40
The Birches	145
The Cut	25
Waringstown	190
Woodville	170
Total	3,725

Source: Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA)

Notes:

- 1 The latest available data are for the 2014/15 academic year.
- 2 Data on NI students attending other European or worldwide universities are not available.
- 3 The electoral ward boundaries are based on the 1992 definition.

Mr Frew asked the Minister for the Economy for his assessment of the potential of collective energy purchasing schemes in lowering energy prices for businesses; and whether his Department will be encouraging businesses to use such schemes.
(AQW 731/16-21)

Mr Hamilton: Given current arrangements by which businesses negotiate their requirements bi-laterally with their suppliers, my Department has no evidence to conclude if collective purchasing schemes would deliver better pricing outcomes for them.

If businesses are interested in exploring this matter they should liaise with other companies, and engage with their energy suppliers to consider the feasibility of participating in such a scheme and assess if it would contribute to improving their competitiveness.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Assembly Commission, in respect of the maximum 74 working hours per MLA, to outline what advice or guidance is suggested in emergency instances when the maximum working hours for the week have been reached but an issue requires completion, to be dealt with or finalised.

(AQW 534/16-21)

Mr Attwood (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Paragraph 155 of the Report which accompanied the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 noted that "The Panel has determined that, after careful research into other legislatures and data from across the wider public and private sector in Northern Ireland, the level of support each Member requires to fulfil their role is up to two full time equivalent (FTE) support staff (74 hours)".

Therefore, paragraph 33 (6) of the Determination specifies that "A member must not require an employee to work more than 37 hours per week". Paragraph 33 (8) further specifies that "In total, members must not require employees to work more than 74 hours per week".

The Commission cannot amend the requirement that a Member can only require an employee to work for no more than 37 hours per week nor can it amend the requirement that all employees, in total, can work no more than 74 hours per week. Unfortunately, the Commission cannot offer advice or guidance on how a Member might seek to cover additional work pressures that cause an employee to work more than 37 hours or all employees to work more than 74 hours in total. In such a situation, a Member could be debarred from recovering staff costs as the requirements of the Determination (set out above) would not be met.

When the Commission has had an opportunity to review this matter, it will consider the nature of any further guidance and support that it can provide to Members.

Ms Armstrong asked the Assembly Commission, in relation to the recent Independent Financial Review Panel determination, (i) why the decision was made not to permit Members' staff to claim mileage for travel related to constituency business, given that the proposed job description provided by the Assembly Commission includes wording confirming certain grades of Members' staff would be required to travel to meetings to represent the Member as part of constituency business; (ii) whether rural proofing was considered before the decision was taken; (iii) to share the rural proofing process and findings; and (iv) why Members' staff are not permitted out of pocket expenses for travel to constituency or Assembly related travel when Assembly secretariat staff are permitted mileage for travel to meetings outside Parliament Buildings.

(AQW 762/16-21)

Mr Attwood (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission is mindful of the statutory independence of the Independent Financial Review Panel when making a Determination under section 2 of the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

The Commission's role in the administration of the system of financial support for Members means that it is required to understand and implement the precise provisions contained in any Determination issued by the Panel. In that regard, the Commission notes that the Panel made reference to the issue of staff travel costs at paragraph 83 of the Report which accompanied the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016. However, this reference was by way of summary of the previous system of financial support for Members. The Commission is not aware of any other reference to staff travel contained in the Report or in the Determination. Under earlier Determinations, a Member was able to avail of general office costs expenditure funding to reimburse the costs of staff travel within a constituency. The present Determination does not contain a provision of this nature and, hence, no payment for staff travel can be made. It is the Commission's understanding that such costs could be borne by a Member from the annual constituency travel allowance that is made available in the Determination.

The Commission is unable to state why such a provision was not included in the recent Determination. The Commission is unaware of any consideration that the Panel may have made with regard to rural proofing and, hence, the results of a rural proofing process are not held by the Commission. The Member may wish to liaise directly with the Panel on these matters.

Staff employed by the Commission are employed on such terms and conditions as the Commission may determine. Staff employed by Members are engaged on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Panel.

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission whether it will fly the Ulster Banner from Parliament Buildings for as long as Northern Ireland remains in the Euro 2016 competition.

(AQW 1039/16-21)

Mr Maskey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Commission only has a policy of flying flags from Parliament Buildings on Designated Days.

The current policy was agreed at the Commission's meeting on 17 June 2015 meeting. The Commission's policy involves the flying of flags from Parliament Buildings on designated days as defined by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This equates to 18 days per annum, an increase of three days on the previous policy.

The Commission has never considered the flying of flags or banners from Parliament Buildings to mark a sporting occasion.

Mr McCausland asked the Assembly Commission whether it will place a copy of the terms and conditions, including remuneration, for the Commissioner for Standards in the Assembly library.

(AQW 1140/16-21)

Mr Attwood (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): I confirm that the Assembly Commission will place a copy of the terms and conditions, including remuneration, for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards in the Assembly library.

Mr McCausland asked the Assembly Commission (i) when the Commissioner for Standards was appointed; and (ii) the duration of the appointment.

(AQW 1141/16-21)

Mr Dickson (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards was appointed on 17 September 2012 for a five year term.

Mr Swann asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 923/16-21, whether it would be feasible to erect signage deterring visitors from touching the panels.

(AQW 1284/16-21)

Mr Wells (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The possibility of providing signage which will be effective without detracting from the status of the chamber will be considered.

Lord Morrow asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 327/16-21, whether it plans to (i) obtain legal advice and compile guidance for Members who are accused of racial and/or disability discrimination on being unable to offer equal

service to constituents requiring (a) interpreter services; and (b) sign-language provision as a result of Independent Financial Review Panel determinations; and (ii) advise if the Member, NI Assembly or both is deemed legally liable in these instances. **(AQW 1294/16-21)**

Mr Maskey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Commission does not intend to seek legal advice or issue guidance in respect of the provision of financial support for Members under the Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 as it relates to a Member's delivery of services to constituents.

It is assumed that any case under equality or diversity legislation would be taken against an individual Member. The Assembly Commission's statutory role is limited.

to the provision of property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Commission does not provide services to constituents nor does it seek to prescribe to Members how they might provide those services.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 8 July 2016

Written Answers to Questions

The Executive Office

Mr McPhillips asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the community and voluntary organisations in Fermanagh and South Tyrone that received funding from their Department, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 269/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Executive Office, previously OFMDFM, funded various groups in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone Area within the past five years. Details are provided in the following table.

Year	Name of group
2015/16	Select Vestry for the Cathedral Parish of Enniskillen
	Fermanagh Trust
	Stronger Together
	South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
	First Steps Women's Centre
	Westville Family Resource Centre
2014/15	South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
2013/14	South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
2012/13	2012 EU Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity among Generations
2011/12	South Tyrone Empowerment Programme

Mr E McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the basis of the estimate on 19 February 2016 that the Executive had created more than 40,000 jobs over the previous five years; and to list these jobs and their location, broken down by county.
(AQW 788/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The figure quoted was based both on Invest NI's mid-year results as published in Autumn 2015 and the forecast end of year outturn which was given at that time. The recent announcement that, over the five-year period of the last Programme for Government, Invest NI helped businesses promote 42,488 new jobs provides a complete report for the five year period, which closed at the end of March 2016. The regional breakdown of the information requested is not currently available for the latest year (2015-2016) as Invest NI is in the process of validating sub-regional performance figures.

Invest NI will make this information available to you when the data has been verified and approved for public release in due course.

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the report on the disbandment of paramilitary groups was not notified to Members on publication.
(AQW 836/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: We refer the Member to the answer we gave to AQT 1/16-21 during Question Time on 13 June 2016.

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why their announcement of the paramilitary panel report was not made in the Assembly Chamber.

(AQW 993/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: We refer the Member to the answer we gave to AQT 1/16-21 during Question Time on 13 June 2016.

Mr Mullan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the regeneration of Shackleton Barracks.

(AQW 999/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: On the 29 April 2016 the majority of the Shackleton Site (621.5 acres) was sold to MJM Group. MJM Group's plans for Shackleton include proposals for a private jet and rail carriage fit out facility, renewable energy facility and the company's own IT service centre and facilities management services.

The remainder of the site will be developed by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (approximately 8.5 acres) for a new headquarters building and NI Water's proposed Integrated Constructed Wetlands project (approximately 86 acres).

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, following the appointment and re-appointment of Special Advisers in the Executive Office, to detail (i) any pay increases that have been awarded, including the amount; and (ii) how any increases were calculated.

(AQW 1209/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: There have been no pay increases for any Special Advisers appointed to the Executive Office.

Mr Mullan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail where the £13.8 million Resource and £6 Million Capital allocations, announced in the June Monitoring Round, for Social Investment Fund and Delivering Social Change will be spent.

(AQW 1254/16-21)

Mrs Foster and Mr McGuinness: The Social Investment Fund has made significant progress over the last year and this positive trajectory will increase throughout 2016/17. The plan is that by the end of this year the programme will have entered full delivery mode, meaning all business cases have been approved and funding committed to all projects. This will bring significant benefits to local communities.

The money allocated in the June monitoring round will therefore be spent on delivering those capital and revenue projects which have commenced or are expected to commence delivery this year across all Social Investment Fund Zones. This includes 10 revenue projects funded from Resource monies which currently provide valuable opportunities to local people. For example, The Building to Employment through Education project, which is being delivered across the Northern Zone, has already engaged with over 300 children and families and is providing much needed educational and parenting support. This will increase during the course of this year and benefit even more children and families.

There are also 21 capital projects which have commenced incurring costs in respect of design and/or construction. For example, the extension to Fermanagh House is due to complete construction in September; it will provide a centre which will link people and communities across rural Fermanagh.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the community and voluntary organisations in East Derry that received funding from her Department, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 335/16-21)

Miss McIlveen (The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs): From 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2016, the Department provided £4,038,689.01 to voluntary and community organisations in the East Londonderry constituency. Details of the organisations which received funding are detailed at Annex 1.

Annex 1: Voluntary and Community Organisations funded by DAERA 2011-2016

Challenge Fund

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Accessible Sensory Equestrian Trail | ■ Gortmore and Avish walking trails |
| ■ Annaghagh Partridge Regeneration Project | ■ Green Shed Eco Trail |
| ■ Benone Conservation grazing Initiative | ■ Hezlett Community Allotments |
| ■ Biodiversity Enhancement | ■ Inscribed stone for the Beresford Obelisk |
| ■ Glenshane Business Park, Beautiful Gardens Project | ■ Limavady Coastal wildlife Leaflet |
| | ■ Limavady Union Workhouse's Final Wall! |

- North Sperrin and River Faughan Access and Walking Programme
- Nurture by Nature
- NW Geodiversity Trial Feasibility and Options

Appraisal

- Restoration of the "Master's Cottage"
- Roe Valley River Habitat Enhancement
- Sea Buckthorn eradication at Bann Estuary ASSI

Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

- Cumber Lower Parish Church

Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme

- Co Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd

Rural Development Programme Axis 3

- Benedy Community Association Ltd.
- Burnfoot Community Development Association
- Bushmills Trust
- Castlerock Community Association (CCA)
- Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Partnership
- Claudy Parish Community Group

- Claudy Rural Developm4/**ent
- Co Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd
- Crow's Nest Community Group
- Derry County Committee
- Eagle Glen Community Partnership Ltd
- Evolve Ju-Jitsu Claudy

Rural Development Programme Axis 3 (continued)

- Feeny Community Association Ltd
- Garvagh Development Trust (GDT)
- Garvagh Museum Ltd
- Glenshane Community Development Limited
- Gortnaghey Community Association
- Greysteel Community Enterprises
- Learmount Community Development Group Ltd
- Limavady Day Care Ltd

- Portballintrae Residents Association
- Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District) Ltd
- Roe Angling Association
- Roe Angling Ltd
- Rural Area Partnership in Derry (R.A.P.I.D.)
- The County Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd

Rethink Waste

- Rethink Waste Grant (Revenue)

Targeting Rural Poverty and Social Isolation

- Ardinarrif Historical & Cultural Society, The Highlands
- Ballyspallen Cricket Club, Ballykelly
- Boveedy Community Association, Kilrea
- Destined Ltd, Feeny
- Garvagh & District Community Association,

Garvagh

- Glenullin Childcare Trust – Appletree Childcare, Garvagh
- Hands That Talk, Dungiven
- Oughtagh Town & Country Sport Club, Claudy
- Rural Area Partnership in Derry (R.A.P.I.D.)

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs when the business case in respect of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund be completed and submitted to the Department of Finance.

(AQW 503/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Since coming into office, I have become fully aware of the need to open the Programme as soon as possible. I have instructed my officials to prioritise the finalisation of the business case and its submission to the Department of Finance for approval.

Mr McKee asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the timescale of the two tiers of capital support within the Farm Business Improvement Scheme; including when the final list of eligible items will be communicated to possible applicants.

(AQW 580/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Farm Business Improvement Scheme will be launched as soon as possible once the approval process has been completed, and full details, such as eligible types of investment, will be made available to potential applicants in advance of the scheme opening, to allow farmers time to prepare.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what measures have been put in place to ensure that there is no repeat of the large-scale illegal dumping at Mubuoy Road in Campsie, Co. Derry.

(AQW 646/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Following the discovery of a minimum of 913,105m³ tonnes of illegally landfilled waste in the area of the Mobuoy Road on land largely owned by City Industrial Waste Ltd (CIW) and Campsie Sand and Gravel Ltd, the Department of the Environment (DOE Minister) at that time initiated a review of waste management and regulation in Northern Ireland.

The Mills Report (2013) concluded that there were systemic failures in the management and regulation of the Northern Ireland waste sector including significant criminal infiltration some of which is linked to organised crime. It also identified issues for how DOE/NIEA (Northern Ireland Environment Agency) has managed the waste sector and, in particular, how effectively they have responded to the challenge posed by those who are prepared to risk human health, the economy and the environment for significant and ill-gotten financial gains.

The systemic failures and criminality that exist within the current system of waste management in Northern Ireland have required a new approach. A key part of this new approach involved the Department improving the traditional methods of regulation and enforcement by now implementing the recommendations set out in the Mills Report through a series of actions. The responsibility for delivering the actions listed in the report lies with the Waste Management Unit and the Environmental Crime Unit both of which sit in the Resource Efficiency Division, NIEA. The key themes of this approach are as follows:

- 1 Enhanced Liaison and partnership working between Central and Local Government. Work is progressing to develop strategic and operational approaches aimed at minimising waste arisings in line with EU requirements and providing tighter controls on the handling of municipal wastes. Regular meetings between council and departmental staff are supported by outcome focussed action plans at both strategic and operational levels to ensure all municipal wastes handled by waste contractors meet legislative requirements.
- 2 Working with general industry to promote resource efficiency and legitimate waste disposal. Operational and legislative changes have been made to ensure waste companies employ the most effective measures whilst treating wastes. Examples of this include a review of the technical competence requirements if an individual is to be a fit and proper person to hold a waste management licence
- 3 Creating a compliant waste industry through ensuring effective and efficient regulation and enforcement. NIEA have completely reviewed its regulatory approaches and processes associated with the waste industry. This has included the development of a compliance assessment scheme for all licenced sites, supported by a risk based inspection programme; more targeted inspections against non compliant sites; more effective enforcement and earlier interventions against non complaint sites and the removal of unsuitable companies from the industry through effective regulation. NIEA has also restructured and changed vital management posts to ensure effective leadership is in place to deliver modern and effective regulation of the waste sector.
- 4 Changes to legislation to place more stringent controls on waste operators and waste carriers. These include tighter controls on duty of care for waste transfer; for the seizure and disposal of property suspected of being used in illegal waste activity; technical competence requirements if an individual is to be a fit and proper person to hold a waste management licence; regulations provide for greater protection of the environment, by moving some previously "exempt activities" to a waste management licensing regime and providing a tighter regime for remaining exempt activities.
- 5 Dealing with Waste Crime through the development of a strategic waste crime assessment and the targeting of resources at the highest risk of environmental crime.

Internal Audit has audited the Departments response to the Mills Review and the actions outlined in the Mills Report and has noted that many of the actions have been implemented with the majority of the remaining actions to be finalised in the next 3 months.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs when the old Department of the Environment became aware of the illegal dump at Mobuoy Road.

(AQW 647/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Enforcement action relating to issues which could have led to the discovery of illegal waste dumping are documented back to 2007 as chronicled in the Mills Report. However, it was the 2012 referral to the NIEA by DOE's Planning Service which prompted further examination and led to subsequent site excavation and the disclosure of the full extent of the waste offending.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the progress of investigations of the trucking of thousands of tonnes of waste from the Brickkiln site at Campsie, Derry across the border and illegally dumped in Co. Donegal.

(AQW 648/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency is not currently conducting any investigations or taking enforcement action in relation to any alleged dumping of waste in Co. Donegal.

I would encourage anyone with knowledge of such activity to bring it directly to the attention of the Environmental Crime Unit on (028) 9056 9453 or at environmentalcrime@daera-ni.gov.uk.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the number of farms that receive European Union funding in East Derry.
(AQW 667/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The number of farms that received European Union funding in the East Londonderry constituency is 1,381.

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department has plans to remove the permission for tail docking of working dogs.
(AQW 766/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Section 6 of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 (the 2011 Act) prohibits the docking of a dog's tail other than for the purposes of its medical treatment by a veterinary surgeon or to safeguard its life. Subsection 4 provides an exemption, subject to certain conditions, for certified working dogs involved in law enforcement, lawful pest control or lawful shooting of animals.

This issue was extensively debated by the Assembly during the making of the 2011 Act. In passing the Act the Assembly agreed a clear policy that cosmetic tail docking of dogs should be banned but that there should be a veterinary certified exemption scheme for specified working dogs.

The detail of this scheme is laid down in the Welfare of Animals (Docking of Working Dogs' Tails and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2012, which set out the requirements to be observed to allow a veterinary surgeon to certify that a dog is likely to become a working dog and may be exempted from the tail docking ban. The certification process in these Regulations is robust and only dogs for which satisfactory evidence has been provided to the veterinary surgeon may have their tail legally docked.

My Department consulted the public and animal welfare stakeholders on the recently completed Review of the Implementation of the 2011 Act and did not receive any representations on this issue.

I therefore have no plans to review the exemption from the ban on tail docking for working dogs.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline (i) the estimated cost of relocating her departmental headquarters to Ballykelly; and (ii) how the increased remit of her Department will impact on that relocation in terms of (a) construction costs; and (b) staffing.
(AQW 857/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The estimated cost of relocating my departmental headquarters to Ballykelly is £21.5m capital and £11.8m resource. The contract for construction of the new DAERA HQ at Ballykelly was awarded to JH Turkington and Sons Ltd on the 24 March 2016.

The restructuring of NICS Departments and the formation of the new Department, DAERA, has not impacted on the estimated costs as outlined above. The business case took into account the staffing position for the new department and the plan remains to construct a building which will accommodate 600 posts.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail any plans her Department has to close any of its offices in the next two years.
(AQW 987/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Department's network of local offices has been a key feature of how it has engaged with and supported farmers and the rural community in general for a number of years. A review of the services that we provide and our delivery models is currently underway, and I have currently no plans to close any local offices.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) the total level of funding; and (ii) the number of farms that have received European Union funding in West Tyrone, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 1006/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The total level of funding provided by my Department to farms in West Tyrone over the last five years is £186.2m. A detailed breakdown of this funding has been provided in the table at Annex 1 and a detailed breakdown of the number of farms that benefitted from this funding has been provided in the table at Annex II.

Annex 1 The level of funding received by farmers in West Tyrone in each of the last five years

EU Funding	2011/12 £'000	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	Total £'000
Area Based Schemes	-	-	-	-	12,258	12,258
Single Farm Payment	37,362	34,184	38,727	33,856	250	144,379
European Union Sustainable Competitiveness Programme	90	109	50	-	124	373

EU Funding	2011/12 £'000	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	Total £'000
NI RDP 2007-13 - Axis 1	1,155	116	639	335	103	2,347
NI RDP 2007-13 - Axis 2	5,536	5,070	5,022	5,262	-	20,889
NI RDP 2007-13 - Axis 3	465	311	525	491	-	1,792
NI RDP 2014-20 - Measure 8					40	40
NI RDP 2014-20 - Measure 10					1,657	1,657
NI RDP 2014-20 - Measure 13					2,468	2,468
Total	44,608	39,790	44,962	39,943	16,900	186,203

Annex II Details of the number farms in West Tyrone that have received funding in each of the last 5 years

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Area Based Schemes					1,082
Single Farm Payment	4,119	4,168	4,242	3,633	23
European Union Sustainable Competitiveness Programme	1	1	1	-	1
NI RDP 2007-13 - Axis 1	506	44	333	429	-
NI RDP 2007-13 - Axis 2	2,166	2,330	2,206	2,327	
NI RDP 2007-13 - Axis 3	23	11	17	15	-
NI RDP 2014-20 - Measure 8	-	-	-	-	100
NI RDP 2014-20 - Measure 10	-	-	-	-	1,187
NI RDP 2014-20 - Measure 13	-	-	-	-	1,693

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the action her Department is taking to resolve the current dairy crisis in West Tyrone.

(AQW 1007/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Dairy farmers across Northern Ireland have been facing challenging market conditions over the past 18-24 months with the fall in milk prices. Whilst the factors contributing to the continuing low prices are outside DAERA's control, my Department will continue to do what it can to assist farmers across Northern Ireland at this difficult time and to help them cope with future market volatility.

I will be working with DEFRA at a national level and also at the European Union level to press for additional support for the dairy sector. I plan to attend the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 18 July to press the case for our industry.

I recognise that many dairy farmers have been experiencing cashflow difficulties in the business during this period of low returns. I intend to meet with the local banks over the coming weeks to discuss what further measures the banks, together with my Department, can take to assist the industry.

My Department will continue to work to build the resilience, efficiency and competitiveness of the sector through a range of support, including education, training and research. We will also continue to make the most of measures through the new Rural Development Programme, including through the Farm Business Improvement Scheme (FBIS) measures, to help ensure that farmers are better equipped to meet the challenges ahead and take advantage of future market opportunities.

Advisors from CAFRE work with two FBIS Business Development Groups to offer group involvement for dairy farmers in the West Tyrone area. These groups provide the opportunity for the farmers involved to share experiences and ideas on improving their farm business performance. The groups also enable the farmers collectively to identify particular aspects of farm business performance that they wish to cover in the programme of support.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the fall in the price of pork; and how it has impacted farmers.

(AQW 1008/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Northern Ireland pig prices are currently 106p/kg, which is 12% below 2015 levels and 30% lower than 2014 levels, despite the producer price having risen by 5p/kg since the low point of early March 2016. A similar depression in prices has been experienced across Europe, attributed to an increase in EU and global pork production combined with the effect of the Russian import ban and adverse exchange rate movements. You will appreciate that these factors are outside my Department's control.

I am aware that the challenging level of local pig prices has resulted in many pig farmers here facing difficulties, particularly with cashflow. Therefore, I have written to the local banks and financial institutions to arrange a number of meetings over the coming weeks to discuss what further measures the banks, together with my Department, can take to assist the industry during this difficult trading period.

In addition, it is hoped that securing access to new trade markets such as those in Australia and China, would mean greater returns for the pig sector and so help mitigate the effects on producers of future price fluctuations. My Department awaits a response from China on the remedial actions our pork processors have taken following the inspection in April 2015. My Department also hosted Australian inspectors in April 2016 and we await their written report later this year.

My Department is continuing to support the pig sector through the provision of education, training and research in order to improve efficiency and sustainability. We will continue to make the most of measures through the new Rural Development Programme, to help ensure that farmers are better equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what measures her Department intends to take to halt biodiversity loss.

(AQW 1029/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: In recognising national and international obligation to halt biodiversity loss and in tandem with other administrations, a dedicated NI Biodiversity Strategy was published in July 2015, which can be downloaded from <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-strategy-northern-ireland-2020-0>

This strategy contains 57 strategic actions across government departments and other sectors designed to halt biodiversity loss. These actions cover a number of areas which DAERA has a responsibility including fishing, farming, rural development and forestry. My Department is also responsible for several EU initiatives which are intended to promote biodiversity. In particular the Habitats and Birds Directives which focus on protecting many of our vulnerable habitats and species. In addition to those strategic actions, DAERA works in partnership with several stakeholders interested in nature conservation at a local level.

My officials intend to review all actions contained in the Biodiversity Strategy later this financial year to ensure that the strategy captures all new initiatives which will have a positive benefit on biodiversity. This review will coincide with a report on progress in meeting the existing actions.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the compulsory Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Scheme; including (a) how long the scheme will be in operation; and (b) whether herd keeper levies will cease if Bovine Viral Diarrhoea is eradicated.

(AQW 1043/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: BVD is a production disease that impacts mainly at farm level and is not notifiable. Industry has taken responsibility for tackling the disease and my Department has not imposed any related statutory levies on herd keepers.

My Department has, however, supported industry by providing start up funding to Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland (the industry body responsible for administering the scheme) and by bringing forward legislation to make tag and testing for BVD of all calves born after 1st March 2016 compulsory.

BVD is endemic in Northern Ireland and tag and testing provides an effective and efficient approach to tackling the disease, identifying infection in new-born bovines and enabling targeted testing of dams. AHWNI reports that the Scheme appears to be operating effectively to date, with some 200,000 calves having been tested since the Scheme became compulsory.

It was never intended that the current BVD Scheme would be open-ended and AHWNI is monitoring its progress. Should industry request changes to the Scheme, the Department will consider the necessary changes to the legislation. The Scheme's success will depend on industry buy-in, and its effectiveness in addressing issues such as the accurate identification of dams and the removal of Persistently-infected animals (PIs).

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the Emergency Assistance Scheme for farmers affected by winter flooding in 2015-16.

(AQW 1076/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: On the 10 March 2016, the Executive agreed that an Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme be established for non-domestic properties, including small businesses (including farms), recreational and community buildings, places of worship and farm businesses to cover the period 7 November 2015 until 31 January 2016. A payment of £1,000 to non-domestic properties is dependent on fulfilling the scheme criteria.

Farm businesses could apply under specific criteria to cover the farmland where those farming the land have been significantly affected as a result of sustained high levels observed and recorded on Lough Neagh and Upper Lough Erne over the period 7 November 2015 until 31 January 2016.

The scheme is being administered by the Councils and there was a substantial response with 539 applications received by my Department at scheme close on 16th May 2016. My Department is finalising the checking of claims with approximately 350 farm businesses expected to meet the criteria. Councils have already issued the first batch of payments to farm businesses and the remainder will follow soon.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the advice and guidance that she has received in relation to her Department not recognising the National Certificate of Agriculture as a Level 3, A-Level equivalent qualification.

(AQW 1107/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Within my Department, the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) uses guidance within the Qualification and Credit Framework to decide which qualifications are recognised at Level 3. This Framework is jointly regulated by England's regulator Ofqual, Wales' DCELLS and Northern Ireland's CCEA.

(Ofqual is the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. DCELLS is the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. CCEA is the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment).

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) the 1899 Act that governs the lease in Woodburn Forest; and (ii) whether it only allows for a leasing period of three years.

(AQW 1131/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I understand that the 1899 Act to which you refer is the Belfast Water Act.

Northern Ireland Water, who are the landowner, is not the responsibility of my Department. This Department's Forest Service manages the trees under a Management Agreement between both parties, and has no role in relation to the 1899 Act.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail how much funding her Department receives from the European Union for farmers.

(AQW 1139/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: During 2015-16 my Department received £262.2m from the European Union for farmers. As the accounts for 2015-16 have not yet been certified, this figure may be subject to change.

The funding specifically drawn down for farmers is for the Pillar 1 Basic Payment, Young Farmer and Greening Schemes; Pillar 2 Schemes Areas of Natural Constraint and Agri-Environment Schemes which are funded from the Rural Development Programme and are match funded.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of (i) the prevalence of Japanese knotweed along the River Bann in Banbridge; and (ii) how this may impact on properties adjacent to the river.

(AQW 1158/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: There are no official studies on the extent of Japanese Knotweed in Northern Ireland to date. The Department is only aware of records submitted by members of the public to CEDaR (The Centre for Environmental Data and Recording), NBDC (National Biodiversity Data Centre) and via the Invasive Species Ireland website. These show 3 records of Japanese knotweed along the River Bann in Banbridge.

Japanese Knotweed is a hardy bamboo like perennial plant that grows quickly and strongly. The plant extends laterally by extension of its rhizome (underground shoot) system and can penetrate loose aggregate and asphalt/concrete through small openings and voids. Once established, the rhizomes can expand with enough force to cause structural damage. The rate of spread is dependent on the density and composition of soil with the impact on individual properties depending largely upon how near to the stand of knotweed the properties are.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she will amend the process to allow waste tyres to be used for coastal and river erosion.

(AQW 1160/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The UK is a contracting party to the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic.

Annex II of the OSPAR Convention specifically prohibits the disposal of waste in the marine environment. Tyres which have reached the end of their useful life are classified as waste. Therefore, the use of waste tyres to protect against coastal erosion could not be considered as a licensable activity on the coast.

I have no intention of seeking any change to this position.

In relation to river erosion, the Department for Infrastructure's Rivers Agency acts as the Drainage Authority for Northern Ireland using the powers conferred on it by the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973. These powers are principally aimed at protecting the drainage function of existing watercourses. The Agency does not have a role in controlling coastal erosion. The Agency's consent is however required where there is a proposal to carry out works which may impact on the drainage function of an existing watercourse.

A proposal to carry out bank protection works to alleviate erosion would require Rivers Agency approval. Consent to such a proposal could not be unreasonably withheld unless it was considered likely to have a detrimental impact on the drainage function of the watercourse.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (i) to outline the measures being taken to clean up the oil spill incident in Larne Lough; and (ii) whether the cost will be covered by the company responsible.

(AQW 1192/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: As the product spilt was diesel and it was released into the sea there is very little that can practically be done to clean it up as it spreads so quickly. Once released the behaviour of this light oil is influenced by the wind and tide and it would be expected that at least 50% of the product at this stage will have evaporated (hence the strong smell associated with such spills) and the rest will be broken down by natural dispersion and biodegradation. The biggest risk to the environment is through certain toxic chemicals dissolving in the water column but even this should be limited because of the massive dilution and strong tidal movements.

Any costs incurred by the Department will be recovered from the polluter.

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to confirm the commencement date for applications under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for the seafood and aquaculture sectors.

(AQW 1261/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Since coming into office, I have become fully aware of the need to open the Programme as soon as possible. I have instructed my officials to prioritise the finalisation of the business case and its submission to the Department of Finance for approval, which is required before DAERA can open EMFF for applications.

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department has completed all of the required protocols for matching funding to support the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, including agreement with the Department of Finance.

(AQW 1263/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I have instructed my officials to prioritise the finalisation of the business case and its submission to the Department of Finance for approval. National match funding has been factored into DAERA's budgetary exercises for the current and future years and will be available once approval has been secured.

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether applicants may proceed with work on projects notified to her Department without being excluded from access to European Maritime and Fisheries Fund funds.

(AQW 1264/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The United Kingdom Operational Programme and eligibility rules stipulate that any expenditure incurred prior to the submission of a fully-completed application form is not eligible for EMFF financial assistance.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department funds a suicide prevention officer to work in rural areas.

(AQW 1276/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My department does not fund suicide prevention officers. However, the Public Health Agency provides funding for three suicide prevention officers to work in rural areas covered by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. These officers are accommodated within the offices of the local Rural Support Networks that are funded through my department's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. This arrangement helps to support the vital work of the suicide prevention officers through the use of local Rural Support Network office facilities and localised knowledge.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the processes in place to ensure that milk processors that are cooperatives are paying a sustainable price to their suppliers.

(AQW 1345/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The price farmers receive for their produce and that others pay, at any point in the food supply chain, is a commercial matter and therefore not within my remit.

However, I will do everything I can to assist farmers at this difficult time.

I will be attending the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 18 July to lobby for increased support for our farming industry, particularly the dairy sector.

With a view to improving cashflow for agricultural businesses generally, including the dairy sector, I have recently announced that my Department will make advance payments from 16 October.

I do believe that every part of the supply chain should get a fair return for their work, including farmers. I intend engaging with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator to see whether the extension of powers to enable the investigation of issues beyond those between the supermarkets and their primary suppliers would be appropriate.

I am also interested to see the report from the European Commission's Agricultural Markets Task Force later this year and any concrete recommendations for initiatives to improve the position of farmers in the supply chain.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the analysis that has been conducted to evaluate the price paid by milk processors for milk supplied by producers and milk purchased from the Republic of Ireland; and whether there is any resulting distortion of the market to the disadvantage of local producers.

(AQW 1346/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs does collect information on the volumes of raw milk exported from and imported to Northern Ireland. However, no information is collected on the prices paid to producers in other countries for raw milk imported to Northern Ireland or on the prices received from processors in other countries for raw milk that is exported by Northern Ireland milk processors. The figures for the first quarter of 2016 indicate that 1% of the milk intake of processors in Northern Ireland was purchased from other countries. Imports at this level were unlikely to have a significant impact on the price received by local dairy farmers. Over the same period, 26% of the milk available to milk processors in Northern Ireland was exported in its raw form to processors in other countries.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of including in the measurement of outcomes of grant aid to the milk processing sector a knock-on enhancement in the price paid to the producers.

(AQW 1348/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 contains proposals for an Agri Food Processing Investment Scheme, which will seek to improve the economic performance and competitiveness of the agri-food sector.

In line with the EU-approved Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, one of the main principles of the scheme is to improve the supply chain through better integration and collaboration between producers, processors and others in the food chain.

My officials are continuing to work to obtain the necessary business case approval and develop scheme design for the proposed processing scheme. Until we have obtained the necessary business case approval, it is not possible to be specific about the support that may be available.

Work is also commenced on developing a complementary monitoring and evaluation programme to assess the impact of the new RDP schemes.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline where money raised through the single use plastic bag levy is spent.

(AQW 1359/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The income from the carrier bag levy is used to fund programmes and schemes to help deliver key environmental outcomes. The main vehicle for allocating the funding is through the Environment Fund. The Fund supports projects in Northern Ireland contributing to two Priority Themes.

Theme 1: Ensuring good habitat quality, landscape and species abundance and diversity; and Theme 2: Promotion of health, well-being, resource efficiency and sustainable economic development, realising the full value of our environment.

The income also helps to fund environmental research, waste management activities and the administration costs associated with collecting the levy.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the amount of money raised through the single use plastic bag levy in each year since its introduction.

(AQW 1360/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The table below lists carrier bag levy income since the introduction of the levy.

Financial Year	Carrier Bag Levy Income
2013-14	£4.2m
2014-15	£4.6m
2015-16	£5.2m
Total	£14.0m

Mr E McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she is aware of evidence that thousands of tonnes of waste have been trucked illegally from the Campsie area of Co. Derry and taken across the border; and whether she plans to make a statement on this matter.

(AQW 1384/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Neither I nor my officials are aware of alleged activity of this nature. If you, or any of your constituents, have such details I would encourage you or them to provide the information to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Environmental Crime Unit on (028) 9056 9453 or at environmentalcrime@daera-ni.gov.uk.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) how many notices have been served on landowners in connection with breaches of the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 over the past five years; and (ii) if any have been served on Transport NI in relation to roadway verges during that period.

(AQW 1413/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Thirty statutory notices have been served on landowners in the last five years in connection with breaches of the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

No statutory notices have been served on Transport NI in relation to roadway verges during this period. On two occasions, reports of noxious weeds threatening to spread to agricultural land were received in respect of land controlled by Transport NI. The required action to control the noxious weeds was taken by Transport NI following investigation of the sites by my officials.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department has responsibility for exercising the control of The Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

(AQW 1414/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has the responsibility to enforce the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977. DAERA will investigate complaints made about the four specified noxious weeds (thistle, ragwort, dock and wild oats) provided the weeds threaten to spread to agricultural land. Failure to control these weeds will result in a statutory notice being issued, which, if not complied with, can result in prosecution.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline her plans to consider tougher sentences for animal cruelty.

(AQW 1428/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The welfare of animals in Northern Ireland is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 (the 2011 Act), which recognises that causing any animal unnecessary suffering is a very serious offence. To reflect this, it significantly increased the penalties from those that were available under the previous 1972 Act.

My officials, working together with the Department of Justice, recently reviewed the implementation of the 2011 Act. The Final Report of that Review was published in February this year and recommended that my Department consider increasing the maximum sentences available under the 2011 Act as follows:

- The maximum penalty upon conviction on indictment (in the Crown Court) to be increased to 5 years and an unlimited fine (from the existing 2 years and an unlimited fine).
- The maximum penalty upon summary conviction (in the magistrates' courts) for the following hybrid offences to be increased to 12 months imprisonment and a £20k fine (from the existing 6 months imprisonment and £5k fine):
 - Section 4 unnecessary suffering; and
 - Section 8(1) and (2) animal fighting.
- The following three summary only offences to become hybrid offences:
 - Section 8(3) Supplying, publishing, showing, or possessing with intent to supply an image or video recording of an animal fight;
 - Section 33(9) Breach of a disqualification order; and
 - Section 40(7) Selling or parting with an animal pending the outcome of an appeal to a deprivation order under section 32.
- The post-conviction powers applicable following conviction for a section 8(3) offence relating to images of animal fighting to be extended to allow a court to impose a deprivation order (section 32), disqualification order (section 33), destruction order (section 36 and 37), or reimbursement of expenses order (section 38).

The Department of Justice agreed to carry the necessary amendments to the 2011 Act in their Justice Act (NI) 2016, which has now received Royal Assent. My Department has agreed with the Department of Justice that they prepare an Order to commence the increased penalties for animal welfare offences, which will have effect from 1 August 2016.

These increases will give Northern Ireland the toughest penalties for animal welfare offences available anywhere on these islands and send a very clear message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated.

While sentencing within the legislative framework is a matter for the independent Judiciary, I hope that sentences in future will reflect the increased range of powers available to the courts through the amended 2011 Act.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what assessment has been conducted on the impact on community background balance within her Department by moving the departmental headquarters to Ballykelly.

(AQW 1463/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: In August 2014, the Department published an Equality Impact Assessment Report on relocation. That assessment considered the impact of relocating in terms of all the Section 75 groups. The report concluded that the relocation has no potential adverse impact on persons of different community background.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether her Department has investigated the existence of a milk producers' cartel.

(AQW 1464/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I believe that all along the supply chain should get a fair return for their work, including farmers. However, the price farmers receive for their produce is a commercial matter and my Department has no remit to intervene.

It is the role of the UK Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to investigate any allegations of anti-competitive activity. Any concerns about anti-competitive practices in the market should be referred to the CMA.

I intend engaging with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator to see whether the extension of powers to enable the investigation of issues beyond those between the supermarkets and their primary suppliers would be appropriate.

I am also interested to see the report from the European Commission's Agricultural Markets Task Force later this year and any concrete recommendations for initiatives to improve the position of farmers in the supply chain.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the practice of milk processors obtaining milk supplies from local producers on a basis that the price to be paid is unknown until over a month later.

(AQW 1465/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The price arrangements for milk supplies are a commercial matter between farmers and the processors to whom they supply milk, and they are outside the remit of my Department.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs how she is collaborating with the Minister of Health on promoting rural health issues.

(AQW 1483/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department works with the Public Health Agency (PHA) on promoting rural health through measures funded under the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework.

The Farm Family Health Checks programme is a joint initiative between DAERA and the PHA which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of farmers and farm families through the provision of a mobile health check and advice service at livestock markets and community venues throughout Northern Ireland. By offering this service at locations where farmers and rural dwellers congregate, it has proven to be successful at reaching clients who do not regularly visit their GP and therefore helps with the early identification of health problems. The programme also offers a signposting service to clients for further advice and support. Over 10,000 clients have now availed of the service with many reporting that it has made a positive difference to their physical or mental health.

DAERA also works with the PHA on the Maximising Access in Rural Areas (MARA) project which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people in rural areas by providing household visits to clients to make them aware of and help them gain access to services, grants and benefits.

I will be working with my Executive colleagues on the implementation of the Rural White Paper Action Plan to ensure that all the commitments contained in the Action Plan, including those relating to rural health, continue to be delivered. I will also be working with other Ministers on the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to facilitate a consistent approach across government which ensures that consideration of the needs of rural communities, including those relating to health, are fully embedded in all aspects of policy and delivery.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail her Department's strategy for ensuring that dairy farmers will receive a fair price for their product.

(AQW 1500/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Whilst the price farmers receive for their produce is a commercial matter and my Department has no remit to intervene, I do believe that all along the supply chain should get a fair return for their work, including farmers.

I will be working with DEFRA at a national level and also at the European Union level to press for additional support for the dairy sector. I plan to attend the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 18 July to press the case for our industry.

I intend engaging with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator to see whether the extension of powers to enable the investigation of issues beyond those between the supermarkets and their primary suppliers would be appropriate.

I am also interested to see the report from the European Commission's Agricultural Markets Task Force later this year and any concrete recommendations for initiatives to improve the position of farmers in the supply chain.

There is some evidence that global markets are beginning to show signs of recovery and I hope this will turn out to be the case. The recent weakening of sterling against the euro and the dollar will make our exports more competitive and should have a positive impact on milk prices. In view of the difficulties farmers are experiencing I have committed to making 95% of Basic Payments by the end of December and for the first time introducing advanced payments from October.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of the impact of the ending of milk quotas on the price paid to local producers.

(AQW 1508/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Milk prices in Northern Ireland have fallen considerably over the last two years and this has put enormous pressure on dairy farmers. There are a number of complex factors behind this decline. While total EU milk production in the 2015/16 milk year is below the total EU quota level in 2014/15 prior to abolition, a number of Member States now have production levels significantly above what was their quota allocation. Consequently it is likely that the retention of milk quotas would have curtailed some of the large increases in production that we have seen in a number of EU Member States over the last year. However, it would be misleading to suggest that the removal of milk quotas alone has been responsible for the current low milk prices. The ban on EU exports to Russia, the stagnating growth in demand for dairy products in China, oversupply on global dairy markets and adverse exchange rates have all been significant factors in driving the steep decline in milk producer prices here in Northern Ireland. Indeed in a scenario where EU milk production was curtailed, it cannot be ruled out that production in the rest of the world would have increased further.

There is some evidence that global markets are beginning to show signs of recovery and I hope this will turn out to be the case. I appreciate that low prices may persist for some time to come, though the recent weakening of sterling against the euro and the dollar will make our exports more competitive and support milk prices. In view of the difficulties farmers are experiencing I have committed to making 95% of Basic Payments by the end of December and for the first time introducing advanced payments from October. I will also keep pressure on DEFRA and the European Commission to take all possible meaningful action to help the industry here.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for her assessment of whether spreading poultry waste on forestry ground could cause a potential problem with eutrophication.

(AQW 1514/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Eutrophication of a watercourse is where it becomes enriched in dissolved nutrients, for example, phosphorus and nitrogen. Eutrophication stimulates the growth of aquatic plant life resulting in the depletion of dissolved oxygen which, in turn, can adversely affect fish life.

In theory, spreading poultry waste on forestry ground could cause a potential problem if it were not conducted appropriately although there are factors that would determine the extent of any problem, for example, the amount of rainfall, the distance of travel to watercourses and the barriers encountered.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (i) whether Biocide T was used in the test bore at Woodburn Forest; and (ii) to detail the dangers to the environment from this chemical.

(AQW 1515/16-21)

Miss McIlveen:

- (i) In accordance with The Petroleum Production Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 as amended by the Petroleum Production (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, this information must be treated as Confidential and cannot be released for a period of 4 years.
- (ii) All chemicals pose a risk to the environment therefore their transport, use, handling, storage and disposal must be carefully managed to prevent linkages or pathways developing between chemical sources and environmental receptors, in which case the risk would be low or negligible.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she will abolish current fee of £842.00 for three years for Paragraph 16 exemption that the farming industry currently pay for waste tyres.

(AQW 1516/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, it is the responsibility of anyone who produces, collects, stores, treats, reuses or deposits waste or used tyres to minimise the risk to the environment, human health and animal welfare, this Regulation is enforced by NIEA.

There are however criteria and thresholds in the legislation which permits certain small scale, low risk waste activities to be exempt from the waste licensing regime. In this instance a farmer may apply to NIEA to register a Paragraph 16 waste exemption for the beneficial use of tyres. This exemption permits a person to use the tyres provided:

- (a) they are put to that use without further treatment; and
- (b) that use of the tyres does not involve their disposal.

The fee to register a Paragraph 16 exemption is currently £854 for 3 years. The Paragraph 16 exemption has been a legal requirement since The Waste Management Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 came into operation on 19 December 2003, over 12 years ago. To date, no farmers have applied for a Paragraph 16 exemption.

Farmers may keep waste tyres, already in place on the farm, to re-use in agricultural activity. An example of this would be for use in a silage clamp. However, it is important that the quantity of tyres should not exceed the number required for the silage clamp(s). If a farmer wishes to bring additional waste tyres onto the farm, the farmer must hold an appropriate waste

authorisation, the transportation of which must be undertaken by a registered waste carrier, waste transfer notes must be completed and retained by the farmer for two years.

DAERA guidance on the use of tyres on farms has been produced, and NIEA are more than happy to assist farmers on this issue.

It should be noted that the Fees and Charges Scheme for Waste Management Licensing are set in accordance with statutory requirements and DFP (Department of Finance and Personnel) and Treasury guidance and the NIEA 3 year Charging Policy. A review of fees and charges is currently being carried out in NIEA, however I can give no guarantees in respect of the cost for an exemption.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) the number of applicants paid under the Countryside Management Scheme; (ii) the number of applicants who have yet to be paid; and (iii) when she expects all payments to have been made.

(AQW 1557/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: Payments to the older 'legacy' agri-environment scheme claimants are generally within the expected timescales from the agreement anniversary.

Payments of 2015 NICMS claims have commenced and over 500 claims have already been paid out of a total of 1477 eligible claimants.

I am very aware of the importance of these payments to participating farmers and I can assure you that my Department will continue to strive to make all payments as soon as possible. I would urge any participant who has received a second stage claim for NICMS to check this carefully, make any necessary adjustments and return the claim promptly to my Department.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to provide details of the meeting that took place between Northern Ireland Environment Agency officials and the developer of a chicken waste incinerator in June 2016, including the location where this development is being considered.

(AQW 1569/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: No meeting has been held in June 2016 with any proposed developer.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the number of staff that haven taken voluntary exit rather than relocating to Ballykelly.

(AQW 1581/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The terms of the Voluntary Exit Scheme did not require applicants to submit their reasons for requesting early exit, therefore it is not possible to determine if any staff left because of the relocation of the Department's Headquarters to Ballykelly.

Of the 392 staff who left under the scheme, 104 were based in the Department's current Headquarters in Dundonald House. The remaining staff were based in offices which are not in scope to move to Ballykelly. Staff communications on relocation have reiterated the commitment that no-one will be forced to move to the new Headquarters and that staff who do not wish to move will be redeployed to posts elsewhere within the NICS. Staff should not, therefore, have felt that taking voluntary exit was the only alternative to relocating to Ballykelly.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs when will she answer AQW 174/16-21 tabled on 27 May 2016; AQW 928/16-21 tabled on 9 June 2016; AQW 1058/16-21 tabled on the 13 June 2016; and AQW 485/16-21 tabled on 2 June 2016.

(AQW 1585/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I have already answered the written questions noted above.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline a timeframe for the processing of the 2015-16 appeals for the Basic Payment Scheme.

(AQW 1609/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: An unprecedented number of Review of Decision requests have been received for the 2015 Basic Payment Scheme year. Each case is individual in nature and must be carefully and thoroughly considered. My Department has reassigned additional staff to process the high volume of applications and the Review process has been streamlined to process the cases as quickly as possible. These measures have already delivered an increase in output and the position is monitored on a continual basis.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail the prosecution proceedings that have been initiated under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 in the last six years.

(AQW 1615/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency, an executive agency within the the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has primary responsibility for the investigation of offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. It submits evidence on suspected waste offending to the Public Prosecution Service, which independently takes decisions to initiate prosecutions.

The figures below reflect the number of defendants brought before court on the basis of that evidence.

In addition to those listed below, 22 evidence files are currently under consideration by the PPS.

Year	No. of prosecutions initiated
2016 (to date)	4
2015	31
2014	65
2013	38
2012	24
2011	24

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to outline the relationship she has, or plans to have, with the National Trust.

(AQW 1618/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: My Department has developed excellent partnerships with the National Trust across a broad spectrum of agricultural, environmental, forestry and rural issues.

The diversity of engagement throughout the Department clearly demonstrates the important role the Trust plays in sustainably managing environmentally valuable land in Northern Ireland. This includes managing woodlands, nature reserves and areas of special scientific interests alongside agriculture.

The knowledge, working partnerships and experiences that have been shared between my Department and the Trust over the years has built expertise and knowledge in Northern Ireland and enhanced our ability to sustainably manage these and other lands for this and future generations.

In addition the Trust receives financial support from my Department from a range of schemes for which it is eligible such as the Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme, the Environment Fund and Forestry Grant Schemes.

I look forward to a continued working partnership with the National Trust to protect and conserve our environment and promote sustainable agriculture and forestry practices.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to list the volunteer and community groups that received funding from her Department, or legacy Department, in each of the last three years, including the amount given each year.

(AQW 1647/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: In the last three financial years, my legacy Department, which includes elements of DOE, DARD and DCAL, provided £33.5m to 620 voluntary and community groups. A breakdown of the funds provided each year is detailed in the following table.

Breakdown of Voluntary and Community Funding provided each year.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total
Voluntary and Community Funding provided each year	£14.1m	£14.4m	£5.0m	£33.5m

A full list of the voluntary and community groups that received this funding is detailed in the following table.

List of Voluntary Community Groups funded by DAERA legacy departments 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Voluntary and Community Groups Funded

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| ■ 1st Kircubbin Guides | ■ Aghyaran Development Association CIC |
| ■ 8th Down Portaferry Sea Scout Group | ■ Aisling Centre, Enniskillen |
| ■ Acorn Womens Group, Augher | ■ Allegri, Nixons Corner |
| ■ Advantageous | ■ Alliance Youth Works |
| ■ Aghaderg Circle of Friends | ■ An Gaelchas |
| ■ Aghagallon Community Centre | ■ Annalong Community Association |
| ■ Aghaloo and Blackwater Community Association Ltd | ■ Annsborough Community Forum |

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| ■ ARC Healthy Living Centre Limited | ■ Ballymarlow & District Community Group |
| ■ Ardaluin Regeneration Trust | ■ Ballymartin Womens Group |
| ■ Ardboe Community Projects | ■ Ballynagross Rural Community Hub |
| ■ Ardglass Community Centre | ■ Ballynure and District Community Association |
| ■ Ardglass Development Association CP Ltd | ■ Ballysallagh Women's Institute |
| ■ Ardglass Festival Association | ■ Ballyspallen Cricket Club |
| ■ Ardglass Residents Group | ■ Ballyvea Football Club |
| ■ Ardglass Youth Club | ■ Ballywalter Historical Society |
| ■ Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society | ■ Ballywalter Youth & Community Cooperative |
| ■ Ardmore Cricket Club | ■ Ballyward Hall Management Company |
| ■ Ardmore Rural Community Association | ■ Ballyward Tuesday Club |
| ■ Ardstraw & Baronscourt Youth Council | ■ Balnamore Community Association |
| ■ Ardstraw Community Angling Club | ■ Bann Valley Community Group |
| ■ Ardstraw Community Playgroup | ■ Barnardo's NI |
| ■ Armoy Community Association | ■ Bat Conservation Ireland |
| ■ Artnagullion Rural, Educational & Cultural Society | ■ Bawn Development Association |
| ■ ArtsEkta | ■ Beech Hill US Navy & Marine Corps Friendship Association |
| ■ Artspace Creative Arts Centre | ■ Belfast and Co Down Miniature Railway Society Ltd |
| ■ Attical Golden Club | ■ Belfast Buildings Trust |
| ■ Aughakillymaude Community Association | ■ Belfast City Council |
| ■ Aughlisnafin Community Association | ■ Belfast City Council and CAAN |
| ■ Aughnacloy Development Association | ■ Belfast Hills Partnership |
| ■ Aughnagurgan Rural Development Association | ■ Bellaghy Development Association Ltd |
| ■ Aurora Counselling Services, Londonderry | ■ Bellanaleck Community Group |
| ■ Ballela Community Group | ■ Bellela Community Group |
| ■ Ballinamallard Fisher Park | ■ Beltrim Charitable Trust |
| ■ Ballinderry AOH Division 287 | ■ Benedy Community Association Ltd |
| ■ Ballinderry Fish Hatchery (River Care Ltd) | ■ Beragh Care Development Association |
| ■ Ballinderry Rivers Trust | ■ Beragh Red Knights, GAC |
| ■ Ballinran Community Association Ltd | ■ Blackhead Angling Club |
| ■ Ballyblack Hall Management Company | ■ Bleary Farmers Hall Management Committee |
| ■ Ballybogey Over 50's Club | ■ Boho Community Association |
| ■ Ballycarry Community Association | ■ Boveedy Community Assoc |
| ■ Ballyclare Activity Trail | ■ Brackey Flute Band, Omagh |
| ■ Ballyclare HS Eco Club | ■ Bright Community Association Ltd, Downpatrick |
| ■ Ballydonagy Rural Community Association | ■ Bright Sparks Pre-School, Lisnaskea |
| ■ Ballydougan Patchwork & Craft Group | ■ British Trust for Ornithology |
| ■ Ballyeaston Village Committee | ■ Brocagh After School Club |
| ■ Ballygorman School House | ■ Brookmount Cultural and Education Society |
| ■ Ballygowan & District Community Association | ■ Broughderg Area Development Association Ltd |
| ■ Ballyholland Development Association (BDA) / Newry And Mourne District Council | ■ Broughshane Environmental Waterfowl & Wildlife Trust |
| ■ Ballyholland Sunshine Club | ■ Broughshane Improvement Committee |
| ■ Ballyhornan & District Community Association (BDCA) | ■ Brunswick Accordion Band, Ballynahinch |
| ■ Ballykinlar Cross Community Pre School Ltd | ■ Burnfoot Community Development Association |
| ■ Ballykinlar GAC | ■ Burrenbridge Community Group |
| ■ Ballykinler and Tyrella District Community Association | ■ Bushmills Trust |
| ■ Ballylaw Regeneration Group | ■ Business In The Community |
| ■ Ballylesson Old Boys | ■ Butterfly Conservation NI |
| ■ Ballymacnab Community Development Association | ■ Caddy & District Community Group, Randalstown |
| ■ Ballymaconnelly Renewal Group | ■ Caledon Regeneration Partnership Ltd |
| | ■ Camlough Community Association |
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| ■ Camowen Farmers Combined Ltd | ■ Corkley Development Association |
| ■ Camphill Community Glencraig | ■ Cornabracken Childcare |
| ■ Cancer Focus NI | ■ Corrymeela Community |
| ■ Cannyman Community Arts, Galbally | ■ COSY Club |
| ■ Carnew Rural Society | ■ Country Lifestyle Exhibitions (CLE) Ltd |
| ■ Carnlough Community Association | ■ Country Roads Women's Group, Dungannon |
| ■ Carnlough Community Development Group Ltd | ■ Countryside Recreation Northern Ireland |
| ■ Carntogher Community Association | ■ County Antrim Indoor Bowling Club Ltd |
| ■ Carrickfergus Gasworks Preservation Society Ltd | ■ County Antrim Yacht Club |
| ■ Carricklongfield Cultural Group | ■ County Armagh Wildlife Society (CAWS) |
| ■ Carrowdore Early Years & Community Development Centre | ■ Craigbane GAC |
| ■ Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association | ■ Craigmore and District Community Association |
| ■ Cashel Community Association | ■ Craobh Rua Camlocha Hurling Club, Bessbrook |
| ■ Castledawson Development Enterprises Ltd | ■ Creggan Country Park Enterprises Ltd |
| ■ Castlederg Childcare Services Ltd | ■ Crewe United Football & Sports Club |
| ■ Castlederg Young Loyalists Flute Band | ■ Crossdernott Bowling Club |
| ■ Castlederg Youth Forum | ■ Crossgar War Memorial Hall Committee |
| ■ Castlewellan Community Play Group | ■ Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary |
| ■ Castlewellan Development Association | ■ Crossmaglen Community Association |
| ■ Castlewellan Regeneration Limited | ■ Culloville Development Association/Newry and Mourne District Council |
| ■ Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust | ■ Cullybackey Development Association |
| ■ Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Partnership | ■ Cullyhanna Community Group |
| ■ Cavan Development Association, Fintona | ■ Curley Rural Community Association |
| ■ Charis Integrated Cancer Care | ■ Cushendall Development Group |
| ■ Churchtown Community Association, Castlederg | ■ Darkley & District Youth & Community Association |
| ■ Cinemagic | ■ Dennett Anglers Association, Burndennett |
| ■ Clady Tiny Tots | ■ Derg Valley Care |
| ■ Clann na nGael GFC, Aughabrack | ■ Derry & Raphoe Action, Newtownstewart |
| ■ Clanrye Group | ■ Derry County Committee |
| ■ CLASS Ltd (Co Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd) | ■ Derrydrummock Community Association |
| ■ Claudy Parish Community Group | ■ Derrygonnelly Community Centre Support Limited |
| ■ Claudy Rural Development | ■ Derrytrasna Senior Citizens Group |
| ■ Cleenish Community Association | ■ Dervock & District Community Association |
| ■ Climate Northern Ireland (CNI) | ■ Destined Ltd |
| ■ Clonduff Historical and Heritage Group | ■ Devenish Partnership Forum |
| ■ Clonmore Regeneration Group Ltd | ■ Diamond Senior Citizens Club, Portadown |
| ■ Clough & District Community Association | ■ Donaghadee Coastal Rowing Club |
| ■ Clough Old School Ltd | ■ Donaghcloney Royal British Legion |
| ■ Cloughey & District Community Association | ■ Donaghcloney Rural Craft Group |
| ■ Cloughmills Community Action Team | ■ Donagheady Presbyterian Church |
| ■ Cnocnafeola Centre/Mourne Hostel | ■ Donemana Cultural Association |
| ■ Coa Community Group | ■ Doury Road Development Group |
| ■ Coiste Ghaeloideachas Chromghlinne | ■ Down District Council |
| ■ Colin Glen Trust | ■ Down District Council and Drumaness Community Association |
| ■ Compass Advocacy Network | ■ Down District Council and Killough Youth and Community Hall |
| ■ Connect, Castlederg | ■ Down District Farmers for Renewable Energy |
| ■ Conservation Volunteers NI | ■ Down Special Olympics Club, Downpatrick |
| ■ Cookstown & Magherafelt Volunteer Centre | ■ Drapers' Towns Partnership Ltd - Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership |
| ■ Cooneen/Coonian Community Development Association | ■ Dromara GAC |
| ■ Copeland Bird Observatory | ■ Dromard Orange Lodge No 284 |
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| ■ Dromore Beekeepers' Association (DBKA) | ■ Garvagh Development Trust (GDT) |
| ■ Drumbanagher Parish Ltd | ■ Gelvin Area Community Association |
| ■ Drumduff & Drumnakilly Community Association | ■ Gillygooley Pipe Band, Omagh |
| ■ Drumgath Ladies Group and Drumgath GAC | ■ Glarryford Young Farmers Club |
| ■ Drumlough & Ballygorian Rural Development Association | ■ Glasgowbury, Draperstown |
| ■ Drumlough Community Association | ■ Glebe House Harmony Community Trust |
| ■ Drumlough Cultural Society | ■ Glenariff Improvement Group |
| ■ Drummond Centre Project, Donemana | ■ Glenarm Community Focus |
| ■ Drumnakilly Parish Church | ■ Glenarm Community Pre-School |
| ■ Drumskinney Rural Action Group | ■ Glenavy Conservation and District Angling Club |
| ■ DSG2010 | ■ Glenclare Community Group |
| ■ Dundrum Village Association | ■ Glenelly Parent & toddlers Group, Plumbridge |
| ■ Dunloy Development Partnership | ■ Gleno Valley Young Farmers Club (Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster) |
| ■ Dunsford Old School Baby and Toddler Group | ■ Glenravel & District Community and Residents Association |
| ■ Eagle Glen Community Partnership Ltd | ■ Glens Angling Club |
| ■ East Down Amateur Boxing Club, Crossgar | ■ Glens Comhaltas, Cushendall |
| ■ ECO-UNESCO | ■ Glens of Antrim Historical Society, Cushendall |
| ■ Eglinton Community Limited | ■ Glens Red Squirrel Group |
| ■ Eglinton Cricket Club | ■ Glens Vintage Club, Glenariffe |
| ■ Enable NI | ■ Glenshane Care Association LTD |
| ■ Enagh Youth Forum | ■ Glenshane Community Development Limited |
| ■ Enagh Youth Forum, Strathfoyle | ■ Glor an Duin |
| ■ Enniskillen Angling Club | ■ Gortilea Social Farm, Claudy |
| ■ Erne & Melvin Enhancement company (EMEC) | ■ Gortin Afternoon Club |
| ■ Erne East Community Partnership Ltd | ■ Gortnaghey Community Association |
| ■ Erne Rivers Trust | ■ Gracehill Old School Trust |
| ■ Eye Feel Good Outdoors | ■ Grange Yard Ltd T/a Life |
| ■ Fabb (For a Better Bangor) | ■ Gransha Hall Management Committee, Garvary |
| ■ FASA - Mens Shed, Ballywalter | ■ Greater Shantallow Area Partnership |
| ■ FASA - Womens Group, Ballywalter | ■ Greater Village Regeneration Trust |
| ■ Fawney Heroes LOL 329, Lisnaskea | ■ Greencastle St. Patricks GFC |
| ■ Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens | ■ Greysteel Community Enterprises |
| ■ Feeny Community Association Ltd | ■ Groundwork Northern Ireland (GWNl) |
| ■ Fermanagh Citizens Advice Bureau | ■ Halftown Residents Association |
| ■ Field Studies Council | ■ Hamilton's Bawn Cultural Society |
| ■ Fintona Senior Citizens Club | ■ Hands That Talk, Dungiven |
| ■ First Castlederg Indoor Bowling Club | ■ Hannahstown Community Association |
| ■ First Steps Children Centre, Castlederg | ■ Happy Faces Day Care Glasdrummond Ltd |
| ■ Forthspring | ■ Harmony Community Trust |
| ■ Forum for Alternative Belfast cic | ■ Hearth Housing Association |
| ■ Fountain NI Ltd | ■ Hearth Revolving Fund & Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust |
| ■ Fourscore LOL, Glenavy | ■ Helen's Bay and Crawfordsburn Residents Association |
| ■ Foyle Down Syndrome Trust | ■ High Moss Sarsfield Football Club |
| ■ Friends of Ardboe Cross | ■ Hillsborough and District Cttee |
| ■ Friends of Derrymore | ■ Hillsborough Scout & Community Hall Group Limited |
| ■ Friends of Grey Point Fort | ■ Hillstown Rural Community Group |
| ■ Friends of Grove Park | ■ Hilltop Friends, Ballinderry |
| ■ Friends of St John the Baptist Roscor | ■ Hilltown Community Association |
| ■ Galbally Youth & Community Association Ltd | ■ Holywell Trust |
| ■ Garrison & Lough Melvin Anglers | ■ Home-Start Ards Comber & Peninsula Area, |
| ■ Garrison Community Group | |
| ■ Garvagh & District Development Association | |
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■ Greyabbey	■ Lecale Conservation
■ Hope 4 ME & Firbo NI, Bessbrook	■ Leckpatrick Development Association
■ Inland Waterways Association of Ireland: Newry & Portadown branch	■ Liberty Consortium
■ Jerrettspass Community Association	■ Ligoniel Improvement Association
■ John Street NI Ltd	■ LILAC Cancer Support Group
■ Kazoku Karate	■ Limavady Day Care Ltd
■ Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful	■ Lisbarnett & Lisbane Community Association
■ Kells & Connor Committee Improvement Association	■ Lislaird Highland Dancers, Castlederg
■ Kells & Connor Community Improvement Association	■ Lislaird LOL 1488, Castlederg
■ Kells & Connor Improvement Committee Improvement Association	■ Lislaird Pipe Band, Castlederg
■ Kells Connor & Glenwherry Angling Club	■ Lisnaskea Community Enterprises Ltd.,
■ Kickhams GAC Creggan	■ Lissan Leisure Club, Cookstown
■ Kilclief Ben Dearg GAC	■ Little Angels Rural Family Centre Ltd
■ Kilcoo Community Association	■ Lough Erne Wildfowlers Council
■ Kilcoo GAC	■ Lough Fea Grouse Conservation Trust
■ Kilcronaghan Community Association	■ Lough Neagh Partnership
■ Kilcronaghan Youth Hostel Limited	■ Lough Neagh Rescue Ltd
■ Kilkeel Development Association	■ Loughgall Womens Institute
■ Kilkeel Parent & Toddler	■ Loughgiel Community Association Ltd
■ Killaloo Accordion Band	■ Loughmacrory Community Development Association
■ Killeen Playgroup	■ Loughshore Care Partnership, Maghery
■ Killen Rangers FC	■ Lylo Schoolhouse
■ Killeshill & Clonaneese Historical Society	■ Madden Community Centre
■ Killeter & District Development Trust	■ Madden Schoolhouse Heritage Committee
■ Killeter Youth Club (The Loft)	■ Magheraboy District LOL No.11
■ Killinchy and District Community Development Association Ltd	■ Magheralin Hall Co Ltd
■ Killinchy Community Development Association Ltd	■ Magheramason Community Development
■ Killough Youth and Community Hall Ltd	■ Maghery District Hall Committee
■ Killyclooney Cricket Club	■ Maguiresbridge Pitch Development & Management Committee
■ Killyleagh Football Club	■ Marine Conservation Northern Ireland
■ Killymoon Rangers F.C., Cookstown	■ Marine Conservation Society
■ Kilmacrew & District Rural Community Group	■ Markethill District Enterprise Ltd
■ Kinawley Community Hall Association	■ Megargy and District Game and Conservation Society
■ Kingdom Men's Shed, Kilkeel	■ Memory Making Ltd
■ Kingdom Youth Club	■ Michael Davitt GAC
■ Kirlish Ulster Scots Association	■ Mid Ulster Enterprises (Creggan) Ltd. (MUE)
■ Knockavannon Rural Community	■ Mid-Ulster Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, Coalisland
■ Knockmoyle Nippers	■ Milford Community Development Association
■ Knockmoyle Youth Committee	■ Millisle & District Community Association
■ Knockninny Credit Union Ltd	■ Millisle Youth Forum
■ Knocks Community Association, Lisnaskea	■ Milltown Rural Development Association
■ Ladies of Mourne, Rostrevor	■ Moira Friendship Group
■ Lagan Canal Restoration Trust	■ Moneyglass Community Centre
■ Lagan Valley Regional Park	■ Moneymore Heritage Trust Ltd
■ Lakeland Community Care Ltd	■ Moneyneena & District Development Group
■ Langfield Community Development Association	■ Moneyslane Rural Community Hub
■ LCDI	■ Moortown St Malachys GAC
■ Learmount Community Development Group Ltd, Park	■ Mornington Community Project
■ Learning to Grow	■ Mountaineering Ireland
	■ Mountfield LOL 674

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| ■ Mountfield Scottish Country Dancers | ■ Pomeroy After School & Play School |
| ■ Mourne Heritage Trust | ■ Pomeroy Pre School Playgroup |
| ■ Mourne Mountain Rescue Team | ■ Portaferry and Strangford Trust |
| ■ Muckamore Parish Development Association | ■ Portaferry Community Collective |
| ■ Muckamore Women's Institute | ■ Portaferry Sailing Club |
| ■ Muintir na Mointeach Community Group, Coalisland | ■ Portavogie Regeneration Forum |
| ■ Muintirevlin Historical Society | ■ Portavogie True Blues LOL 552 |
| ■ Mullabrack Parish Hall Ltd | ■ Portglenone Enterprise Group |
| ■ Mulleek Community Association | ■ Positive Futures |
| ■ N I Raptor Study Group | ■ Pound Bridge & District Community Association, Drumbo |
| ■ Naiscoil na Speirini, Draperstown | ■ Poyntzpass Community Playgroup |
| ■ National Trust | ■ Primrose Hill Day Nursery |
| ■ Natural Copeland | ■ Railway Preservation Society of Ireland |
| ■ Newbuildings ABC | ■ Ramoan Friendship Group, Ballycastle |
| ■ Newbuildings Cricket Club | ■ Rasharkin Community Centre |
| ■ Newcastle CCE | ■ Rasharkin Community Playgroup |
| ■ Newry & Mourne Citizens Advice Bureau | ■ Rasharkin Womens Group |
| ■ Newry & Mourne DC in partnership with Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium | ■ Rathfriland Elim Church |
| ■ Newry & Mourne District Council | ■ Rathfriland Football Club |
| ■ Newry and Mourne District Council | ■ Rathlin Development & Community Association (RDCA) |
| ■ Newtownabbey Educational Guidance Centre | ■ Redrock Development Partnership |
| ■ Newtownards & District Shooting Club | ■ Regent Historical Society |
| ■ Newtownhamilton Rural Community Association | ■ Resource Centre Derry |
| ■ Newtownstewart Flute Band Red Hand Defenders | ■ Richmond Parents Support Group |
| ■ Newtownstewart Leisure Complex Ltd | ■ Richmount Rural Community Association |
| ■ Newtownstewart Masonic Hall | ■ Richmount Rural Community Association - Elders |
| ■ NI Environment Link | ■ Richmount Rural Community Association - Newcomers |
| ■ NI Forest School Assoc | ■ Riding For the Disabled Association (Coleraine and District Group) Ltd |
| ■ Niamh Louise Foundation, Dungannon | ■ Ring of Gullion and Cooley's Red squirrel group |
| ■ Nifty Over Fifties, Castlewellan | ■ River Blackwater Catchment Trust (RBCT) |
| ■ North West Red Squirrel Group | ■ River Care Ltd |
| ■ Northern Counties Development Association, Swatragh | ■ River Valley Development Association Ltd (RVDA) |
| ■ Northern Ireland Environment Link | ■ Rock Community Group, Cookstown |
| ■ Northern Ireland Freshwater Taskforce | ■ Roddensvale School |
| ■ Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group (NIRSG) | ■ Roe Angling Limited |
| ■ NOW | ■ Roe Valley Community Property Ltd |
| ■ Oaktree Day Nurseries | ■ Rosemount & District Welfare Rights Group |
| ■ Oisins CLG, Glenariffe | ■ Rostrevor & District Vintage Club |
| ■ Omagh Early Years Centre | ■ Rowallane Community Hub |
| ■ Oughtagh Town & Country Sport Club, Killaloo | ■ Rowallane Credit Union Ltd |
| ■ Out Of the Shadows, Richhill | ■ RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) Northern Ireland |
| ■ Outdoor Recreation NI | ■ Rural Area Partnership in Derry (R.A.P.I.D.) |
| ■ Owenkillew Community Development Association | ■ Rural Childcare Network / Rainey Centre |
| ■ Owenkillew Development company Ltd | ■ Saintfield Community Estates Partnership |
| ■ Parent Teacher Association Aughnacloy Primary School | ■ Saintfield Development Association |
| ■ Parkgate and District Community Group | ■ Sandholes Community Group |
| ■ Peninsula Health Living Partnership Ltd | ■ Saval GAC, Newry |
| ■ Pettigo and District Angling Association | ■ Scouts NI - Strangford District |
| ■ PLACE | ■ Seaforde and District Community Association |
| ■ Playtime, Day Nursery, Playgroup and Out of School Club | |
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| ■ Seaforde Women's Institute | ■ The Drapers' Towns Partnership Ltd |
| ■ Seaforde Young Farmers | ■ The Drummond Centre Project Limited, Donemana |
| ■ Share Discovery Village | ■ The Follies Trust |
| ■ Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust | ■ The Glens Youth Club Ltd |
| ■ Sion Mills Community Forum | ■ The Irish Landmark Trust |
| ■ Sixmilecross Enterprise Ltd | ■ The Kilbroney Centre |
| ■ Sixmilecross Presbyterian Church | ■ The Lakeland Players, Enniskillen |
| ■ Sixmilewater Trust | ■ The National Trust |
| ■ Something Special Academy | ■ The Rainbow Project |
| ■ South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association | ■ The Rural Area Partnership in Derry (RAPID Ltd) |
| ■ South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, Dungannon | ■ The Sports Centre Management Group, Fivemiletown |
| ■ Speedwell Trust | ■ The Trustees of Lower Mourne Gaelic League |
| ■ Sperrins Tourism Limited | ■ The Woodland Trust |
| ■ Springhill Golf & Country Club | ■ The World of Owls |
| ■ Springwell House | ■ The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster |
| ■ St Brigid's Accordion Band Jonesbrough | ■ Ti Chulainn Activity & Cultural Centre |
| ■ St Brigid's PS Parents Group, Crossmaglen | ■ TIDAL |
| ■ St Colman's Parish Community Group, Ardboe | ■ Time 4 Me, Toombridge |
| ■ St Ergnats Moneyglass GAC | ■ Tir na nOg GAC |
| ■ St Eugeenes GAC Castlederg | ■ Tirgan Community Association |
| ■ St John's Drumnaquoile GAC | ■ Tobermore Community Projects |
| ■ St Mary's GAA Club Ardmore | ■ Tobin Youth Centre (Moortown) Ltd |
| ■ St Mary's Primary School PTA, Cushendall | ■ Toomebridge Initiative Group |
| ■ St Mary's Youth Club | ■ Torrent Valley Initiative Ltd |
| ■ St Michaels GFC, Magheralin | ■ Traad & Ballyronan Ballinderry Development Association |
| ■ St Mochai's GAC, Crossgar | ■ Traad Wildlife and Conservation Club |
| ■ St Oliver Plunkett Youth Club | ■ Transition Town Whitehead |
| ■ St Patrick's GAC Saul | ■ Trillick Community Group |
| ■ St Patricks Hall Committee, Fintona | ■ Trinity Park Pre-School and Nursery |
| ■ St Patrick's Hurling Club, Lisbellaw | ■ Tullintrain Orange Hall, Claudy |
| ■ St. Eugene's GAC Castlederg | ■ Tullyhappy LOL 59, Markethill |
| ■ Strabane & District Women Together, Artigarvan | ■ Tullysaren Community Association |
| ■ Strangford Community Association | ■ Tullyvallen LOL 630, Newtownhamilton |
| ■ Strangford Football Club | ■ Tullyvallen Rangers FC Community Limited |
| ■ Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership | ■ TVI |
| ■ Stranocum & District Development Group | ■ Tyrone County GAA Committee |
| ■ Strathfoyle Community Association Ltd | ■ Tyrone's Ditches Pipe Band, Armagh |
| ■ Suffolk Community Forum | ■ Ulster Architectural Heritage Society |
| ■ Sugar & Spice early Years Centre | ■ Ulster Wildlife Trust |
| ■ Sustainable NI | ■ Ulster Workhouse and Famine Trust Lisnaskea |
| ■ Taghnevan Community Development Association | ■ Upper Andersonstown Communtiy Forum |
| ■ Tamlaght Women's Institute | ■ Upper Lough Erne Tourism Development Association |
| ■ Tanvalley & Anaghlonge Project | ■ Upperlands Community Development Limited |
| ■ The Birches Day Care Centre and Cosy Club, Portadown | ■ Victoria Street and Surrounding Area Action Group |
| ■ The Boys' Brigade (Belfast) | ■ Walk the Glens, Cushendall |
| ■ The Brain Injury Foundation, Newry | ■ Watty Grahams GAA Club, Maghera |
| ■ The Charles Sheils Charity | ■ West Belfast Partnership Board |
| ■ The Conservation Volunteers | ■ WF Marshall Friends Group, Sixmilecross |
| ■ The County Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd | ■ Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust - Castle Espie Wetland Centre |
| ■ The Downpatrick & County Down Railway Society Ltd | ■ Willowbank Organic Producers Ltd |
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- Windsor Women's Centre
- Woodland Trust
- Workspace (Draperstown) Ltd
- World Of Owls
- Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster
- Youthlife

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether she is aware that the new legislation on horse racing must be place before the end of June 2016 to have any effect on 2016-17 payments.

(AQW 1652/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: I am aware that bookmakers can renew their licence from 1 July 2016 to operate during the year 2016-17, and that any changes to the rate payable to the Horse Racing Fund must be enacted in legislation before this date. As legislation to revise the rate of payments to the Horse Racing Fund has not yet been brought forward, the rate will remain at its current charge of £1123 for off-course bookmakers and £99 for on-course bookmakers for this year.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether any consideration is being given to increasing the carrier bag levy.

(AQW 1657/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 became operational on 8 April 2013 and were subsequently amended in January 2015 by the Carrier Bags Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. This amendment extended the scope of the Carrier Bag Levy to include all bags with a retail price of less than 20p effectively extending the levy beyond single use bags to include cheap reusable bags.

A statutory review of the Carrier Bag Levy charging regime is scheduled for completion by April 2017. Officials from my Department have already commissioned this work and findings will be presented to the Departmental Committee early next year. Pending this review I have no plans to increase the levy; however, the potential for an increase in the levy will be examined as part of the terms of reference of this review.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail all (i) completed; (ii) in progress; and (iii) future capital projects funded through her Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1661/16-21)

Miss McIlveen: The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has completed a number of capital projects over the last seven financial years, totalling £28,883,170. This is broken down in the table below. Due to the Department's document retention policy of seven years, financial information prior to the 2009/10 year is limited and has therefore has been excluded.

Currently, within the 2016/17 financial year there is £340,637 of approved allocated funding to capital projects in this area.

As the Executive has not yet agreed any capital budgets beyond 2016/17, it is not possible to set out the future capital projects that will be funded by the Department.

Annex A – Completed Capital Projects funded by the Department

Area	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	Total £
Farm Nutrient Management Scheme	7,057,521	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,057,521
NI Rural Development Programme	862,075	988,571	1,966,001	1,859,067	5,002,380	2,594,253	497,979	13,770,326
Rural Childcare Programme	-	178,949	-	-	-	-	-	178,949
Fuel Poverty Programme	-	-	21,075	35,474	76,596	-	-	133,145
Rural Borewells Scheme	-	-	-	50,000	12,000	12,000	-	74,000
Interreg IVA – Sub Theme 2	-	-	-	-	-	971,886	1,696,904	2,668,790
Rural Micro Grant Programme	-	-	-	-	-	-	31,957	31,957
Rethink Waste	-	324,878	153,950	-	-	441,313	372,325	1,292,466

Area	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	Total £
Forest Service Grants	67,825	135,615	93,638	75,298	89,406	42,811	37,162	541,755
Total	7,987,421	1,628,013	2,234,664	2,019,839	5,180,382	4,062,263	2,636,327	25,748,911
Projects								
Forest Service Capital Works	-	30,907	26,838	-	-	291,389	310,968	660,101
NIEA - Resurfacing	-	-	-	33,158	-	-	-	33,158
CAFRE – Enniskillen Campus	-	320,000	270,000	37,000	395,000	520,000	258,000	1,800,000
Forest Service Headquarters Relocation	-	-	-	-	-	-	641,000	641,000
Total	-	350,907	296,838	70,158	395,000	811,389	1,209,968	3,134,259
Total	7,987,421	1,978,920	2,531,502	2,089,997	5,575,382	4,873,652	3,846,295	28,883,170

Department for Communities

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Communities to detail (i) those organisations receiving both Neighbourhood Renewal funding for salaries and running costs associated with the provision of childcare and funding for child care salary, or running costs under the Northern Ireland Housing Executive social housing enterprise awards 2016-17; and (ii) the amount awarded for 2016-17 from each scheme.

(AQW 1510/16-21)

Mr Givan (The Minister for Communities): The table below details those organisations receiving Neighbourhood Renewal funding for salaries and running costs associated with the provision of childcare and the amount funded for those elements to each for 2016/17. There are currently no organisations receiving both Neighbourhood Renewal funding for salaries or running costs associated with the provision of childcare, and funding for childcare salary or running costs under the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Social Housing Enterprise Awards for 2016/17.

It should be noted NIHE has advised that there has been no funding awarded at this time from their Social Housing Enterprise Investment Scheme in relation to the provision of childcare services in the current financial year 2016/17.

Organisation Name	Neighbourhood Renewal Funding Awarded 2016/17
Hobby Horse Playgroup	£51,943.65
Tullycarnet Community Support Services Limited	£26,862.03
Newtownards Road Womens Group	£87,982.28
*Upper Springfield Development Company Limited	£56,547.04
An Droichead Limited	£55,419.61
Glenbank Community Association	£17,377.67
174 Trust	£10,939.14
Wishing Well Family Centre	£49,351.45
Ashton Community Trust	£116,935.22
*Ballee Community Childcare	£10,890.32
Creggan Pre-School Training Trust	£82,267
Ionad Uibh Eachach	£31,636.64
Greater Village Regeneration Trust – South West Belfast – Children's Programme	£35,576.58

* These projects were not included in previous AQW 54792/11-16, as they were not in receipt of Early Years funding in 2015/16.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Communities to detail the level of departmental funding provided to organisations and community groups in Upper Bann in each of the last five years, broken down by each organisation and community group. **(AQW 1564/16-21)**

Mr Givan: The table below sets out the level of Neighbourhood Renewal funding provided to organisations and community groups in Upper Bann over the last five years, set out by capital build / equipment type projects and by revenue type service delivery projects.

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Craigavon Borough Council (CBC)- North Lurgan Sensory Garden	£0.00	£0.00	£41,372.00	£0.00	£0.00	£41,372.00
Craigavon Borough Council -Brownlow Terrace Footbridge	£0.00	£59,050.67	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£59,050.67
Craigavon Borough Council - Mourneview MUGA	£0.00	£145,187.93	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£145,187.93
Dept For Regional Development - Kilwilkie Roads and Footpaths	£0.00	£246,840.34	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£246,840.34
Department For Regional Development - Mourneview Carriageway Reports & Footway Improvement Scheme	£0.00	£0.00	£136,872.53	£0.00	£0.00	£136,872.53
Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Oakfield Drive Car parking	£6,020.54	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,020.54
Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Fencing at Taghnevan Drive & Glenholmre Park Footpath	£12,186.84	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£12,186.84
Southern Education & Library Board - Ceara Special School Equipment	£0.00	£0.00	£78,334.48	£0.00	£0.00	£78,334.48
Southern Education & Library Board - St Marys High School Community Learning Room	£89,208.01	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£89,208.01
Lurgan YMCA - Internal Furnishings	£0.00	£88,508.97	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£88,508.97
Lurgan Phoenix Boxing Club Kit and Equip	£0.00	£0.00	£16,723.01	£0.00	£0.00	£16,723.01
Lurgan Golfing Academy - Driving Range	£0.00	£0.00	£315,220.20	£0.00	£0.00	£315,220.20
Lurgan Town FC Redevelopment - Pavilion & Training Pitch	£0.00	£0.00	£15,260.83	£486,204.40	£8,460.80	£509,926.03
Lurgan Clan Na Gael - New Kit	£2,584.10					£2,584.10
Lurgan - St Pauls GFC - New Kit	£14,510.00					£14,510.00
Lurgan Ladies Hockey Club - New Kit	£16,064.00					£16,064.00
Lurgan On Guard Gym			£28,506.06			£28,506.06
Lurgan CIDO Fencing		£18,997.00	£0.00	£0.00		£18,997.00

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Lurgan Rugby and Cricket Club Options Ap		£3,000.00	£0.00	£0.00		£3,000.00
Lurgan Oxford Sunnyside Kit		£26,223.96	£0.00	£0.00		£26,223.96
Lurgan Clann Eireann Options Appraisal		£0.00	£4,170.00	£0.00		£4,170.00
Total	£140,573.49	£587,808.87	£636,459.11	£486,204.40	£8,460.80	£1,859,506.67

Portadown Capital Build / Equipment Projects

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Drumcree Community Trust - Community Centre Refurbishment	£0.00	£0.00	£5,094.00	£379,659.23	£6,011.40	£390,764.63
Southern Education & Library Board - Ballyoran PS Community Learning Room	£144,706.53	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£144,706.53
Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Environmental Improvements	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£44,900.56	£0.00	£44,900.56
Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Edgarstown Fencing	£0.00	£10,173.58	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£10,173.58
Southern Education & Library Board - Millington PS Family Learning Suite	£0.00	£136,487.82	£149,173.94	£0.00	£0.00	£285,661.76
St Mary's Youth Centre Refurbishment	£22,235.04	£62,377.57	£354,392.29	£0.00	£0.00	£439,004.90
Edgarstown Residents Association - Programme Equipment	£0.00	£6,657.90	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,657.90
Department For Regional Development - Edgarstown Improvements	£61,105.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£61,105.00
Epworth Girs Brigade - Refurbishment	£0.00	£14,475.51	£10,203.41	£0.00	£0.00	£24,678.92
Edgarstown Community House refurb	£74,200.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£74,200.00
St Mary's Youth Club New Kit	£9,150.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£9,150.00
St John's Scouts Hut - Health & Safety works	£19,780.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£19,780.00
Bannside Refurbishment	£5,600.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,600.00
Mayfair Solar Repower	£0.00	£0.00	£850.00	£5,500.00	£0.00	£6,350.00
Drumcree Community Trust - EQUIP	£17,645.40	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£17,645.40
Epworth Girls Brigade - Equipment	£12,187.12	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£12,187.12
Tir Na Nog GFC - New Pavilion / Changing	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£558,478.28	£558,478.28
Total	£366,609.09	£230,172.38	£519,713.64	£430,059.79	£564,489.68	£2,111,044.58

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
CRAIGAVON CAPITAL BUILD / EQUIPMENT PROJECTS						
Craigavon Borough Council - Playpark Refurbishment	£0.00	£368,765.57	£107,438.45	£0.00	£0.00	£476,204.02
Craigavon Borough Council - Bus Shelter Project	£0.00	£0.00	£17,135.00	£0.00	£0.00	£17,135.00
Drumellan Family Learning Centre	£10,400.00	£84,600.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£95,000.00
Clanrolla and Clonmeen - additional carparking	£48,783.04	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00	£48,783.04
Brownlow Ltd - new computer suite	£0.00	£12,539.29	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£12,539.29
Bluestone Business Park Phase 3	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£581,020.00	£167,640.00	£748,660.00
Brownlow - West Brownlow Environmental Improvements	£59,231.90	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£59,231.90
St Anthony's Hall	£452,638.39	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£452,638.39
Craigavon City FC - 3G pitch	£0.00	£18,900.00	£424,524.29	£500.00	£0.00	£443,924.29
Tots at the Bridge - kitchen refurbishment	£0.00	£7,883.87	£41,884.00	£0.00	£0.00	£49,767.87
AFC Craigavon - upgrade changing rooms	£0.00	£3,540.00	£156,229.56	£78,790.44	£0.00	£238,560.00
Craigavon Amateur Boxing Club - new kit	£0.00	£0.00	£6,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,000.00
Craigavon Amateur Boxing Club - Equipment	£31,135.25	£3,800.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£34,935.25
Eire Og GFC - new kit	£28,041.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£28,041.50
Craigavon City FC - new kit	£21,795.17	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£21,795.17
7th Dromore Scouts - new kit	£38,760.38	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£38,760.38
Drumbeg Community House - refurbishment	£14,070.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£14,070.00
Enniskeen Community House - refurbishment	£0.00	£52,854.69	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£52,854.69
Craigavon Cowboys - new kit	£19,764.70	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£19,764.70
Lismore Student Parental Learning Facility	£0.00	£0.00	£59,100.03	£0.00	£0.00	£59,100.03
Total	£724,620.33	£552,883.42	£812,311.33	£660,310.44	£167,640.00	£2,917,765.52

Craigavon Wide - Revenue Projects / Programmes

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Craigavon Borough Council - Retail Capacity Building	£89,401.76	£151,824.56	£5,933.68	£0.00	£0.00	£247,160.00
Craigavon Borough Council - Pest Control	£3,340.00	£3,169.00	£2,198.50	£3,561.50	£0.00	£12,269.00
Craigavon Borough Council - Craigavon Technical Assistance 4	£58,474.99	£54,281.65	£63,371.68	£61,962.60	£0.00	£238,090.92

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Craigavon Borough Council - Graffiti Removal and Prevention Project	£25,000.00	£25,000.00	£25,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£75,000.00
Craigavon Borough Council - Sport in the Community (2011-2014)	£73,220.40	£112,607.34	£152,278.40	£0.00	£0.00	£338,106.14
Craigavon Borough Council - Sport in the Community (2014 - 2015)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£90,147.96	£0.00	£90,147.96
Craigavon Borough Council - Neighbourhoods in Bloom Project	£0.00	£295,000.00	£75,500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£370,500.00
Craigavon Borough Council - Citizen 21 Project	£0.00	£34,800.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£34,800.00
Craigavon Borough Council - Craigavon wide Angling Project	£0.00	£31,402.70	£43,912.70	£21,310.86	£0.00	£96,626.26
Craigavon Borough Council - Craigavon wide Bushcrafting Project	£0.00	£18,446.25	£151,907.75	£138,236.58	£0.00	£308,590.58
Craigavon Borough Council - Craigavon wide Cycling Project	£0.00	£0.00	£18,980.55	£87,022.90	£0.00	£106,003.45
Armagh Craigavon & Banbridge Council - Technical Assistance 4 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£54,229.68	£54,229.68
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council - Sport in the Community 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£98,336.70	£98,336.70
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council - Craigavon Building Sustainable Communities 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£192,535.65	£192,535.65
Southern Health & Social Care Trust - Craigavon Health Improvement Project	£94,463.01	£113,489.66	£121,275.33	£99,143.19		£428,371.19
Southern Health & Social Care Trust - Craigavon Health Improvement Project 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£87,637.57	£87,637.57
Southern Education & Library Board - Education and Social Exclusion	£14,240.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£14,240.00
Southern Regional College - Craigavon TOPS	£31,939.46	£118,997.14	£107,838.66	£99,189.88	£0.00	£357,965.14
Southern Regional College - Practice Firms	£39,132.77	£96,569.33		£0.00	£0.00	£135,702.10
Southern Regional College - Craigavon Steering to Success	£66,436.21	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£66,436.21
Southern Regional College - Cancerwise	£1,574.87	£39,325.95	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£40,900.82

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Southern Regional College - The Grow Project	£2,214.45	£44,305.41	£79,743.61	£63,072.53	£0.00	£189,336.00
Southern Regional College - The Enterprise Firm	£0.00	£49,922.46	£122,902.54	£115,392.77	£0.00	£288,217.77
Southern Regional College -Care4U	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£37,923.00	£0.00	£37,923.00
Southern Regional College - OCEANS 14			£12,086.30	£56,701.85	£0.00	£68,788.15
Southern Regional College - OCEANS 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£42,959.64	£42,959.64
Southern Regional College - Care4U 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£8,920.01	£8,920.01
Southern Regional College Craigavon - TOPS 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£110,400.14	£110,400.14
Southern Regional College - Southern Region Enterprise Firm 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£43,630.00	£43,630.00
Southern Regional College - Craigavon - The Grow Project 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£27,824.70	£27,824.70
Southern Education & Library Board - Portadown Early Years Learning Mentor	£0.00	£0.00	£44,065.45	£30,376.35	£0.00	£74,441.80
Education Authority - Portadown Early Years Learning Mentor 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£62,750.10	£62,750.10
Dialogue For Diversity - Language Training	£0.00	£5,907.70	£4,251.62	£1,281.99	£0.00	£11,441.31
Social Renewal Educational Programme 2	£14,929.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		£14,929.50
SELB - Inclusion in Education	£117,739.30	£120,939.76	£115,304.12	£104,059.79	£0.00	£458,042.97
SELB - Youth Engagement	£75,794.13	£119,089.38	£133,200.16	£131,401.46	£0.00	£459,485.13
SELB - Count, Read, Succeed	£0.00	£66,000.00	£85,780.93	£138,353.62	£0.00	£290,134.55
SELB - Transitions Programme	£0.00	£0.00	£32,587.50	£51,812.41	£0.00	£84,399.91
Education Authority - Inclusion in Education 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£94,250.00	£94,250.00
Education Authority - Count, Read, Succeed 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£138,121.00	£138,121.00
Education Authority - Youth Engagement 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£111,250.00	£111,250.00
Education Authority - Transitions Programme 15/16	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£55,210.00	£55,210.00
Total	£707,900.85	£1,501,078.29	£1,398,119.48	£1,330,951.24	£1,128,055.19	£6,066,105.05
Total by Financial Year	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	Overall
Capital Build / Equipment	£1,231,802.91	£1,370,864.67	£1,968,484.08	£1,576,574.63	£740,590.48	£6,888,316.77
Revenue Programmes	£707,900.85	£1,501,078.29	£1,398,119.48	£1,330,951.24	£1,128,055.19	£6,066,105.05

Applicant	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total Spend
Total	£1,939,703.76	£2,871,942.96	£3,366,603.56	£2,907,525.87	£1,868,645.67	£12,954,421.82

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities, pursuant to AQW 554/16-21, for a breakdown of salaries paid to (i) central government planners prior to transfer to local government; and (ii) Northern Ireland Environment Agency mineral units staff prior to transfer to local government.

(AQW 1635/16-21)

Mr Givan:

(i) Central Government Planners

The cumulative figure for salary costs for Local & Strategic Planning and Planning Policy, including administrative staff, for the year 2014/15 was £15,660,000. It has not been possible to break down the salaries for central government planning staff prior to transfer to local government. The 11 council model was not reflected in the payroll costing analysis that was used at that time.

(ii) Mineral unit

The Mineral Unit was a specific Unit within Planning Service and not part of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

There was a team of seven NIEA staff transferred to local government to provide support to the new Councils' statutory function to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessments in order for Councils to determine planning applications. Given the technical nature of the expertise transferred, it was provided through a Shared Service Arrangement for all Councils to access.

The 2014-15 salary costs for these 7 staff was £218,143.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister for Communities to list the volunteer and community groups that received funding from his Department, or legacy Department, in each of the last three years, including the amount given each year.

(AQW 1645/16-21)

Mr Givan:

Volunteer and Community Groups that received Departmental funding in each of the last three years (2013/14 – 2015/16).

(Please note that some organisations may feature more than once due to receiving funding from different business areas within the Department)

Business Area: Voluntary and Community Division

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
16th NI Seaview Presbyterian Girls Brigade			900
1st Ballykelly Boys' Brigade	1,500	900	
1st Castledawson Boys Brigade		1,000	800
1st Castlerock Scout Group			850
1st Charlemont Boys Brigade	900		
1st Coleraine Boys Brigade		1,500	1,200
1st Cullybackey Guides			650
1st Culnady Boys Brigade	1,500	1,000	600
1st Dungiven Boys Brigade		1,081	1,000
1st Enniskillen Guides			840
1st Faughanvale Girl Guiding Unit		1,200	900
1st Garvagh Boys Brigade		1,468	1,200
1st Inniskilling Scouts		900	
1st Kilbride Boys Brigade			1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
1st Lisburn Boys Brigade		957	
1st Maghaberry Scout Group	790	850	
1st Maghera Boys Brigade			300
1st Magheraculmoney Scouts		1,050	
1st Magherafelt Boys Brigade			700
1st Moneymore Guide Company			833
1st Presbyterian Church Broughshane Sunday School	1,255		520
1st Raloo Boys Brigade	1,500	1,500	800
1st Redrock Boys Brigade	1,400		
1st Saintfield Youth Council (BB, GB & Youth Club)		1,000	
1st Tandragee Scout Group		1,200	
220th Castledawson Girls Brigade		1,000	600
228th Tobermore Girls Brigade		1,030	600
23rd Antrim Scout Group	500		
258th Culnady Girls Brigade	1,500	1,000	700
2nd Ahoghill Boys Brigade	540	800	200
2nd Ards Cub Pack	1,400		
2nd Chance - Ashes to Gold	1,480		
2nd Hillsborough Beechlawn School Scouts	500		
2nd Limavady Boys Brigade	1,260	1,500	1,000
32nd Belfast Boys Brigade		1,200	1,000
33rd Derry Ballinascreen Scouts	1,300		1,200
362nd Raloo Girls Brigade			1,000
3rd Ards Boys Brigade	1,470		
3rd Belfast Boys Brigade	1,300		
3rd Larne Boys Brigade Company			969
4 C/s Limited	1,500		
4th Ballymoney Boys Brigade	340		
4th Fermanagh Scouts	1,120	1,005	840
7th Bangor Scout Group	1,500	1,300	
7th Larne Scout group	1,499		
Abbey Amateur Boxing Club	1,450		
Abbeytots Parent & Toddler Group	1,160	1,300	890
ABC Community Network	66,539	66,539	63,212
Accolade		1,100	
Accolade (All Communities Art Communication)			1,200
Acorn Womens Group		1,500	1,200
Active Listening Ltd	1,499	1,499	
Advice NI	1,448,488	1,313,353	1,315,879
African & Caribbean Support Organisation NI (ACSONI)	1,500		900

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Age Concern Castlederg			1,200
Aghagallon Community Centre	1,500	1,150	1,200
Aghalee Taekwondo Club		1,120	
Aghanloo Flute Band		1,100	1,000
ALBERT FOUNDRY FOOTBALL CLUB			1,100
All Nations Ministries	1,500		800
All Saints Crossderrnott Bowling Club	983		876
Altamuskin Community Association		1,050	
AMIGOS Together Belfast Free Spanish Lessons			1,120
An Tearmann Project Ltd	633		
Andersonstown Celtic Football Club			1,100
Annaclone Summer Scheme			1,104
Annagh United Football Club	1,000		
Annaghmore GAC		700	
Annalong Cultural Education Society		1,250	
Antrim Festival Group		900	
Antrim Hockey Club			1,080
Antrim Reminiscence Group	1,500	1,150	850
Antrim RFC & Hockey Club	1,455	1,032	
Antrim to Gaza		1,150	
Antrim Youth Information and Counselling Centre	1,500	1,500	1,200
Aodh Ruadh Dun Geanainn Ladies GAC		900	
Apprentice Boys of Derry Parent Club		950	
Arboretum Regeneration Castlewella (ARC)	1,410	1,250	
Arbour House Project	1,500	1,500	1,200
Ardaluin Regeneration Trust	1,460	1,380	
Ardinariff Historical and Cultural Society	1,075	1,200	1,200
Ardmore Cricket & Football Club		1,300	
Ardmore Rural Community Association	1,040		
Ardoyne Holy Cross boxing club	1,425	1,250	
Ards Development Bureau & Community Network	61,786	68,926	58,697
Ards Ladies Hockey Club	985		
Ardstraw & Baronscourt Youth Council	1,140	1,500	300
Ardstraw & District Community Development Assoc	510		
Ardstraw Community Playgroup		1,350	1,200
Ardtrea & Desertcreat Senior Citizens Group		1,190	950
Area Ten North Derry County Darts	1,300	1,050	450
Armagh Child Contact Centre		1,498	1,000
Armoy Community Association	1,420		14,016
Armoy Over 50s Club		825	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Arthritis Care Banbridge	550		
Arthritis Care Strabane	1,500	1,300	
Artigarvan Youth Club			820
Artillery Youth Centre (Greater New Lodge Youth Forum)			600
Ashgrove Primary Parent Teacher Association			1,200
Ashton Community Trust	47,528	47,528	45,152
Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland	1,480		900
Association of Charitable Foundations	10,000	10,000	10,000
Atlas Womens Centre	114,260	114,404	111,077
Atticall Community Association		1,150	
Augher Stars Youth		1,110	
Aughintoher Regeneration		900	
Aughlismafin Youth Club			650
Aughnahooray LOL 343B		700	
Aughrim LOL 711		750	
Aztecs Volleyball Club	960		
Ballela GAC		1,000	
Ballinamallard United Football Club		1,490	
Ballinamallard United Youth FC			1,200
Ballinascreen Historical Society	1,490	800	
Ballinascreen Spred Group (Special Needs Adults)		1,500	1,200
Ballinrees Bowling Club		1,200	
Ballinrees Pipe Band		1,150	800
Ballintoy & District Community Development Association	1,460		
Ballybeen Men's Motivational Group	2,000		
Ballybeen Womens Centre	250,856	250,856	247,292
Ballybogey Community Association	1,320		
Ballycastle Concern Group	1,500		1,100
Ballycastle McQuillans GAC	1,500	900	
Ballycastle United Football Club	1,440		
Ballycastle United Youth Academy		960	960
Ballyclare Family Focus: Ballyclare Family Support & Resource Network	1,000		1,200
Ballydugan Patchwork Craft Group			1,100
Ballykeel Together Development Association	2,023	1,200	
Ballykelly Boxers	1,500	800	1,100
Ballykelly Community and Youth Association			1,100
Ballykelly Mens Shed			1,200
Ballykelly Primary School			800
Ballykinlar Cross Community Preschool			1,100
Ballymac Friendship Trust Limited			12,202

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Ballymarlow & District Community Association	1,500		
Ballymena & District Carers Group	1,105	1,300	1,200
Ballymena and Antrim Athletic Club		1,500	
Ballymena Area Childrens Contact Service		1,200	1,000
Ballymena ME & Fibromyalgia Support Group	1,220	1,412	
Ballymena United Allstars Ladies Football Club			1,200
Ballymoney Community Resource Centre	65,564	65,564	62,286
Ballymoney United Youth Academy	1,410	1,190	1,160
Ballymoughan Flute Band	1,000	1,000	
Ballynaveigh Community Development Association	66,405	66,405	73,085
Ballynagross FC		1,125	1,120
Ballynahinch Child Contact Centre			1,200
Ballyoran Community and Arts Group			840
BALLYSPALLEN CRICKET CLUB	1,500	1,500	1,000
Balnamore Community Association	1,200	1,200	
BANBRIDGE AMATEUR BOXING CLUB	550		
Banbridge Amateur Swimming Club		1,500	
BANBRIDGE RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB	1,500		1,100
Banbridge Senior Citizens Club	1,500	1,500	
Banbridge Special Olympics	1,100	800	
Bann Valley Community Group	1,350	1,500	
Barn United Youth Football Club	1,500	880	1,200
Barnmaghery Rural Society		1,500	
Barnlee Crafts and Activities	1,500		
Beal Cu ORaballaigh GAA Club		700	
Beautiful Minds			699
Bee Heard			1,200
Beechland Community Group	1,070		
Belcoo Community Playgroup	1,487		
Belfast 89FM			1,194
Belfast City BMX Club			964
Belfast Cranes Special Olympics Club			704
Belfast Ice Foxes	1,160		
Belfast Lough Sailability	2,000	1,500	1,000
Belfast Platform for the Arts		1,492	1,000
Belfast Running Club		1,350	
Bellaghy RBP 573			700
Bellaghy Village Regeneration			600
Bellaghy Womens Group			835
Belnaleck Art McMurrough's GFC			1,050

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Benbradagh Community Support	650		783
Benburb District Community Association			800
Beneath His Wings			1,200
Benedy Community Association	1,625	1,100	1,200
Beragh Red Knights GAC		1,100	700
Beragh Youth Club	375	1,086	550
Bertie Peacock Youth FC	1,450	1,500	
Birches Action Rural Network	1,190	1,500	1,200
Blast Community Fitness			900
Bleary Farmers Hall Management Committee	130		
Bloomfield Community Association	1,420	1,500	1,200
Bloomfield Football Club		1,400	
Boho Womens Group	720	1,090	1,200
Bonds Glen Cricket Club		1,500	
Border Arts	1,400	1,450	1,200
Born 2 Run Events		1,350	1,200
Bovalley Community Association	1,833	1,200	850
Boys Brigade Belfast Battalion	1,400		
Brackaville Owen Roes GFC		1,345	
Braidwater Seniors	1,315		
Braniel Community Association	1,000		
Braniel Community Church		950	650
Bready & District Ulster Scots Development Association			1,100
Breakaway Blues	1,100		
Bredagh GAC	1,125	1,500	1,200
Breffni Club			1,200
BRG Lint Dam Allotments	1,280		
Bridging Divides			500
Brigade Cricket Club			500
Bright Early Mens Club			600
Bright Lights	1,500	1,000	1,150
Brocagh & District Regeneration Group	1,100	1,000	
Broughderg Area Development Association	1,500	1,500	1,200
Broughshane & District Community Assoc Ltd	500		
Brown Square Residents Association		1,076	
Bruces True Blues Accordion Band		1,000	700
Brunswick Accordion Band		1,000	500
Building Ballysally Together	1,400	1,500	1,200
Building Change Trust Ltd	13,584	175,199	50,040
Building Communities Ltd	1,200	1,200	780

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Burnfoot Community Development Association	1,565	1,500	1,080
Burnside and District Community Group	950		620
Bushmills Residents & Environmental Forum	1,500	1,300	1,200
Bushmills Traders Association	1,170		
Business in the Community NI	16,051	16,861	17,943
CAB Ballymena	1,478		
Cairde Teo	633		
Cairncastle L.O.L. 692 Community & Cultural Group	1,500	1,500	860
Caledon Playgroup	1,500		
Camara Education UK	1,500	1,350	
Camowen Farmers Combined Ltd			1,000
Camowen Partnership Ltd	900	1,075	700
Campsie Residents Association	1,500	1,350	800
Cancer Connect		1,300	
CAP (Christians Against Poverty)			1,200
Cappagh Badoney Comhaltas Branch		1,500	825
Cara-Friend	1,500		
Care For The Family	44,002	34,831	17,600
Carey Faughs GAC		1,100	
Carnagat Area Community Association			1,050
Carncourt Variety Club		1,300	
Carniny Amateur & Youth FC	1,500		1,200
Carnlough Community Association	2,000	1,500	3,361
Carrick Connect			450
Carrickcruppen GAC		1,400	1,190
Carrickfergus Boxing Academy	1,500		
Carrickfergus Child Contact Centre	1,180		
Carrickfergus Childminders Drop In Group	500		
Carrickfergus Citizens Advice	1,500		
Carrickfergus Community Cultivation	1,115		980
Carrickfergus Community Forum	60,642	60,642	57,610
Carrowshee Park/Sylvan Hill Community Association	1,170	1,030	1,180
Carryduff Amateur Boxing club	1,450		
Carryduff Colts FC	1,500		
Carryduff Regeneration Forum			1,200
Castle Juniors	1,500	1,500	1,200
Castlecaulfield Horticultural Society	1,150		
Castledawson Part Music Flute Band		1,450	700
Castlederg Methodist Church	1,048		
Castlederg Youth Forum		1,450	1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Castlemara Community Association		1,200	
Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum			1,200
Castlerock Community Association	1,500	1,250	1,050
Castlewellan Town FC		1,500	
Catalyst Arts Limited	1,500	1,500	900
Causeway Archers Cushendall		1,270	
Causeway Befrienders		1,500	
Causeway Cardiac Support Group	985		590
Causeway Christian Services	1,500		
Causeway Community Tennis Club			1,200
Causeway Friends of The Elderly		966	
Causeway Rural & Urban Network	70,828	247,890	67,287
Causeway Volunteer Centre	62,975	40,000	44,533
Cavehill Antrim Road Regeneration	1,500	1,000	
Cavehill Primary School - Parent Teacher Association	1,500	1,500	800
CBS JU-JITSU SCHOOL	1,400		
Celtic Bhoys FC	1,500		
Central Belfast Child Contact Centre			900
Ceres Europe (NI) Ltd	1,500	1,400	730
Cheol Taekwondo Academy		1,072	1,200
Chernobyl Children Internal Foyle Branch			1,000
Cherryvalley youth Group	1,500	1,220	
Children for Peace (CFP) Belfast / Kansas City	1,500		1,200
Chirpy Chicks Playgroup			1,200
Christ Church Presbyterian Church/ Christ Church Youth Council		1,150	1,200
Chrysalis Womens Centre	73,997	73,997	75,483
Church Hill Community Development Association		1,150	
Church of Ireland Diocese for Derry and Raphoe	23,424		
Churches Community Work Alliance	185,202	233,847	121,109
Churches In Co-operation	1,500	1,500	1,200
Churches Ministry Of Healing: The Mount		1,500	1,200
Churchlands Golden Gloves		1,100	1,200
Churchtown Community Association	1,500	1,490	1,200
Citizens of Senior Years	1,500		
City of Armagh Cricket Club	1,400	1,264	1,100
City of Derry AC	1,500		
City Of Derry Young Farmers Club		1,090	1,200
Clady GFC	826	1,200	
Clandeboyne Village Association	1,250		
CLEAR Psoriasis	1,480	1,500	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Clogher Eire Og GFC		450	920
Cloghogue Pitch Putt Friendship Group			1,200
Clonduff Playgroup		1,350	
Clonoe Boxing & Youth Club		800	
Clonoe Rural Development Agency	500		
Cloughmills Community Action Team		800	1,150
Cloughskelt Rural & Cultural Association	817		1,194
Coach House Regeneration Limited	1,991	1,500	1,200
Coagh Community Crossroads Club		930	
Coagh Sports Centre		1,300	
Coagh United FC		1,300	
Coalisland & District Development Association Ltd		1,240	850
Coleraine Borough 50 (plus) Forum	833	840	818
Coleraine FC Academy	1,500	776	
Coleraine Historical Society		1,339	540
Coleraine Ulster-Scots Regeneration Group			1,050
Colin Safer Neighbourhood Project			1,000
Colin Valley Football Club	1,350	1,200	970
Comber Regeneration Community Partnership CRCP		1,500	
Comber Youth For Christ Ltd (The Net Youth Project)		754	
Community and Voluntary Services		1,500	
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	38,904		
Community Restorative Justice Ireland	1,500		
Community Restorative Justice Newry/Armagh	1,480	1,500	
Con Magee's GFC	1,400		
Confederation of Community Groups Newry & Mourne	66,539		63,212
CONNECT		1,450	900
Connect Christian Counselling Service	1,090		700
Conradh na Gaeilge Craobh an Iúir	1,200	1,000	
Cookstown & Magherafelt Volunteer Centre	54,419	43,938	143,938
Cookstown Community Arts Project (CCAP)			1,200
Cookstown Community Police Liason Committee			1,200
Cookstown Hockey Club	1,500		
Cookstown MS Help Support		485	
Cookstown Youth FC	1,500	1,500	1,200
Coolessan Community Organisation		1,500	1,200
Coonian/Cooneen Community Assoc			1,000
Co-operation Ireland	460,522	486,459	263,019
Corkley Development Association		1,450	
Corpus Christi Youth Centre	633		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
COS for Autism Families		1,150	
Cosy Club			1,200
Counselling All Nation Services (CANS)	1,500	1,500	1,200
County Armagh Community Development	71,000	71,000	67,450
County Down Community Games	955	1,500	
Crafts With Love	1,500	1,290	1,200
Craigavon & Banbridge Home Accident Prevention Group	600	1,048	
Craigavon and Banbridge Volunteer Centre	53,246	39,451	40,000
Craigavon Sport Leisure Users Group (SLUG)			800
Craigyhill Senior Citizens Club	900	1,050	
Cranagh & Aghagallon Club	1,140	1,090	1,200
Cranagh Community Association	1,500	1,375	
Cranagh Football Club		1,375	
Craobh an Luir			750
Creating Space	1,837		1,200
Creative Holistic Art as Therapy		1,040	
Creevedonnell Cricket Club	1,000		
Cregagh Wanders Youth FC	1,500	1,500	
Creggan Community Association	810		
Creggan Neighbourhood Partnership	47,528	47,528	45,152
Creggan Tours Activities Ltd	1,500	1,000	400
Crewe United Football & Sports Club		1,500	
Crilly Cultural Group		740	
Crossdernott Youth Club		850	
Crossmaglen Community Association		1,499	
Crossover Basketball N.I.	1,200	1,300	
Crumlin Road Presbyterian ROC Club			600
Crusaders Youth Academy			1,000
CRUSE Bereavement Care (Armagh/Dungannon)	1,500	1,500	1,200
CRUSE Bereavement Care (North Down & Ards)	1,500	1,500	1,200
CRUSE Bereavement Care Omagh	1,050	1,050	
Cullion Cultural Society	1,310		
Cullybackey Development Association	1,100		720
Culmore Scouts		720	
Culnady Rural Development Association			470
Curragh Hall Development Association	1,500	1,399	900
Curragh Silver Band	1,000	1,300	
Curran (1776) Hall Development Association	1,475		
Curran Heritage Culture Community Association			700
Curryrierin Community Association			800

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
CWA Brass Band		960	720
Daisy Support Group			1,000
Davinas Ark		1,500	
Dawn Womens Group		1,001	1,200
Dean Clarke Foundation			1,000
Dee Street Community Centre	1,500		
Dennett Anglers Association			800
Derganagh Training and Development Association			800
Derramore Presbyterian Church	996	1,000	
Derramore Presbyterian Church Bowling Club			430
Derramore Presbyterian Church PW (Womens Group)			620
Derriaghy Cricket Club	1,480		
Derry & Raphoe Action		1,500	700
Derry and Raphoe Youth Board (DRY)			1,000
Derrygannon Community Association		1,000	900
Derrygannon Crafts & Heritage Socieity		1,500	
Derrylaughlan Kevin Barrys GAC		700	
Derrylin O'Connells GAC		800	1,200
Derrynoose GAC		1,200	
Derrytrasna Playgroup			700
Dervock & District Community Association	1,425		
Dervock Parent Toddlers Small Grant		945	
Desertcreat Scout Group	1,500		
Desertmartin Accordion Band	1,375	800	500
Development Trusts NI	186,961	210,757	204,186
Diamond Rural Development Group		1,490	1,097
Disability Action NI			30,000
Disability Equality Group NI		1,500	1,200
Dockers Amateur Boxing club	633		
Docksider's Senior Men's Group		1,435	1,196
Dollingstown FC	600		
Dollingstown Ulster Scots Cultural & Heritage Society	1,310	1,435	900
Dominican@Orana	500		
Don Boscós Football Club			1,200
Donagh Development Association		1,090	1,200
Donagh Wee Folk Playgroup		1,425	
Donaghadee Commerce and Development Group			800
Donaghadee Football Club		1,230	400
Donaghadee Lifeboat	475		
Donaghcloney Cricket Club	1,500		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Donaghcloney Rural Needs Development Group			800
Donaghey Parents Association		640	
Donaghmore & District Community Association	1,100		1,200
Donaghmore Historical Society	1,500	1,500	
Donegal Celtic FC	1,500	1,280	
Donegall Pass Community Forum		1,200	
Donemana Cricket Club	2,010	1,000	
Donemana Haven	1,860	1,500	950
Dorsey Emmets GAC		990	
Dorsey Senior Citizens			360
Douglas Bridge Cross Community Assoc Ltd	1,500	1,350	
Doula-Vision Northern Ireland		1,150	
Down Chinese Martial Arts Association	1,317	1,300	
Down Special Olympics Club	1,500		900
Downpatrick & County Down Railway	1,255		
Downpatrick Community Collective			1,200
Downpatrick FC			1,200
Downpatrick School of Lifesaving	1,500		
Dramability	1,480		911
Draperstown Celtic FC	1,500	1,500	
Dromara GFC	1,500		
Dromara Village FC	1,450	1,200	
Dromboughil Community Association	1,240	1,210	605
Dromore Diocesan Youth Commission			1,000
Dromore Youth For Christ		1,350	
Drumachose Boys Brigade		1,185	300
Drumbo Amateur Football Club			800
Drumduff & Drumnakilly Community Association	1,190	1,190	1,200
Drumellan Community Association	1,000		
Drumlegagh Women's Group		1,015	
Drumlough & Ballygorian Rural Development Association	825	1,500	1,200
Drumlough Community Association	1,200	1,075	1,000
Drumnaleg Community Association			840
Drumturn Community Association	1,625	1,300	1,030
DSG2010	445		
Dunaghy Flute Band	1,500	1,470	1,200
Dunamoney Community Group		800	
Dunamore Community Association		595	560
Dunbarton Bowling Club			730
Duncairn Community Gardens			1,050

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Dunclug Youth Forum		1,300	
Dundonald Boy's Football Club		750	
Dundonald Purple Vine Historical Cultural Society	1,500		
Dundonald Sea Cadets	1,500	1,400	1,200
Dundrum Cross Community Playgroup		1,500	900
Dungannon Branch of the National Autistic Society			460
Dungannon Thomas Clarkes GFC		1,025	
Dungannon West Recycled Teenagers	866		
Dungannon Youth Resource Centre	633		
DUNGIVEN CELTIC YOUTH FC	1,420	1,100	1,200
Dungiven Retirement Club	735	760	950
Dungoyne Boys FC	1,500	1,500	1,100
Dunmurry Community Association			915
Dunmurry Presbyterian Church - Boys Brigade	975		
Dunmurry Presbyterian Church - Girls Brigade	925		
Dunmurry Presbyterian Youth Group - The Link	375		
Dunsford Old School Family Group	808		
Dupont Retirees Club The Rec Club		1,250	1,200
Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre		1,360	
Eagle Glen Community Partnership	1,450		
East Antrim Battalion Boys Brigade		500	
East Antrim National Graves Association		1,290	
East Belfast Alternatives	1,500	1,500	400
East Belfast Community Counselling	1,500	1,500	
East Belfast Community Development Agency	45,887	45,887	43,593
East Belfast Community, Historical and Cultural Association			400
East Belfast Mission			13,027
Eating Disorders Association NI	1,250		
Edenderry Community Development Association			1,050
Edenderry Residents' Association			1,200
Edgarstown Residents Association			1,200
EDGE	500		
Educational Shakespeare Company	1,500	1,500	1,200
Eglinton Annual Show Committee		650	840
Eglinton Building Bridges	950		1,016
Eglinton Cricket Club	1,440	900	1,050
Eglinton Womens Institute		900	750
EIRE OG HURLING CLUB CARRICKMORE	1,430	1,000	
Elevate Youth Fellowship MPDA		1,200	
Embrace Ballysillan	1,750		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Emerald ABC			1,100
Emergency Medical Care Mid Ulster		1,000	
Emergency Medical Services	1,500	1,500	
Empire Residents Association		1,500	
ENABLE 2 ACT INCLUSIVE THEATRE GROUP	850		
Enagh Rural Development Association		1,077	
Enagh Seniors Group			900
Enagh Youth Forum	950		
Enniskillen Athletic Football Club		1,500	
Enniskillen Lakelanders Amateur Swimming Club		1,500	
Epworth Playgroup	375	1,500	
Erne Gaels GAC	1,500		630
ERRIGAL BOWLING CLUB	1,500		
Escolinha De Lingue Portugesa			900
Ethnic Minorities Empowerment Association	840		
Evolve		1,150	
Eye Feel Good Outdoors			740
Factory Community Forum	1,070	1,000	
Fairhill Community Association	1,500		
Falcon Dinner Club	800		680
Falls Community Council	66,539	66,539	63,212
Falls Women's Centre	53,742	53,742	53,742
Families Against Sexual Abuse Trauma (FAST)	1,500		
Far and Wild		700	
Faughanvale Boys Brigade		1,500	
FC Ballynure	1,320		
Feeny Community Association	125	1,500	1,200
Fellowship of Good Counsel (Columba Community)	1,500	1,100	1,200
Fermanagh Film Club		1,184	
Fermanagh Genealogy Centre		1,100	
Fermanagh Rose of Tralee		1,500	700
Fermanagh Stroke Support Group		1,200	
Fermanagh Voluntary Association Of The Disabled		1,445	
Fermanagh Womens Network	1,100	1,418	
Ferry School Of Dance			600
Fibromyalgia Support North Down & Ards		1,500	1,200
Fight Academy Ireland		850	
Fintona Senior Citizens	1,450		
First Fermanagh GAA		1,000	
First Limavady Fellowship Club		880	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
First Steps Womens Group	103,425	103,425	100,280
Fivemiletown District Cultural & Sports Association		1,500	
Flute Band Church	1,500		
Flying Horse Ward Community Forum	1,050	1,150	
FOCUS	52,099	52,099	49,494
Footprints Womens Centre	180,854	180,854	177,218
Foreglen Community Association			1,000
Fountain Dance Association	1,500		
Fountain Foodbank			1,200
Fountain Street Community Development Association	1,500	1,350	
Fox Lodge Cricket Club		1,126	900
Foyle and Bann Shipping Association		525	660
Foyle Child Contact Centre	1,000		1,162
Foyle Cruse Bereavement Care		1,500	
Foyle Parents and Friends Association	2,100	1,250	
Foyle Special Olympics		990	
Foyle Womens Information Network	47,528	47,528	45,152
Friendly Care Group	1,250	1,500	1,130
Friends of Glenariffe		850	1,200
Friends of Half Moon Lake	1,500		
Friends of Hollybush	1,300	1,060	1,200
Friends of Larne Adult Centre	1,500		
Friends of St Dallans			1,100
Friends of Termoncanice Parent Teacher Association	1,500	1,200	
Friends of the Grove Park	1,200		
Friends of 1st Presbyterian Church Newtownards		1,500	800
Friendship for Integrated Development Association Northern Ireland (FIDA NI)	1,500	1,300	1,200
Fuse Youth	1,150	1,500	1,200
G A P Community Centre			1,200
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh		2,350	
Galbally Youth & Community Association Ltd	500		
Garvagh & District Community Association			490
Garvagh Womens Network			1,200
Gateway Club Cookstown			1,200
Gelvin Community Association Ltd		969	650
Gillygooley 2nd Youth	1,500		1,200
Gilnahirk Mens Group		900	
Girlguiding North Antrim	1,500	750	600
Girlguiding South Antrim	1,500	1,200	1,200
Girlguiding Tyrone		775	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Giving Life Opportunities to Women (GLOW)		1,400	
Gleann Amateur Boxing Club		1,200	1,100
Gleann FC	1,240	1,300	
Glebe Cross-Community Development Assoc		1,200	
Glebe Rangers Football Club		1,482	
Glen Rural Community Group Armoy	1,100	1,100	1,200
Glenanne Horse and Pony Club		1,500	
Glenavy Conservation and District Angling Club		1,498	1,198
Glenbank Community Association		800	1,000
Glencolin Residents Association	1,500	1,500	1,200
Glendowan F.C.	1,480	1,500	
Glenelly Community Family Club		1,400	
Glenelly Historical Society	1,130		
Glenelly Parent & toddlers Group	1,500		
Glengormley Amateur Boxing Club	500	500	800
Glengormley Ambulance & Rescue Unit	1,500	1,500	1,200
Glenn John Martin GAC/Young at Heart	900		
Glenravel & District Community and Residents Association		1,300	
Glens Community Association	333		
Glens Youth Club	1,300		
Glenshane Care Association Ltd	1,500	1,400	1,100
Glenshane Community Development Ltd		1,500	1,200
Glenshesk GAC		1,200	
Glenside Club for People with Disabilities	1,300		
Glentimon Cultural Development Association		1,368	
Glentoran Academy	1,450	1,500	600
Glenview Preschool	1,200		
Glor na Mona			1,200
Glynn Community Group	1,295		
Goal Line Youth Trust Portadown	2,240	1,250	900
Golden Millennium Club			1,200
Good Morning Ballymena		1,500	1,199
Good Morning Down	1,470	1,500	1,200
Good Morning East Antrim	1,500		628
Gortin Ageing Well		1,467	1,148
Gortnaghey Community Association		1,295	900
Gortnaghey Youth Club	600		
Gran Quilters		1,110	700
Granaghan & District Womens Group	1,500	1,500	1,000
Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland	5,100		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Grange Youth and Community Group	633		1,200
Grass Roots Conservation Group	400		
Greater Andersonstown Safer Neighbourhood Project	1,460	1,100	1,200
Greater Lisburn Seniors Together	1,150		
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership	66,295	66,295	62,980
Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association	633		
Greencastle Rovers Football Club		1,180	
Greencastle Youth Club	1,575		
Greenisland Boys Football Club		1,494	
Greenisland FC	1,470		950
Greenway Womens Group	133,265	137,401	133,836
Greyabbey & District Community Association			680
Greysteel Community Association	125	1,200	1,200
Groomsport Village Association			1,100
Growing Connections N1	1,800		
Halftown Residents Association & Youth Group	1,476		800
Hanging Rockers Climbing Club			1,200
Hannahstown Community Association	633	1,500	900
Happy Faces NI	500	1,410	
Happy Faces Playgroup	1,500		
Harbour Community Group		1,325	
Harmony Court Residents Association	800		
Harmony Hill Community Group	760	800	700
Harmony Singers	1,140		
Harryville Partnership Initiative			15,696
Hilden Community Association	950		700
Hillcrest Trust Ltd		1,500	
Hillhall Regeneration Group	860	860	750
Hillsborough Boys Football Club	1,500	980	1,200
Hillstown Rural Community Group	1,500		1,200
Hilltown Community Association		1,500	1,200
Hillview ABC	1,460		
Holy Family Youth Centre	1,500		700
Holy Rosary Guides	1,500		
Holy Trinity Youth Centre	1,450		
Holywell Trust	117,976		
Hollywood Family Trust	61,786	61,786	58,697
Hollywood Recon Community Group	1,400		
Hollywood Shared Town	500	1,500	
Homeplus NI Ltd		1,500	1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Home-Start Antrim	1,500	1,125	850
Home-Start Ards Comber & Peninsula Area			760
Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon	1,500	1,500	1,200
Home-Start Causeway	1,486	840	1,200
Home-Start Clogher Valley			1,000
Home-Start Craigavon			550
Home-start Lakeland		1,500	1,200
Home-Start Lisburn/Colin	1,450	1,450	1,200
Home-Start Omagh District	600		1,000
Home-Start South & East Belfast	1,500		1,200
Hope 4 ME & Fibro NI	1,500	1,480	1,200
Hope of Eglinton LOL 764		1,250	1,100
Hope Summer Camp Limavady			1,200
Horn of Africa People's Aid NI	1,360		
Huntingtons Disease Association NI		1,500	
Indian Senior Citizens Club	2,000	1,500	1,200
Inner East Youth Project	800		
Institute Football Club		1,500	
InVOLve	1,500	1,500	
Irish Disabled Fly Fishing Association			1,200
Irish Football Association	59,325	59,325	58,454
Irish Rugby Football Union Ulster Branch	59,450	59,450	58,454
Irvinestown Lady of the Lake Festival	500		
Jack & Jill Community Playgroup	1,340	1,280	1,200
Jack Horner Community Playgroup	600		
Jigsaw Community Counselling Centre	1,500		
Joanmount Open Door		1,200	
JOHN MITCHEL'S GAC / CUMBER HOUSE	1,500		
John Paul II Youth Club	670		
Junior Belfast Giants	1,500		
Kabalikat in North West		1,500	1,200
Kairos Centre		1,500	1,200
Katesbridge Community Association	810	2,936	1,000
Katesbridge Ladies Rural Group		1,491	1,045
KEADY MICHAEL DWYERS GFC	1,500		600
Kells Connor Cougars		750	680
Kells Connor Youth			1,000
Kells and Connor Community Improvement Association			1,200
KEVIN LYNCH HURLING CLUB	1,450	1,000	
Kilclief GAC			1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Kilcoo Community Association			1,100
KILCOO GAA		1,170	
Kilcooley Womens Centre	38,900	38,900	38,900
Kilcronaghan Community Association	1,793	1,037	1,154
Kildoag and District Women's Group		1,370	900
Kildress Kare	890	1,170	825
Kilkeel Community Association			1,200
Kilkeel Parent & Toddler	1,360		
Kilkeel Sea Cadets		1,500	
Killen Parent and Toddler		1,500	1,000
Killeter & District Development Trust	1,425	1,400	1,200
Killicomaine Residents Group		1,500	900
Killough Community Association			1,000
Killowen Community Association	1,100	675	1,200
Killowen Drive Residents Association	1,500		
Killycurragh Youth Club	375		
Killylea Methodist Youth Club	350		
Killyleagh Yacht Club		1,500	680
Killynure Community Association			1,170
Kilrea Girl Guides	720		
Kindred Spirits		1,500	
King Street Parent Toddler Group		820	640
Kingdom Mens shed			1,050
Kingdom of Dalriada Ulster Scots Society			950
Kingdom Youth Club	2,000		
Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd	1,465		
Kittys Road Community Association		1,350	1,066
Knights Wheelchair Basketball Club			1,200
Knockmore Community Association			500
Knockmoyle Youth Club	1,100		840
Knocknagin Hall Committee			1,195
Knocks Community Association		1,263	1,019
LA Project			1,200
Lagan Rivers Trusts		1,300	
Lagmore Meadows Residents Association		1,200	500
Lakeland Credit Union			675
Lakeland Special Olympics Club	1,500		
Laochra Bhricre Hurling Club			900
Larne Community Development Project	51,879	50,379	48,460
Larne Harbour Senior Citizens Group	1,100		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Larne Market Inver Area Forum	1,495		
Larne Sea Cadets			1,200
Larne Youth			700
Laurencetown Rural Benefit Partnership		2,400	1,200
Laurencetown Summer Scheme	475	1,000	1,200
LCC Community Trust			12,343
Learmount Community Development Group Ltd		1,200	800
Lecale Conservation	1,360	1,500	
Leitrim Community Youth Group	750		
LGBT Northern Ireland		517	
Liatroim Fontenoy's GAA Club	1,500		
Liberty Church	1,500	1,100	1,200
Life NI			900
Lightning Powered Wheelchair FC	850		
Ligoniel Amateur Boxing club	1,325		
Ligoniel History Group	1,325		
Ligoniel Working Mens Football Club	1,125		
Lilac Cancer Support Group	2,000	1,300	
Limavady Recreation Club			1,000
Limavady Senior Citizens	1,241		800
Limavady Volunteer Centre	53,041	37,043	40,000
Limavady War Project		1,500	950
Limavady Wolfhounds GAC	1,500	700	
Lincoln Courts Youth and Community Association	1,200		600
Link Community Association	1,500		
Lisanelly Regeneration Group	375		
Lisbarnett & Lisbane Community Association Ltd		500	
Lisbellaw United FC		1,500	
Lisburn Chinese Ladies Group	1,500	1,500	850
Lisburn Downtown Centre For Community Care	800		800
Lisburn Ladies Football Club		900	
Lisburn North Community Association	400		
Lisburn Outlook			1,130
Lisburn Taekwondo Club		1,300	800
Lisnacree Community Association	690		
Lisnafin / Ardnalee Trust Cross Community Development Association	2,010	1,300	700
Lisnaskea Emmetts GAC	1,200		
Lisnaward Rural Association			600
Lissan House Trust	1,450		
Little Acorns Playgroup			1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Little Angels Toddler Group	1,000		
Little Castle Playgroup			960
Little Dippers Swimming Club		1,200	
Little Rascals Community Playgroup			1,050
Little Treasures Playgroup		1,400	
Longstone Community Association	1,500		
Lough Fea Grouse Conservation Trust	600		
Lough Neagh Rescue Ltd	1,328	1,218	1,164
Loughgall Football Club	1,750	1,500	
Loughinsholin Cultural Music Group	750	1,500	600
Loughmacrory & Murrins District Angling Association		1,050	1,200
Loughmacrory Community Development Assoc			900
Loughshore Care Partnership	1,300	1,500	1,200
Loughside Football Club	1,500	1,200	1,100
Loughview Community Development	956		
Loughview Partnership Association	1,500		
Love Hockey Ireland			720
Love Music Hate Racism NI			1,200
Lower Andersonstown Mothers Support Group	1,500	1,500	1,200
Lower Castledawson Community Association	1,500		
Lower Mourne Gaelic League	1,500		
Lurganville & District Community Group			600
Macosquin Senior Citizens Club		1,260	910
MADD MUSIC		900	1,200
Madden Raparees GFC	1,480	760	
Maghera Cross Community Link		1,000	780
Maghera Parish Caring Association	1,500		
Maghera Snooker Club	1,000	1,100	
Maghera Sons of William Flute Band	1,400	1,000	400
Maghera Strollers FC	785		
Maghera Womens Institute	315		
Maghera Youth Connect		1,500	
Magherafelt & District Cage Bird Society	500		
Magherafelt & District Road Safety Committee	1,500	1,000	800
Magherafelt Sky Blues FC		1,260	1,200
Magherafelt Titans Basketball Club	1,390		
Magherafelt Womens Group	115,885	114,385	111,059
Magheralin Community Association			900
Magheramason Community Development Association		1,500	1,000
Magilligan Community Association		1,250	1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Magilligan Community Playgroup			1,200
Maiden City Motor Club Ltd			750
Maiden City Soccer Academy	1,350	1,250	1,200
Mallusk Community Playgroup	1,500		
Mallusk Harriers			1,134
Marconi Radio Group	1,500	1,500	
Marian Park Community Association	1,300		
MATT (Men About The Town)		1,500	1,200
Maydown Community Association	1,330		
Mayobridge District Forum	1,450	1,450	
Mayobridge GAC	500		
MCS Taekwondo Club	1,500	1,100	1,200
McStravick i Ltd		800	900
Meet N Eat Friendship Club	1,178	1,499	979
Meeting Point Luncheon Club	600	650	480
Megargy District Game Conservation Society	710		
Melmount & East Banks Estates Community Associations Forum		1,500	1,200
Memory Making Ltd	2,000	1,500	1,200
Mens Action Network		1,500	
Mens Advisory Project		1,500	
Mens Shed Antrim	875		
Merville Residents Association	1,500		
Mid Ulster Amateur Swimming Club		1,500	1,200
Mid Ulster Athletic Club		1,450	
Mid Ulster Canoe Kayak Club	1,242		
Mid Ulster Community and Arts Trust (MUCAT)	1,500	1,500	1,200
Mid Ulster Ladies FC	1,500		
Middletown & District Comm Dev Assoc		1,220	
Middletown GAC	1,280		
Milford Buildings Preservation Trust	500	1,500	1,200
Millburn Community Association	1,090		1,200
Millisle & District Community Association	1,489		
Millisle Youth Forum	2,000	1,100	1,200
Milltown Rural Development Association			1,200
Mind Skills Training and Coaching			1,200
Moirra Friendship Group		1,500	
Moneydig Rural Network Group	1,500	1,250	
Moneyneena & District Development Group			1,200
Moneyreagh & District Community Association	1,500		1,200
Monkstown Amateur Boxing Club	1,500	875	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Mornington Community Project Limited	1,500	1,500	1,200
Mossley Hockey Club			1,200
Mount Eagles Drive Action Group	1,500	1,265	1,100
Mountfield Pipe Band		1,500	
Mountfield Scottish Country Dancers		1,500	
Mountjoy United Juniors		1,500	1,200
Mournederg Partnership		1,000	
Mourneview, Grey Estates Community Development Association	1,500		
Movilla Abbey Coffee House	1,200	1,000	1,200
Moygashel Community & Cultural Association		700	
MOYRAVERTY ARTS & DRAMA SOCIETY	900		
MS Society Newry, Mourne & Armagh Branch MS Society	1,500	1,400	1,200
Muckamore Cricket & Tennis Club	1,500		800
Muintirevlin Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann (CCE)			1,000
Mulleek Community Association	1,500		
Murlough Athletic Club		1,400	900
Na Magha Hurling and Camogie Club	1,500	1,250	
Na Shamrocks Hurling Club	1,500		1,125
Naiscoil an Chéide	750		
Naiscoil an Iúir	800		
Naiscoil an Traonaigh	929	1,500	900
Naiscoil na Deirge	1,422	1,492	1,196
Naiscoil Neachtain	125		
Naomh Padraig Juvenile GAA Club - North Antrim			600
NEO Ireland Ltd	1,361		
New Beginnings	1,150		
New Dawn Training		1,000	
New Mossley Presbyterian Youth Club	1,340		
Newbuildings United FC	1,450	1,500	
Newcastle Arts Festival		620	
Newcastle Athletics Club Junior Section	1,500		
Newcastle FC	1,000		
Newforge Taggers Tag Rugby Football Club	900		
Newhill Community Project		1,000	
Newhill FC	1,500	1,500	1,200
Newington Football Club	1,500	950	
Newpoint Players			1,200
Newry & Mourne Carers Limited	1,031		
Newry & Mourne Sea Kayaking & Canoe Club	1,200	814	1,200
Newry City Special Olympic Football Bowling Club	1,500		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Newry Maritime Association		1,500	1,200
Newtownabbey Arts Cultural Network		1,500	1,200
Newtownabbey kickers			800
Newtownabbey Men Sheds			1,200
Newtownards Sea Cadets	1,500	1,500	1,200
Newtownbreda Dream Scheme	1,500		
Newtownbutler Playgroup		1,300	
Newtowne Football Club			1,200
Newtownstewart Flute Band Red Hand Defenders			1,000
Newtownstewart Highland Dancers	1,350	1,500	400
Newtownstewart Leisure Complex Ltd			1,200
NI Cruise		1,480	1,200
NI Deaf Youth Association	633		
NICVA	998,105	852,000	813,401
Nifty Over Fifties			1,200
No Limat	1,328		
North Antrim Bands Forum			900
North Antrim Cultural & Musical Society (NACMS)		1,350	1,200
North Ballymena Community Cluster			270
North Belfast Womens Initiative & Support Project	560		
North Down & Ards Road Safety Committee	1,124	1,254	1,065
North Down Boxing Club		1,500	1,200
North Down Community Network	49,891	49,891	47,396
North Lisburn Community Investment	1,500		
North Star Basketball Club	1,500	1,500	
North West Community Network	58,495	58,495	55,570
North West Cricket Union (Ireland)		1,215	
North West Football Centre (NWFC)	1,400	1,200	850
North West Junior Zone Bowlers			800
North West Migrants Forum	1,500	1,300	
North West Mountain Rescue Team			703
North West Red Squirrel Group			950
North West Tongues, Tones & Tappin	1,525	1,500	1,100
North West Umpires Scorers Association			675
Northend United Youth Football Club	1,421		880
Northern Counties Development Association			600
Northern Cricket Union of Ireland		1,500	
Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association			1,200
Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network	38,750	1,200	1,200
NORTHWEST COUNSELLING	1,500	750	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Nourishing Connections	1,375		
Oak Partnership			1,200
Ocean Youth Trust Ireland	2,000		
OConnors Glack GAA			955
Off the Cuff Community Theatre Group	1,500	1,500	714
Oisins CLG		700	
Old Warren Community Association	1,420		700
Omagh Arts Committee		1,180	
Omagh Child Contact Centre	1,500	1,300	700
Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group	1,500	1,500	1,200
Omagh Riding For Disabled Group	1,454		
Omagh Spires Special Olympics	1,500		1,000
Omagh Volunteer Centre	48,502	40,614	41,754
Omagh Wheelers Cycling Club	1,205	1,150	
Omagh Womens Area Network	1,100	1,000	850
O'Neills GFC An Port Mor		1,150	
Open Door T/A The Hub BT80	1,525		1,200
Ophir Rugby Football Club		1,200	1,150
Opportunity Arts NI	750	1,000	650
Order Of Malta Ambulance Corps Derry Unit			1,200
Order of Malta Strabane Unit	1,500	1,300	1,200
Ormeau Road Boxing Club		1,500	
Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland	36,000	36,000	
Over The Hill Music Collective			1,075
Owen Roe GAC Coleraine		790	
Oxford Sunnyside FC	1,400		
Oxford United Stars Football Club	1,400		
P.O.C.A. Parents of Older Children with Autism			1,200
Palliative Transport Service			1,200
Parent and Toddlers @ First Magherafelt			650
Parent Teacher Association UK			33,268
Parents & Friends Of Cookstown Primary School		1,250	1,200
Parkmore Community Association	1,500		
Parkview Community Group	300		
Pawzitive	1,500	1,500	
Peaceful Futures South Armagh			510
Peadar O Doinin GAA Club Forkhill		1,150	500
Peatlands Playgroup	1,500		
Pennyburn Community Playgroup	715		
Phoenix Cycling Club		1,500	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
PIPS Larne	1,500		
PIPS Newcastle District			1,200
Play Tots Mother & Toddler Group		395	
Polish Association County Down	1,500		1,200
Pomeroy After Schools Club	700		
Pomeroy Community Projects	1,400		
Pomeroy Development Projects Limited			350
Pomeroy Players	300		500
Pomeroy Plunketts GAC			950
Pomeroy Pre School Playgroup	750		
Pomeroy Resource Centre	1,000		900
Pomeroy Social Activity Group			1,200
Portadown Cares	1,500		
Portadown Ladies Hockey Club	1,500		1,200
Portadown ME Support Group	561		
Portadown Men's Hockey Club	1,400		
Portadown Panthers			370
Portadown Phoenix Players			900
Portavogie Rangers Youth Football Club	1,500	926	1,200
Portglenone Community Mens Shed	1,197		1,179
Portglenone Enterprise Group		1,500	
Portrush Heritage Group			1,120
Portstewart Community Association		1,500	
Pottinger Historical and Cultural Society			600
Preventing Addiction Larne	1,500		925
Pride of the Park Flute Band			700
Project Ballynahinch	1,320		
PVN (Place of Victory for All Nations)	1,500		
Quilly Rural Development Group		1,350	1,200
Radio Coalisland		1,050	
Rainbow Club - Carrickmore		1,300	1,200
Rainbow Gateway Club	1,350		
Ramoan Friendship Group	700	1,500	
Randalstown ARCHES Association Ltd	52,281	52,281	49,667
Randalstown RFC	1,500		
Rascals Playgroup Gortin		1,240	
Rascals Playstation Day Care Centre	1,500	1,290	1,000
Rasharkin Community Association		1,370	810
Rasharkin Community Centre Management Committee			1,175
Rasharkin Womens Group		1,200	700

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Rathcoole Churches Community Group	1,500		
Rathcoole Friends of the Somme	1,500		
Rathfriland Elim Church	1,500	1,000	1,000
Rathfriland FC			900
Rathlane Care Farm			1,200
Rathlin Development & Community Association			50,000
Ravara Productions			1,200
Ravel Rascals	300		
REACH Across	1,500		1,100
Realta na Cromoige			1,080
Redburn Youth Group	1,500		
Redburn/Loughview Community Forum	2,000	1,500	1,200
Redrock Development Partnership (Tuesday Club)	1,125	1,485	1,200
Restore Community Group	1,350	1,500	1,200
Richmount Playgroup	1,500	1,250	1,050
Richmount Rural Community Association	1,500	1,350	1,200
Ridgeway Rovers FC	1,500	1,050	800
Riding for the Disabled Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd	1,500	1,500	
Rights Empowerment Action Lobbying (REAL) Network	1,500		
River Bann and Lough Neagh Association Company		1,080	1,200
Riverdale Football Club	1,460		
Rockin by the River		1,350	870
Roe Angling Limited		700	340
Roe Valley Artists and Musicians Collective			1,200
Roe Valley Arts Heritage Committee	800		
Roe Valley Folk Club	1,000	1,480	1,100
Roe Valley Football Club	1,500	1,500	
Roe Valley Residents Association (New Beginnings YC)	1,833	1,150	1,200
Rosario Youth Club	1,500	1,400	500
Rouskey Community & Development Association	750	1,500	1,200
Rowallane Community Hub			1,040
Royal National Institute For The Blind NI	37,082		
R-Space Gallery CIC	1,500	1,500	1,000
Ruairi Og CLG	1,500		
S.T.E.P.S.	1,500		
Safer Activities For Everyone (S.A.F.E.)			1,200
Sailortown Mothers and Toddlers	633		
Saintfield Development Association	1,500		600
Saints Youth Centre	633		
Salisbury Special Olympics Club		965	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Salterstown Flute Band		800	
Samaritans Ballymena			1,090
Samaritans Bangor & North Down	1,500	1,314	1,000
Samaritans Derry Branch	1,500	900	925
Samaritans Newry			1,000
Sandholes Community Group	220	1,470	200
Sandy Row Amateur Boxing Club			700
Sandy Row Methodist Church - Shine After School Club	1,500		
Sandy Row Residents Association	1,310		
Santos Football Club	1,400	1,500	1,200
Sarsfield GAC	300		
Sarsfields Community Hall Management Group			1,010
Schomberg Fife & Drum	455		640
Scoil An Droichid Primary School (Belfast)	1,500		
SCOPE			900
Scorpion Amateur Boxing Club	1,500		
Scotch Street Youth Club	2,100	1,500	1,200
Seacourt Youth Club		1,500	
Seagoe Football Club		500	1,195
Seagoe Ministries Ltd		1,390	
Seagoe Youth Group			1,200
Seapark AC		1,000	
Seven Towers Cultural, Community and Educational Association		800	
Shankill United Football Club	1,500	1,260	1,080
Shankill Womens Centre	49,021	49,021	49,021
Shantallow East Children's Support Group	1,500		650
Shantallow Men's Support Group	1,900		800
Shantallow Renewal Team	1,500		
Shantallow Social Support Group	1,900		900
Shantallow Womens Group	1,900		700
Shantallow Youth Intervention Group			500
Shared History Interpretive Project	633	1,340	1,200
SHE (Seymour Hill Empowered)			1,200
Shelagh Youth Club			1,130
Shimna Stars Special Olympics Club	1,400		
Shopmobility Ballymena Ltd			500
Shopmobility Carrickfergus	1,500	1,300	600
Shopmobility Cookstown	1,845	1,450	
Shopmobility Enniskillen	1,500	1,500	700
Shopmobility Lisburn - Bow Street Mall	525		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Shopmobility Magherafelt			500
Shopmobility Newry	289		
Silver Lights	1,500	850	650
Sion Mills Community Association	2,010	1,150	600
Sion Mills Community Forum		1,175	1,175
Sion Swifts FC	1,500	1,230	
Sirocco Works Football Club			1,200
Sirocco Youth Football Club	2,133	600	
Sixmilecross Enterprise Limited		1,100	
Sixtowns Cross Community Group			1,200
Skyzdalimit	700		
Society of St Vincent de Paul Cookstown	1,500		
Solas	14,268	34,282	
Somerton Road Youth Club	1,500	1,400	1,200
Something Special			1,200
South Armagh VIP Club	1,319		
South Belfast Alternatives	1,500		
South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association			1,200
South Tyrone Empowerment Programme	66,539	66,539	63,212
South Tyrone Ulster Farmers Union	1,290	750	
South West Age Partnership	1,426	1,360	
Southlink Day Centre Ltd	890		
Southwest Carers Forum		1,085	
Special Education Needs Advice Centre	1,500	1,500	
Speedwell Trust	500		
Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association		1,000	
Sporting Hearts			1,000
Sports and Leisure Users Group	1,000	1,000	1,460
Springfarm & District Community Association			650
Springfield Star Blackmountain	1,500	1,500	
Springtown Amateur Boxing Club	1,200		1,096
St Agnes Amateur Boxing Club	1,475	1,300	
St Agnes Senior Social Club		1,500	
St Aidans Magilligan GFC	1,460	845	200
St Bernards Youth Community Group	1,500		
St Brigids Afterschool Club			1,200
St Brigids Art Society			1,200
St Brigids GAC	1,020		
St Canice's GFC		2,870	
St Colman's GAC	1,500		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
St Colms GAC Ballinascreen	1,500	1,266	1,200
ST COMGALLS YOUTH CENTRE		300	
St Ergnats Moneyglass GAC	1,500		725
St Eugenes GAC Castlederg		1,500	1,000
St James Community Forum	1,500		
St John Bosco ABC	1,500	1,050	680
St John Bosco Community Association	1,500	1,500	1,200
St John Vianney Youth Centre		1,500	1,100
St Johns Amateur Boxing Club		1,000	
St Joseph St Marys Banagher Conference of St Vincent de Paul			450
St Katharines Parish Church	916		
St Kevin's Senior Citizens	633		
St Malachys GAC (Belfast)	1,500		1,200
St Malachy's GAC (Castledawson)	700		1,000
St Malachy's Youth Centre	1,500	1,500	1,000
St Mary's G.A.A. Club Ardmore	1,500		
St Mary's GAC	1,500		
St Marys Parent and Todder Group (Belfast)	1,500		
St Marys Parent Support Group	1,500		
St Mary's Youth Club Aghlisnafin		1,090	
St Matthews FC		1,260	1,030
St McCartans Ladies GFC			900
St Michael's GAC (Magheralin)	1,500		
St Michaels Youth Club, Magheralin			900
St Miguel Community Youth Band	1,495		
St Molaise GAC Irvinestown	1,500		
St Oliver Plunkett Football Club	1,440	1,100	675
St Patricks Community Band			800
St Patricks Football Club		1,100	
St Patrick's GAC	500		
St Patricks Parish Clogherney & Seskimore			860
St Patricks Young Mens Football Club		1,500	1,200
St Pauls GAC		750	1,050
St Peters Youth Club Lurgan		750	
St Swithins Craft Class			400
St Teresas Youth Centre	1,500		
St Trea's Ballymaguigan GAA Club	864		
St. Joseph's G.A.C. Craigbane		750	600
Star Breakers		550	
Stedfast association NI			1,000

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Steelstown Brian Og's G.A.A. Club	2,010	1,500	1,200
Stendhal Festival Ltd	1,150	1,000	1,200
Stevenson Community Projects	1,300		
Stewartstown Amateur Dramatic Society		1,000	1,200
Stewartstown Community Group			550
Strabane Lifford Mens Education and Health Group			600
Strabane & District Special Olympics			675
Strabane & Lifford LGBT Group	510	1,300	
Strabane Athletic FC		880	
Strabane Community Unemployed Resource Centre	750		400
Strabane Ethnic Community Association	1,500	1,350	1,200
Strabane F2P Airsoft	1,500		
Strabane Health Improvement Project			950
Stramore Community Association	1,500		
Strangford Festival Committee			1,200
Strathfoyle Womens Group	80,602	80,602	77,276
Stravaganza Production company	2,010	1,500	
Stream Street Residents Association	1,500		
Street Safe		966	
Street Soccer NI			1,200
Sunflowerfest Unlimited CIC			1,050
Superstars Club	1,500	1,500	1,000
Survivors of Suicide Support Group			1,200
Synergy Ireland Ltd			1,160
Synergy@JVC	800		600
Tackling Awareness of Mental Health Issues (TAMHI)	1,306		
TAG (The Active Group)	543	1,500	1,200
Take A Bow Cookstown Archery Club	1,375		
Talking Newspaper Association Mid-Ulster	1,000	900	
Tanglewood Music	500		
Tattyreagh GAC		1,200	
Team Aspie			1,195
Ted Clarke Memorial Fund Community Outreach Group		1,000	
Templepatrick Cricket Club	840		580
THE ARMAGH RHYMERS EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL ORGANISATION			650
The Basement Youth Project	1,500		
The Big House Ireland		1,480	1,200
The Brain Injury Foundation			1,000
The Cabbage Patchers		1,500	1,200
The Churches Voluntary Work Bureau Ltd	118,211	123,766	76,606

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
The Coast Office Watersports Club	1,500	800	600
The Compassionate Friends			820
The Conservation Volunteers	26,772	42,157	
The Den Youth Club			850
The Dojo		1,380	1,100
The Draperstown Traders	1,500		
The Drummond Centre Project Limited	1,785	1,200	1,145
The Fermanagh Trust	55,526	55,526	52,750
The Fitzzone Foundation	1,324		1,005
The Garden Yard		1,500	
The Gasyard Development Trust		1,500	
The Glens Community Association	1,500	1,250	1,100
The Harry Gregg Foundation			11,330
The Helping Hand	1,300	1,500	1,200
The Hubb Community Resource Centre		1,500	900
The Judo Academy	1,500		
The Keady Clachan Community Group	550	622	700
The Lambeg Project			700
The Lena Mackrel Community Poetry Competition		1,300	1,200
The Lively Bunch	633	1,400	
The Magic Roundabout	1,150		
The Molly & Mia Foundation	1,485	750	
The O-Bon on the Foyle Festival Group			955
THE OPEN DOOR BALLYMONEY			760
The Open Door Centre	1,750	1,400	600
The Pink Ladies Breast Cancer Support Group		1,500	
The Plum Club	1,500		825
The Reach (Portadown)	1,325	1,050	900
The Rectory Residents Association	375		605
The Resurgam Community Development Trust Ltd/Resurgam Youth Initiative	169,224	153,489	149,568
The Right Key/Recovery Cafe			1,188
The Rivers Community Project	1,900	1,230	1,020
The Rotary Club of Dungannon	500		
The Royal British Legion		1,500	
The Saturday Club		1,460	900
The Space NI			1,200
The Sperrin Choir	1,460	1,500	700
The Star Amateur Boxing Club		1,500	
The Tuesday Club	1,400	1,456	1,200
The Tuesday Group			1,200

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
The Upbeat Agency			1,200
The Villages Together	1,600		
The warehouse Project	633		
The Welcome Project	1,200	1,100	1,200
The Well Project	1,500	1,500	
The Whistle Project	510		
The Young Foundation			147,971
The Zacchaeus Outreach Project		1,070	1,000
Thomas Davis GFC	500		
Three Spires Scout Group			1,200
TIDY Randalstown			800
Tiny Tots Community Playgroup	1,000		
Tirgan Community Association		1,168	1,189
Tobermore Baptist Youth Fellowship		700	
Tobermore Community Projects			900
Tobermore United Football Club			1,100
Tobin Youth Centre		1,500	1,000
Together One Voice			750
Tollymore United Football Club	1,500		
Tools for Solidarity	1,500	1,500	
Tools for Solidarity Downpatrick	1,500	1,500	1,200
Toome Initiatives Group		1,500	
Topstar Kickboxing Club		1,395	
Tots at the Bridge	1,250	1,500	1,200
Townparks Residents Association		1,495	1,183
Traad & Ballyronan Ballinderry Development Association	1,150		1,080
Train To Be Smart	1,260	1,276	
Training For Women Network Ltd	187,519	347,994	346,155
Trendsetters Irvinestown	915	1,480	1,200
Trillick Arts Cultural Society			980
Trillick Senior Citizens			609
Tristar Boys FC		900	1,100
Tuesday Break			1,075
Tullyally Community Partnership		1,000	
Tullygarley Community Development Group	700		370
Tullylish GAC	1,500		
Tullysaran Community Association	500		
TWG Plus	810	1,456	918
Twinkle Tots Parent and Toddler Group			200
Tyrone Donegal Partnership	95,312	204,460	176,215

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Tyrone's Ditches Pipe Band	1,330		560
Ullans Speakers Association			29,672
Ulster Aviation Society	1,410		
Ulster Council Gaelic Athletic Association	58,700	58,700	58,454
Ulster Ice Skating Club	1,500		
Ulster Project	550		
Union Road Mums Tots			700
Unit T			1,150
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	60,573	60,573	57,544
Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre	1,500		
Upper Lough Erne Tourism Development Association		650	
Upperlands Community Development Ltd		1,200	500
Urban Soul	1,350	1,400	
Via Wings		1,500	
Victoria Action Group	655	645	
Victoria Bridge Cross Community Forum	1,000	1,200	1,200
Vineyard Compassion Ltd			29,960
Voices: Republican Women Ex-Prisoners Group		900	
Volunteer Investment Project			600
Volunteer Now	658,440	429,577	406,895
Walkway Community Association	2,000		440
Wandsworth Community Association	1,500	1,500	
War Years Remembered			730
Waringstown Community Youth Centre			600
Waterside Women's Centre	87,007	87,007	84,488
We Go Together Support Group			1,200
Weast Chernobyl	1,420	1,140	
Welcome Trust Disabled Care Group	633		
Welcome Trust Ltd		1,500	1,200
West Belfast District Scout Council		620	
Westland Community Group	1,500		
Wheatfield Primary School		910	
Whitecity Community Development Association		1,500	900
Whiterock/Westrock Residents Association	1,000	1,430	
Wilgar Community Forum Association	1,500		
Willowbank Youth Club	1,500		
Winding Roe Magazine	300		
Windsor Womens Centre Women Too	178,562	178,562	175,235
Windyhall 50 Club	490	972	833
Windyhall Community Association	1,500	1,150	900

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Windyhall Youth Club	1,150	1,200	1,000
WISE OWLS		1,000	
Wolfe Tones GAC (Bellaghy)	1,500	1,200	1,200
Women Making Waves	1,300		1,200
Women of St Ergnats and Moneyglass Community	1,150	600	
Womens Centre Derry	122,674	102,500	98,936
Womens Common Path Network	2,133		1,200
Womens Institute Donaghmore	1,275		
Womens Institute Pomeroy		820	
Women's Resource & Development Agency	46,369		
Womens Support Network	78,931		
Womens World	1,500	1,130	
Woodlands Pre-School (Previously Donemana)	1,250	1,300	1,200
World Of Owls Centre			800
XMTB Club	1,190		
Yew Trust Ltd		1,500	
YMCA Portadown	1,500		
Young at Heart Mens	1,500		

Business Area: Community Cohesion Group

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
174 Trust		47,962	
2&4 Wheel Steering Group	9,712		
25th Belfast Company, The Boys Brigade		1,418	
4th Portadown Scouts	245,000		
Abbey Villa FC	245,000		
AC Haughey			1,950
Acadamh Ceoil Chaoimhín Uí Dho			5,000
Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee	25,000	7,760	
Aghalee Young Volunteers Flute Band	1,650		
Aisling Ghéar	50,000	47,000	30,000
Aisling Ghéar	50,000		
Albertbridge Accordion Band		1,950	
Altram	166,290		
Altram	166,290		
An Caifé Chuinne		480	
An Chultúrlann		10,376	
An Coire			490
An Cumann Scoilríomáíocht		750	
An Droichead Teo	80,410		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
An Droichead Teo	80,410	55,818	
An Gaelaras			180,000
An Gaelaras		215,000	
An Gaeláras Ltd	154,763	155,788	128,436
An Gaeláras Ltd	154,763		
An tÁisaonad	380,992		
An tÁisaonad	380,992		
An tSnáthaid Mhór	17,478	29,541	9,842
An tSnáthaid Mhór	17,478		
An tUltach	16,254		
An tUltach	16,254		
Annagh United FC	245,000		
Annaghmore Star & Crown Flute Band	1,650	825	
Annalong Cultural Education Society		4,436	5,418
Annalong Ulster Scots Festival	3,585		
Aonach Mhacha	750		
Aonach Mhacha	750		
Aras Colmcille Trust		5,000	
Ardarragh Accordion Band	1,650		1,600
Ardbarron Pipe Band	1,650	1,950	1,950
Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure	150		
Ardinariff Historical & Cultural Society	4,013	1,869	4,664
Ardstraw & Baronscourt Youth Council	1,674	2,012	
Ardstraw Jubilee Parents, Teachers & Friends Association			1,675
Armagh City FC	245,000		
Armagh Pipers Club	6,500	5,000	4,000
Armagh Pipers Club	6,500		
Armagh Public Library	3,647	4,246	
Armagh Rhymers		5,000	
Armoy Auld Boys Musical Association	1,200	1,500	
Articlave Flute Band	1,650		
Artnagullion Rural Education & Cultural Society	1,050		
Arts & Business	16,385	3,000	6,640
Ashton Centre		90,000	
Association of NI Car Clubs	16,700		
Athletics Northern Ireland	66,250	47,500	38,545
Audiences NI		10,000	
Audiences NI	20,000		
Aughanran Pipe Band	1,650	1,950	
Augharonan Pipe Band	825	1,950	1,950

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Aughintober Pipe Band		1,035	
Aughlisnafin Accordion Band	375		
Aughnagurgan Scottish Dance Association	2,339		
Aughnavollog Ulster Scots Cultural Society		1,950	1,950
Auld Toon Ulster Scots Society	1,568		
Baillies Mills Accordion Band	1,650	1,335	
Ballindarragh Accordion Band	900	1,050	
Ballintoy Accordion Band	1,355		
Ballyboley Pipe Band	1,200	1,975	3,225
Ballybriest Pipe Band	1,650		
Ballycarry & District Community Association			8,640
Ballycarry Community Assoc.	836	7,718	
Ballycoan Flute Band		1,950	
Ballycraigy Auld Boys Musical Assoc.	1,540		
Ballydonaghy Pipe Band	1,560	1,940	
Ballyeaston Fife & Drum Club	825		975
Ballygowan Flute Band	1,200		1,950
Ballyhalbert Flute Band	1,410		
Ballyholland PS	3,400	1,750	1,750
Ballyholland PS	3,400		
Ballykeel Loyal Sons of Ulster Flute Band	1,650		
Ballylone Concert Flute Band	1,650		
Ballymaconnelly Renewal Group	1,200		1,950
Ballymaconnelly Sons of Conquerors Flute Band	1,640		
Ballymageough Rural Development Association	1,650		1,950
Ballymartin GFC	245,000		
Ballymena Business Centre			5,000
Ballymena Corps of Drums		2,068	
Ballymote Community Project		11,315	
Ballymoughan Flute Band	1,020		
Ballynahinch Protestant Boys Flute Band	825	1,950	
Ballyrea Cultural Society			1,550
Ballyvea Rural Development Association			3,150
Ballyvea Rural Development Association	1,448		
Ballywalter Community Action Group			3,620
Ballywalter Flute Band	1,650		
Banbridge Amateur Boxing Club	294,000		
Bangor FC	245,000		
Bann Rowing Club	22,518		
Bann Valley Community Association	1,650	1,853	1,950

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Basketball NI	4,000	3,500	
Battle of Garvagh Commemoration Festival	3,663		
Battlehill Pipe Band		1,950	1,950
Beathaisnéisi Éireannacha	3,000		
Beathaisnéisi Éireannacha	3,000		
Belfast Central Mission			711
Belfast Community Circus School			19,100
Belfast Community Sports Development Network			15,000
Belfast Film Festival	95,250		
Belfast Indoor Bowling Club	62,278		
Belfast Library & Society for Promoting Knowledge		5,000	
Bellaghy Pipe Band	1,650	1,950	
Belleeks GFC / CLG Bhéal Leice		1,750	
Benburb Memorial Pipe Band			1,790
Bendocragh & District Community Association	1,650	1,900	1,950
Benraw Highland Pipe Band	1,650		
Beragh Red Knights GAC		23,254	
Bernard Rafferty	1,250		2,250
Bernard Rafferty	1,250		
Berries Rosemary Collins			325
Bessbrook Crimson Arrow Pipe Band	1,650		
Blackstaff Press	750		
Blackstaff Press	750		
Blair Memorial Flute Band	1,073		
Bleary & District Pipe Band	1,650		
Bloody Sunday Trust			500,000
Blossomhill Pipe Band	1,650		
Bob Harte Memorial Trust			165,000
Bogside & Brandywell Initiative		20,000	
Boirche Íochtar CnaG		31,717	35,983
Boirche Íochtar Conradh na Gaeilge	39,700		
Boirche Íochtar Conradh na Gaeilge	39,700		
Bready & District Ulster-Scots Development Association	5,005	10,697	11,201
Bready Cricket Club		35,600	
Bright Lights	2,682		
British Orienteering	38,200	20,100	1,200
Brookeborough Flute Band	1,650	1,950	1,875
Brookmount Cultural & Education Society		3,590	
Broomhedge Ulster Scots Society	998		
Bruces True Blues Accordion Band	1,650		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Brunswick Accordion Band	1,050	1,950	1,950
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	1,500		
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	1,500	1,750	
Bushmills Salmon & Whiskey Festival	5,370		
Cairde Bheann Mhadagáin			7,000
Cairde Bunscoil na Deirge	2,772		
Cairde Bunscoil na Deirge	2,772	3,480	
Cairde Ghleann Darach	1,570		
Cairde Ghleann Darach	1,570		
Cairde na Ceathrún Gaeltachta			5,508
Cairde na Gaelscoile	11,988	3,500	3,500
Cairde na Gaelscoile	11,988		
Cairde na Tamhnaí Móire			1,750
Cairde Strabane			2,000
Cairde Strabane		10,000	
Cairde Teo	59,903	44,652	44,608
Cairde Teo	59,903		
Cairde Uí Néill	57,675	40,783	44,135
Cairde Uí Néill	57,675		
Cairdeas Eoghain		2,000	1,750
Cairncastle LOL 692 Community & Cultural Group	6,999		
Cairncastle Ulster Scots Bluegrass & Folk Festival	9,288		
Campa Chormaic An Droim Mór		1,750	
Campa Chormaic an Dúin	3,500	3,500	3,500
Campa Chormaic an Dúin	3,500		
Campa Chormaic Co. Aontroma	1,750	3,500	3,500
Campa Chormaic Co. Aontroma	1,750		
Campa Chormaic Dhoire	3,500	1,750	3,500
Campa Chormaic Dhoire	3,500		
Campa Chormaic Thír Eoghain	1,750	3,500	3,500
Campa Chormaic Thír Eoghain	1,750		
CAN (Compass Advocacy Network)		1,043	
Canoe Association of NI	98,650	55,000	65,000
Cappagh Pipe Band	1,050		
Carntogher Community Assoc.			1,500
Carrick Hill Residents Association	30,454		
Carrickfergus Historical Re-enactment Group		3,701	4,500
Carrickfergus Pageant	4,167		
Castlederg Young Loyalists Flute Band	1,650	1,950	1,950
Castlegore Amateur Flute Band	1,050	1,200	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Castlewellan FC	131,394		
Cathedral Youth Club		669	738
Cavancarragh Pipe Band	893		
Caw Flute Band (Londonderry)		1,463	
Caw/Nelson Drive Action Group	2,823	2,872	2,646
Celtronic			70,000
Celtronic		110,000	
Ceoltaí Éireann	2,000		4,200
Ceoltaí Éireann	2,000		
Church of the Good Shepherd		80	
Cinemagic			37,000
Cleland Memorial Pipe Band	1,500	1,800	1,800
CLG Bhéal Leice			1,750
Cliftonville FC	12,700		
Clogher & District Pipe Band	1,538		
Clogherny Scottish Country Dance Group	2,101	2,458	2,458
Clontibret Pipe Band	1,650		
Clooney Estate Residents Association	2,549	2,560	2,684
Clooney Hall Centre	362		
Closkelt Highland Dancers	1,093	1,122	1,489
Closkelt Pipe Band		1,783	
Clough Fife & Drum Club	645		
Cloughfin Pipe Band	1,455		1,950
Club Óge Machaire Bóthain		3,500	
Club Óige an Dúin			3,500
Club Óige an Iúir			3,500
Club Óige an Iúir		3,500	
Club Óige Luraigh	6,500		19,750
Club Óige Luraigh	6,500		
Club Óige Luraigh		5,250	
Club Óige Mhachaire Bóthain	6,993	1,750	3,500
Club Óige Mhachaire Bóthain	6,993		
Club Óige na Carraige Móire	2,900	5,250	3,500
Club Óige na Carraige Móire	2,900		
Club Óige Setanta	6,850	5,834	6,946
Club Óige Setanta	6,850		
Club Spraoi	5,250	5,250	5,250
Club Spraoi	5,250		
Club Spraoi Ard Mhacha			3,045
CnaG - Seal Spraoi	1,660		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
CnaG - Seal Spraoi	1,660		
CnaG Boirche Íochtar	6,950		
CnaG Boirche Íochtar	6,950		
Co Armagh Drum Majors - Tandragee	900		
Coalisland Fianna GFC	223,879		
Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair	73,225	56,411	60,074
Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair	73,225		
Coiste Ghaeloid.Chromghlinne	3,500		3,500
Coiste Ghaeloid.Chromghlinne	3,500		
Coiste Ghaeloideachais (CGC)			1,750
Coláiste Bhlinne		1,750	1,750
Coláiste Dhéan Mhic Oirc			3,034
Coláiste Feirste	17,495	10,945	1,750
Coláiste Feirste	17,495		
Coláiste Shliabh gCuilinn	1,185		
Coláiste Shliabh gCuilinn	1,185		
Coleraine 12th Festival of Culture & Heritage	10,100		
Coleraine and District Riding for the Disabled Association		27,074	
Coleraine Borough Council		120,000	
Coleraine Festival Committee		8,582	9,707
Colin Neighbourhood		63,456	
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	34,642	15,000	15,000
Colourpoint Creative Ltd	5,220		
Colourpoint Creative Ltd	5,220		
Comhairle Cathrach Dhoire	42,330		
Comhairle Cathrach Dhoire	42,330		
Comhairle Chathair Dhoire &CSB			24,419
Comhairle Dhún Geanainn & Tír Eoghain	28,221		
Comhairle Dhún Geanainn & Tír Eoghain	28,221		
Comhairle Fhear Manach	42,330		
Comhairle Fhear Manach	42,330		
Comhairle Lár Uladh			31,459
Comhairle Mhachaire Fíolta	28,221		
Comhairle Mhachaire Fíolta	28,221		
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta			6,110
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta		950	
Comhaltas Uladh	55,200		
Comhaltas Uladh	55,200		
Community Dialogue		4,999	
Community Watersports CIC	550		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Conradh na Gaeilge- Craobh Ar			1,950
Conradh na Gaeilge-Seal Spraoi			5,250
Cookstown North Community Group	2,146		
Corkley Development Association		1,386	
Corkley Drum Majors	1,050		1,200
Corkley Pipe Band	1,545		
County Armagh Drum Majors - Tandragee		975	1,000
County Derry Amateur Boxing Board	13,130		
Cowan Memorial Flute Band	1,590	1,650	1,678
Cranfield Accordion Band		1,950	
Cranfield Cultural Society	1,656		
Craobh an Iúir (CnaG)		8,000	8,000
Craobh Chabhán an Chaorthainn	2,000		
Craobh Chabhán an Chaorthainn	2,000		
Craobh Ghleann an Iolair		3,500	
Craobh Naomh Pádraig	1,060		
Craobh Naomh Pádraig	1,060		
Crawfordsburn Scout Centre	700		
Creagán le Chéile	3,500		
Creagán le Chéile	3,500		
Cregagh Community Association		47,977	
Cricket Ireland	95,250	72,750	40,000
Crilly Pipe Band	1,650		
Crimson Star Accordion Band	1,485		
Croí Éanna	55,371	39,964	42,292
Croí Éanna	55,371		
Crossmaglen Rangers GFC	245,000		
Crozier Memorial Pipe Band	1,650		
CultureTech			35,000
CultureTech		90,000	
Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich	108,837	106,484	100,305
Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich	108,837		
Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain	76,820	64,831	52,585
Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain	76,820		
Cumann Forbartha an Chairn			13,000
Cumann Gaelach Leath Chathail	1,000		
Cumann Gaelach Leath Chathail	1,000	1,750	
Cumann Gaelach na Ceathrún Gae			3,500
Cumann Iarscoil na gCrann	6,818	3,500	5,250
Cumann Iarscoil na gCrann	6,818		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Cumann Óige Chroí Éanna	3,500		
Cumann Óige Chroí Éanna	3,500		
Cumann Óige na bhFál			3,500
Cumann Sacar na gCláirseach		3,498	3,457
Cumann Scoil dramaíocht Bhéal Feirste	750		
Cumann Scoil dramaíocht Bhéal Feirste	750		
Cumann Staire Dhúiche Néill	3,375		
Cumann Staire Dhúiche Néill	3,375		
Curlough Accordion Band	1,350	1,710	1,900
Curran Flute Band	525		
Cycling Ireland	20,316	22,500	36,600
Danielle Quinn		480	
Dearcán Media		600	
Declan McChesney (Cahill Bros)		1,063	
Derry & District Youth Football Association		7,000	
Derry & Raphoe Action		28,311	33,383
Derry and District Youth FA Foyle Cup	10,000		
Derry City Council		50,000	
Derryloran Flute Band	1,650		
Derrynoose GAC	245,000		
Derryoghill Flute Band	1,650		
Dervock & District Musical & Cultural Society		2,130	
Desart Lodge Nursery			1,750
Desertmartin Accordion Band	893	1,200	
Destined Ltd	10,000		
Destined Ltd	10,000		
Devlin in Design	1,685		
Devlin in Design	1,685		
Disability Sport NI	47,750	231,250	81,300
Divis Joint Development Committee		85,613	31,879
Doagh Lambeg Drumming Club			1,200
Dollingstown Ulster Scots Cultural & Heritage Society	2,280		
Donaghmore & District Community Association		9,152	
Donemana Cultural Association		1,523	1,588
Down District Council	6,270		
Downpatrick and Co Down Railway	4,739	2,295	3,114
Dromore Controlled PS Parent Support Group		1,051	2,443
Dromore Orange Hall Committee	1,879		
Drum Major Trip	1,050		1,200
Drumbanagher Accordion Band	855	778	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Drumderg Flute Band	1,650	1,950	
Drumderg Flute Band, Keady			1,950
Drumlee Community Fife & Drum Association	1,650		
Drumlough Highland Pipe Band	1,500	1,943	1,950
Drumlough Pipe Band	1,650	1,200	
Drumquin Pipe Band	1,540	1,815	1,913
Duillí Éireann	4,100		1,215
Duillí Éireann	4,100		
Duillí Éireann F-15		1,290	
Dún Uladh Ltd		3,500	3,500
Dunaghy Flute Band	1,650	1,900	1,913
Duncairn Ulster Scots Society		1,169	2,100
Duncairn Ulster-Scots Society			
Dungannon United Youth FC	245,000		
Dungannon Volunteer Flute Band	425		
Dungonnell Ulster-Scots Society		238	
Dunloy Accordion Band	1,650	1,950	1,950
Dyan Pipe Band	1,200		
Early Years	45,000		
East Belfast Mission	48,368	108,708	192,700
East Belfast Mission	48,368		
East Donegal Ulster Scots Association	1,050		
Eden Accordion Band	2,490		
Edenderry Pipe Band			1,200
Edenmore Flute Band	1,650		
Education Authority			3,500
Eglinton Amateur Boxing Club	11,064		
Éigse Cholm Cille	4,000	4,000	3,000
Éigse Cholm Cille	4,000		
Emma Lyons and Company			768
EPIC (REACT North West)		15,000	
Erne Highland Dancers	2,211	2,012	2,229
Families at the Waterworks	27,334		
Fardross Pipe Band	1,650		
Féile	256,995	350,000	200,000
Féile an Iúir		700	
Féile Charn Tóchair	2,000		
Féile Charn Tóchair	2,000	2,000	
Féile Dhoire	750		
Féile Dhoire	750		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Fermanagh U-S Empowerment	4,016		
Fifes & Drum Musical & Historical Society	1,650		1,950
Finaghy Ture Blues Flute Band	825		
Finnard Rural Development Association	2,021	2,586	2,808
Flame: Gasworks Museum	2,200		1,464
Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013	1,340		
Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013	1,340		
Flute Band Church	1,650		
Forbairt Feirste			30,000
Forbairt Feirste	111,082		10,000
Forbairt Feirste	111,082		
Fort Knox Communications Ltd		613	
Fountain Street Community Development Association			1,000
Freeman Flute Band	1,650	1,950	
Frozen Foods		173	
GAA Handball Ireland	15,200	15,000	15,000
Gael Linn	10,000		
Gael Linn	10,000		
Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail	495		
Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail	495		
Gaelphobal an tSrátha Báin			20,593
Gaelphobal Cheantar an tSratha			19,336
Gaelphobal Cheantar an tSratha	58,008		
Gaelphobal Cheantar an tSratha	58,008	38,672	
Gaelphobal na Lorgan			1,750
Gaelphobal na Lorgan	1,550		
Gaelphobal na Lorgan	1,550	1,750	
Gaelscoil an Chaistil			7,000
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	3,500		
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	3,500	3,500	
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	3,500		
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	3,500		
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir			5,210
Gaelscoil Éanna	3,180		
Gaelscoil Éanna	3,180		
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh		2,703	
Gaelscoil na Móna			3,500
Gaelscoil na Speiríní	3,500		
Gaelscoil na Speiríní	3,500	3,000	
Garryduff Flute Band	1,650	1,300	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Garvagh Pipe Band	1,650		
Gasyard Development Trust		22,000	
Gasyard Wall Feile		70,000	
George's Bar			2,070
Gertrude Star Flute Band	1,650		
Gillygooley Pipe Band			1,853
Gilnahirk Pipe Band		1,755	
Glasgowbury			30,000
Glasgowbury		50,000	
Glebeside Community Association			1,170
Glen Barbers		825	
Glenkeen Fife & Drum Band		1,950	
Glenravel Community Development Association		17,533	
Glór an Chollain		3,500	
Glór an Ghleanna	3,500		
Glór an Ghleanna	3,500	5,500	
Glór an Ghleanna - Cumann Óige			7,000
Glór Dhún Geimhin	1,500		7,150
Glór Dhún Geimhin	1,500		
Glór na Móna	62,324	47,737	44,349
Glór na Móna	62,324		
Glór na nGael Uachtar Tíre	49,359	34,906	34,222
Glór na nGael Uachtar Tíre	49,359		
Glór na Spéiríní			2,760
Glór Uachtar Tíre	1,485	1,750	2,550
Glór Uachtar Tíre	1,485		
Golfing Union of Ireland UB	40,500	40,500	19,000
Gransha Pipe Band	1,650		
Greater Shankill Partnership		63,587	
Greater Shankill Partnership		9,995	
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership			36,500
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership	3,200		
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership		58,500	
Greater Shantallow Community Arts			156,000
Greater Shantallow Community Arts		42,500	
Greater Village Regeneration Trust		74,388	52,564
Greater Village Regeneration Trust		47,901	
Greencastle Youth Club	6,648	7,000	7,000
Greencastle Youth Club	6,648		
Greenhill YMCA	550		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Greens			250
Greysteel Community Enterprise		43,118	
Grúpa Tuismitheoirí & Tachráin	3,025	3,500	3,500
Grúpa Tuismitheoirí & Tachráin	3,025		
Guildhall Press		20,000	
Gymnastics Northern Ireland		3,000	
Harry Ferguson Memorial Pipe Band			1,950
Harry Ferguson Memorial Pipe Band	1,650	1,950	
Heart of Down Highland Dancers	1,865	2,461	1,832
Hillstown Rural Community Group			1,850
Hollywood Yacht Club	47,769		
Homeless Street Soccer NI			15,010
Horse Sport Ireland	92,500	73,000	66,085
IFA - PETPSE	570,667	488,990	176,984
IFA - Stadia Development	680,525	17,980,639	11,140,547
Immaculata Junior Football Club		30,408	
Influence of the Plantation	4,491		
Inniskillings Museum	2,000		630
Institute of Irish Leadership			1,950
International School for Peace Studies			24,850
Ionad Uíbh Eachach	48,950	34,893	38,447
Ionad Uíbh Eachach	48,950		
Iontaobhas Ultach	87,716		
Iontaobhas Ultach	87,716	86,850	
Irish Athletic Boxing Association	55,100	108,245	96,000
Irish Bowls Federation	59,000	57,500	60,000
Irish Football Association	3,750	2,600	23,000
Irish Ladies Golf Union Ltd	20,013	25,500	25,600
Irish Pages Ltd		1,250	
Irish Rugby Football Union			14,000
Irish Street Community Association		1,504	6,340
Irish Table Tennis Association Ulster Branch			2,000
Irish Waterski and Wakeboard Federation	6,000	6,000	
Irvine Memorial Pipe Band			1,853
Jean McGuinness		650	
Joseph Forde Memorial Pipe Band	1,650	1,950	
Kabosh	28,263		
Kathryn Stewart School of Highland Dance, Larne			2,450
Kennedy K McArthur Festival of Sports and Ulster-Scots	3,600		
Kilcronaghan Community Association	2,647		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Kildoag Pipe Band	1,485		
Killen Pipe Band		1,740	
Killycurragh Regeneration Group	213,439		
Killyfargue Pipe Band	2,063		
Killymuck Accordion Band	1,650	1,950	
Kingdom of Dalraida Ulster Scots Society	6,808	8,040	19,352
Kingdom of Dalriada Ulster-Scots Festival and Highland Games	8,991	9,913	
Kirknarra School of Dance	2,194	4,184	3,400
Knocks Grattans Hurling Club	1,590		
Knocks Grattans Hurling Club	1,590	1,600	
Kusadasi Kutts -Serdar Erdemli			1,000
Lack Pipe Band	990		
Leafair Community Association		26,000	
Learmount Community Development Group			600
Legananny Accordion Band	1,650		
Limavady Borough Council		20,000	
Limavady Community Development Initiative			7,000
Limavady Jazz and Blues Committee		26,400	
Lisburn Racquets Club		458,896	
Lislaird Pipe Band	1,650	4,034	4,034
Lislea Lambeg Drumming Club	525	600	
Lisnafin/Ardnalee Trust Cross Community Development Association			1,570
Lisnafin/Ardnalee Trust Cross Community Development Association		6,500	
Lisnakea Silver Band		2,996	
Lisnamurrican Flute Band	1,650		
Lisnaskea Silver Band	1,050	2,014	
LIVE Strabane Youth Arts			2,475
Loughbrickland & District Rural Development Association		4,125	
Loughbrickland Community Festival	4,840		
Loughinsholin Cultural Music G	430		
Loughshore Ulster Scots Festival 2013	1,567		
Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group		12,190	
Loyal Sons of Benagh		1,950	
M A & C Trading Limited			1,000
Macdara Seodra	2,000		
Macdara Seodra	2,000		
Macosquin First Flute Band	1,650	2,040	1,950
Maghaberry Community Association	245,000		
Maghaberry True Blues Flute Band		1,950	
Maghera Sons of William Flute Band	1,650	1,950	

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Maghera Sons of William Flute Band			
Magherabeg Rural Community Association	193,559		
Magheraboy Flute Band		1,770	1,913
Magheraboy Flute Band			
Magherafelt District Council		30,000	
Magheraglass Flute Band	1,650		
Maguiresbridge Highland & Scottish Country Dancing Group	2,067		
Maiden City Festival		19,575	22,113
Maiden City Festival			
Maiden City Motor Club		10,000	
Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band		1,349	3,512
Manorcunningham Pipe Band	1,650		
Marlaco0 & District Pipe Band	1,644		
Marlagh Educational & Cultural Group		1,950	1,950
Matt Boyd Memorial Pomeroy Pipe Band			1,861
Mayobridge Community Centre	1,750	1,750	4,740
Mayobridge Community Centre	1,750		
McClintock Parents Support Group		2,025	1,964
McClintock Primary School	1,856		
McCracken Summer School	111,384		
McDonald Memorial Pipe Band	1,650		1,950
Michael Rennick		993	
Mid Ulster Victims Empowerment			1,476
Mid Ulster Victims Empowerment		1,898	
Mid-Armagh Community Network		16,874	
Milford House Museums		9,070	
Moneydig Rural Network Group	998		
Moneygore Rural Development Association		1,913	
Monreagh Heritage Centre	50,000	50,192	50,000
Mosside Rising Sons of Ulster Accordion Band	1,650	1,538	
Motor Cycle Union of Ireland Ulster Centre	7,500	7,000	10,000
Motorcycle Racing Association	15,000	24,000	6,000
Mount St. Catherine's PS			3,500
Mountaineering Ireland	38,000	28,000	7,000
Mountfield Pipe Band			1,950
Mountfield Scottish Country Dancers	1,867	4,718	2,011
Mourne Valley Cultural Association	2,238	2,137	7,134
Moybrone Pipe Band	570		
Moygashel Community & Cultural Association		1,883	
Moyne Ulster Scots Association	4,296	5,231	4,839

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Muckamore Cultural Music Society	825		
Mullaghy Flute Band	1,365		
Mullinagoagh Pipe Band	1,350	1,388	1,528
Mullintur Crown Defenders	525		980
Music City		50,000	
Music Service for Pipes & Drums			22,743
Na Magha Hurling & Camogie Club		51,000	
Naggy Burn Ulster-Scots & Schomberg Orange Cultural Society	1,730	156	
Naí-Ionad Ard Eoghain	3,490		
Naí-Ionad Ard Eoghain	3,490	3,490	
Naíscoil an Chéide			63,960
Naíscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh		3,500	1,750
Naíscoil Ghleann an Iolair	65,000		
Naíscoil Ghleann an Iolair	65,000		
Naíscoil Léim an Mhadaidh			2,550
Naíscoil Léim an Mhadaigh	3,089		
Naíscoil Léim an Mhadaigh	3,089	2,850	
Naíscoil na Banna			1,750
Naíscoil na mBeann			18,000
Naíscoil na Tamhnaí Móire		69,000	
National Ice Skating Association (UK) Ltd	7,500		
National Trust	3,280	1,246	4,182
Nerve Centre			4,000
Netball NI	104,000	52,500	38,000
Newbuildings Youth Club	2,394	2,383	1,867
Newbuildings Youth Club			
Newry & Mourne Ulster Scots Festival	3,193		
Newtownards Melody Flute Band	1,650		
Newtownhamilton Fest 2013	4,924		
Newtownstewart Highland Dancers			1,808
NI Archery Society	14,500	35,500	6,000
NI Commonwealth Games Council	58,250	81,500	133,000
NI International Youth Football Cup Ltd (Milk Cup)	10,000		
NI International Youth Football Cup Ltd (Milk Cup)		7,000	
NI Judo Federation	26,500	38,500	30,000
NI Karting Association	7,500		
NI Orienteering			500
NI Screen Commission		280,000	
NI Sports Forum	43,750	40,000	75,000
NI Wrestling Association			5,000

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
NI Youth Forum		5,000	
North Belfast Play Forum	249,600		40,000
North West Historical & Cultural Society	3,402		
North West Play Resource Centre			17,000
North West Regional College			8,950
North West Team			
Northern Ireland Federation of Shooting Sports		64,000	20,000
Northern Media Group	2,000		
Northern Media Group	2,000		
Northern Regional College			9,491
Nuala O'Neill & Maria Murray			1,175
NW Play Resource Centre		40,000	
NW Womens Collective		10,000	
O Neills Bar	1,250		
O Neills Bar	1,250		
Oak Leaf Amateur Boxing Club	20,269		
Odyssey Trust Company Ltd			40,000
Ógras an Chaistil	3,500		
Ógras an Chaistil	3,500		
Ógras an Dúin		3,500	
Oin Interactive	750		
Oin Interactive	750		
Oisín Mac Millen t/a BIA			1,692
Olivia's Beauty			675
Ollscoil na Banríona/ Queens	6,550		
Ollscoil na Banríona/ Queens	6,550		
Ollscoil Uladh	4,750	8,750	600
Ollscoil Uladh	4,750		
Omagh Protestant Boys Melody Flute Band	1,000	1,950	1,950
O'Neill Pipe Band	1,200		
Open House Festival	4,000		
Open House Festival	4,000		
Orangefield Flute Band	1,650		
Ouburst			20,000
Outdoor Recreation NI	3,750		640,700
Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership			28,000
Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	9,000		
Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership		77,000	
Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	1,250		
Pádraig Mac Ardail			1,950

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Paralympics Ireland	65,563	80,297	118,000
Pat's Barbers		300	
Peter Haughey		342	
Phoenix Amateur Boxing Club			3,859
PLACE	7,210		
Plumbridge Brien Boru Pipe Band	1,560		
Pobal	188,981		
Pobal	188,981		
Pobal ar lúl			4,500
Police Museum		495	
Pollee Temperance Accordion Band	1,508		1,560
Portavogie Pipe Band	1,650		
Pride of the Derg Flute Band	1,575	1,838	
Pride of the Park Flute Band	1,650	2,040	2,036
QUB		10,000	30,000
Queen's University of Belfast	3,450		
Queen's University of Belfast	3,450		
Quilly True Blues Flute Band	1,650	1,950	1,950
Raffrey Pipe Band	1,425		
Raidió Fáilte	100,764		583,200
Raidió Fáilte	100,764		
Raidió Fáilte Teo		327,053	
Railway Preservation Society of Ireland	4,125		
Randalstown Sons of Ulster	1,650		
Raphoe Pipe Band	8,891	5,850	14,170
Rathlin Development and Community Association	4,000		
REACT		1,771	
Red Hand Defenders (Newtownstewart Flute Band)	1,650	1,650	2,123
Ring Amateur Boxing Club	16,704		
Rising Sons of the Valley Flute Band			1,950
Robert A. McMillen	2,000		
Robert A. McMillen	2,000		
Robert Starrs			1,950
Rochester's Amateur Boxing Club	10,831	92,868	
Roden Street Community Development Group		73,691	62,471
Roden Street Development Group		109,057	208,275
Rosedermot Community Cultural Group	1,650		
Rowing Ireland	4,000	7,000	34,720
Rowing Ireland UB			2,000
Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum	500		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Royal Irish Veterans Association			8,043
Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI			2,000
Royal Yachting Association (NI)	51,250	55,500	69,000
Rua Media CIC	21,000		
Rua Media CIC	21,000	215,400	
Rural Ructions	3,339		
Safer Activities for Everyone (SAFE)			1,500
Salterstown Flute Band	600		
Salto Gymnastics Centre Limited		10,000	
Sandholes Community Group	1,650		
Schomberg Festival Committee		9,476	8,625
Schomberg Fife & Drum			1,713
Schomberg Fife & Drum	1,500		
Schomberg Folk Orchestra	975	1,375	2,816
Schomberg Society Kilkeel			34,555
Schomberg Society Kilkeel Ltd	3,948	32,536	
Schomberg Ulster Scots Festival	8,204		
Scoil Ghramadaí Naomh Iósaeif		3,500	
Scoil Samhraidh Shéamuis Uí Néill	2,000		
Scoil Samhraidh Shéamuis Uí Néill	2,000		
Seal Spraoi	3,500		
Seal Spraoi	3,500		
Seal Spraoi Dhún Geanainn			1,750
Seal Spraoi Dún Geanainn		3,000	
Seal Spraoi Oileán an Ghuail		3,500	
Search and Rescue Dog Association-Ireland North	2,000	2,000	
Seven Towers Pipe Band	1,600		
Share Discovery Village	150		
Shooting Federation of Northern Ireland	49,000		
Short Strand		63,512	
Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band	1,650		
Sion Mills Building Preservation Trust		5,000	
Siopa an Carn - An Carn Ltd			350
Sir George White Memorial Flute Band	1,650	1,950	
Skeogh Flute Band	1,560	2,123	
Small Steps Adult Education Group	1,743	3,675	36,828
Sollus Cultural Promotions			80,000
Sollus Cultural Promotions	70,000		
Sollus Cultural Promotions		80,000	
Sollus School of Highland Dance	5,851	5,307	5,029

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Somme Museum	2,603		
Sons of Kai Flute Band	1,650	1,950	
Sons of Ulster Flute Band	1,650		
South Belfast Partnership Board		9,481	
South East Fermanagh Foundation	9,624	11,058	9,194
South Fermanagh Loyalist Flute Band	1,650		
South West College			8,500
Southern Sports Partnership	18,000		
Spa Accordion Band	998		
Special Olympics Ireland			545,000
Spectrum			48,708
Spectrum	1,122		
Spectrum Centre	80,535		
Springtown Amateur Boxing Club	17,304		450,373
St Columb's Park House			11,500
St Galls GAC			3,247
St Joseph's Amateur Boxing Club	21,241		468,627
St Joseph's GAC (Ederney)	245,000		
St Mary's Amateur Boxing Club	9,408		
St Patrick's Pipe Band	1,650		1,950
St Peter's GAA Club (Lurgan)	245,000		
St. Mary's Primary School			3,500
St. Mary's University College		485,785	49,410
Stendhal Festival			50,000
Stendhal Festival	8,000		
Stendhal Festival		130,000	
Stepping Forward with Ulster-Scots Family Together	3,150		
Sticky Fingers	100,000		
Strabane & District Caring Services			2,500
Strabane District Council		39,950	
Strabane Health Improvement Programme			1,000
Strabane Health Improvement Programme		6,000	
Strabane Sigerson's GAA			1,426
Strabane Sigerson's GAA		9,500	
Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership	3,500		
Strawhill Voluntary Independent Pipe Band	1,574	1,650	
Swim Ireland	30,000	40,500	28,720
Swim Ulster Ltd	41,250	7,000	
Syerla & District Pipe Band	1,050		
Taekwondo Association of NI	4,000	2,500	3,000

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
The Black Box	4,000		
The Blue Thistle Highland Dancers	2,081		2,270
The Bogside Inn	550		
The Bogside Inn	550		
The Boys Brigade 25th Belfast Company	1,283		
The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland			2,000
The Fews Highland School of Dance		2,860	2,827
The Fostering Network			31,500
The Gathering 2013	5,923		
The Nerve Centre			633,000
The Nerve Centre	25,000		
The Nerve Centre		380,000	
The Share Group			1,538
The Warren Cultural & Education Society	1,650		
Thiepval Memorial Pipe Band	1,275		
Ti Chulain		49,385	
Tievemore Pipe Band	1,050		
Tobermore Loyal Flute Band	1,628		
Tobermore Village Hall Development Association		4,199	
Topp Star of the North Pipe Band	1,568		1,500
Tracey Hughes t/a Vanilla's			275
Trench Memorial Flute Band	1,650		
Triathlon Ireland	40,000	31,500	38,000
Triax Ltd			36,500
Triax Taskforce		43,000	
Trillick Pipe Band	1,650	1,900	
Tullywhisker Pipe Band			1,650
Tyrone Country Board	419,341	79,619	1,114
UB Badminton Union of Ireland	22,000	25,000	9,000
UB Irish Rugby Football Union	3,750	4,560	2,250
UB Irish Table Tennis Association	42,050	15,400	1,000
UB Tennis Ireland	3,750		
UBIRFU - PETPSE	264,487	1,037,652	137,869
UBIRFU - Stadia Development		8,759,873	3,056,990
UCGAA - PETPSE	267,575	72,791	67,116
UCGAA - Stadia Development	3,279,352	555,442	817,637
Ullans Speakers Association	76,768	73,096	65,083
Ulster Angling Federation Ltd	5,200		
Ulster Camogie Council	7,750	3,500	
Ulster Coarse Fishing Federation	5,100		

Name of Organisation / Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Ulster Council Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)	63,750	33,000	2,250
Ulster Hockey Union	117,541	56,825	107,064
Ulster Protestant Boys Flute Band	1,650		
Ulster Scots Community Network	256,068	265,857	281,140
Ulster Squash	24,500	21,000	
Ulster-Scots Celebration in Tobermore	3,125		
Ulster-Scots Musical Celebration	2,050		
Verbal Arts			5,400
Verbal Arts Centre			31,500
Verbal Arts Centre		40,000	
Vernetta Hillen			1,950
Voice of Young People In Care			40,350
Waringsford Pipe Band	1,650	1,950	1,950
Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership			21,000
Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership		27,905	
Waterside Theatre Company Ltd			5,960
Waterside Theatre Company Ltd		15,000	
West Belfast Partnership Board		7,750	
West Belfast Partnership Board	9,964		
West Tyrone Ulster Scots Culture Festival	1,571		
Whitehouse Pipe Band			1,875
Wilgar community Association			20,000
William Kerr Memorial Pipe Band			1,850
William Kennedy Piping Fest	2,000		
William Kennedy Piping Fest	2,000		
Windyhall Cultural Community & Sports Action Group	1,630	1,950	
Woodvale Cricket and Tennis Club	48,498		

Business Area: Neighbourhood Renewal

Group Name	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
174 Trust	247,927	10,932	11,002
4R's Reuse Workshop			87,385
An Droichead Ltd	47,441	57,573	55,515
An Gaelaras	60,296	133,123	131,881
Andersonstown Traditional & Contemporary Music School	42,401	26,646	
Annadale Haywood Residents Association	40,375	30,255	32,609
Aras Cholmcille Trust Ltd		20,625	
Ardmonagh Family & Comunity Group			148,901
Ardmonagh Family Group	13,897		
Ardayne Youth Providers Forum	164,704	183,535	183,061

Group Name	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Argyle Business Centre		19,400	
Arts For All	10,894	10,894	8,612
Ashton Community Trust	312,066	311,536	182,681
Ballymac Friendship Trust		10,000	42,000
Ballymagroarty/Hazelbank Community Partnership	124,653	142,396	145,191
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association		24,848	
Ballysillan Community Forum	95,923	91,207	90,290
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	75,688		
Belfast Activity Centre	126,292	126,051	106,083
Belfast Community Sports Development Network	24,079	41,159	41,159
Blackie Community Groups Association	129,676	118,762	120,301
Blackie River Community Group	13,987		
Blackmountain Action Group	81,982	60,410	59,404
Bloody Sunday Trust	20,420	20,420	
Bogside & Brandywell Initiative	208,575	213,742	218,537
Bryson Multi Cultural Resource Centre	88,520	64,198	87,329
Cancer Lifeline	59,041	89,935	83,388
Carrick Hill Community Association	98,638		
Carrick Hill Residents Association	41,429	31,361	41,372
Cathedral Youth Club	42,644	34,218	36,484
Caw Community Playgroup	18,400		4,125
Caw/Nelson Drive Action Group	64,416	68,207	70,786
Charter NI	43,460	48,523	56,469
Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum	249,834	226,541	225,221
Clonard Neighbourhood Development Partnership	2,039		
Clooney Estate Residents Association	43,235	112,594	335,684
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	696,931	607,304	581,379
Colin Partnership Board	13,037		
Community Restorative Justice	159,436	159,669	
Community Restorative Justice			159,374
Community Restorative Justice Ireland	217,016	200,023	197,780
Conway Education Centre	258,446	234,265	233,871
Conway St Youth Centre	156,201		
Conway Youth Centre	9,723		
Creggan Country Park Enterprises Ltd	87,698	131,763	62,884
Creggan Enterprises Ltd	24,450		
Creggan Pre-School & Training Trust Ltd	106,310	113,837	117,319
Curryrierin Community Association	58,613	8,354	
Divis Joint Development Committee	108,177	130,415	129,311
Doire Colmcille CLG		480,115	

Group Name	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Donegall Pass Community Forum	154,308	106,806	156,118
Dove House Community Trust	81,272	136,931	114,141
Dry Arch Children's Centre			12,000
Dunluce Family Centre Ltd	128,837	407,651	129,751
Dunville Park	30,004		
East Belfast Community Development Agency	581,732	574,874	540,405
East Belfast Partnership	19,819		
East Belfast Partnership Board	191,129	214,531	179,749
Enterprise North West Ltd	12,560	11,002	
Ex Prisoners Interpretive Centre (E.P.I.C)	186,042	126,674	171,835
Falls Community Council	319,730	285,767	271,827
Falls Women's Centre	165,836	148,561	146,998
Farset Youth and Community Development Limited	148,401	119,087	138,579
Footprints Womens Centre	144,286	45,402	
Forum For Action On Substance Abuse	343,802	323,810	318,027
Fountain Street Community Development Association	41,263	35,851	42,984
Foyle Womens Aid	15,694	16,397	
Galliagh Community Development Group	35,844	36,610	41,150
Gasyard Development Trust	46,552	293,306	50,341
Gasyard Wall Feile	26,028	29,447	29,306
GEMS	66,532	66,532	
GEMS Northern Ireland	58,671		
Gingerbread NI	41,400	41,607	32,573
Gleanne Boxing Club	1,592		
Glen Community Parent Youth Group	50,167	65,925	66,038
Glen Development Initiative	87,268	87,871	92,309
Glenbank Community Association	17,663	16,281	17,635
Glencolin Residents Association	27,402	30,194	30,129
Grace Womens Development Limited	74,273	74,154	71,620
Greater Shankill Partnership	198,968	152,741	154,706
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership	369,981	392,223	265,777
Greater Shantallow Community Arts		14,056	194,544
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	693,950	600,786	502,847
Groundwork NI	9,046		
Hillcrest House Family Centre		127,869	
Hillcrest House Ltd	50,832	77,113	
Hillcrest Trust			142,619
Hobby Horse Playgroup	66,066	63,000	65,265
HURT	6,382	8,060	9,694
Inner City Trust		652	8,488

Group Name	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Ionad Na Faiseogíe			29,000
Ionad Uibh Eachach	96,792	86,371	87,587
Irish Street Community Association	58,736	69,308	75,698
Kids Together	1,727		15,219
Lagan Village	23,214	51,738	
Leafair Community Association	32,829	66,406	75,676
Lenadoon Community Forum	98,735	116,344	88,983
Lenadoon Women's Group	27,611	43,663	48,482
Liberty Consortium			66,650
Liberty Consortium	49,703	65,992	
Ligoniel Improvement Association	142,902	131,149	141,008
Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	54,138		
Limavady Wolfhounds		308,980	
Lisnafin/Ardnalee Trust Cross CDA	29,690	29,736	29,931
Londonderry YMCA			33,068
Lower Oldpark Community Association	11,024		0
Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group	100,877	100,692	99,973
Lower Shankill Community Association	65,006	51,407	61,301
Markets Development Association	53,881	85,821	79,422
Melmount EBA Community Assoc Forum	41,847	41,780	41,982
Mount Vernon Community Development Forum	129,382	114,258	110,690
Na Magha Hurling & Camogie Club		102,989	446,354
New Life Counselling	165,216	174,577	198,875
Newstart Education Centre			13,065
Newtownabbey Methodist Mission	26,613		
Newtownards Road Womens Group	89,946	87,581	89,619
NI Alternatives - East	90,708	87,595	
NI Alternatives - North	81,838	73,264	
NI Alternatives - South	42,215	41,503	
NI Alternatives G Shankill	95,289	97,155	
NORTH BELFAST ADVICE PARTNERSHIP - VINE CENTRE			123,231
North Belfast Employment Centre	113,022	116,461	2,043
North Belfast Partnership	76,476	106,679	101,300
North Belfast Partnership Board	167,588	142,758	142,207
North Belfast Women's Initiative and Support Project	33,737	41,733	33,680
North City Business Centre	40,000	18,114	35,000
Northern Ireland Alternatives			140,500
Northern Ireland Alternatives - EAST			90,900
Northern Ireland Alternatives - SOUTH			41,794
Northern Ireland Alternatives SHANKILL			92,870

Group Name	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
NOW Project		60,120	
NW Play Resource Centre	41,676	28,533	
Oasis Caring In Action	14,653		
Old Library Trust	62,151	262,505	17,268
Older People NW (Age Concern Derry)	83,985	72,188	76,580
Outer West Ltd	56,220	55,524	
Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Ltd			69,503
Patrick Sarsfield GAC		78,927	
Pink Ladies Breast Cancer Support Group	37,994	29,374	
POBAL		16,545	
Poleglass Community Association @ Sally Gardens	19,541	60,718	14,085
Rainbow Child & Family Centre	1,102	340,051	
Rathcoole Churches Community Group	21,731	28,621	
Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	10,597		
Resource Centre Derry	180,604	524,706	59,253
Resurgam Community Development Trust		15,510	
Roden Street Community Development Group	125,630	116,323	94,894
Roe Valley Residents Association	40,076	40,726	40,524
Rosemount & District Welfare Rights Group	114,026	120,642	121,619
Sandy Row Boxing Club	39,706		
Sean Dolans GAC		77,910	425
Shankill Womens Centre	221,740	201,242	171,248
Shantallow Community Residents Association	103,894	231,124	229,525
Short Strand Community Forum		194,831	
Skainos			104,651
SOLAS	3,000		
South Belfast Partnership Board	155,235	115,688	124,157
Springhill Park Community Development Association	47,969	48,379	41,422
St Andrews Community Action Group	19,563		
St Columb's Cathedral	28,771	28,406	
St Georges Boxing Club		8,585	148,199
St Paul's GAC	39,425		
St Vincent de Paul		3,228	
Stadium Youth & Community Group	89,299	88,132	88,399
Star Neighbourhood Centre	141,167	125,517	134,801
Strabane & District Caring Services		43,138	
Strabane & Lifford LGBT Group	41,915	40,011	
Strabane Community Project	26,226	29,423	29,863
Strabane Community Unemployed Group	1,713	20,520	20,498
Strabane Ethnic Community Association	32,575	44,288	49,485

Group Name	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Strabane Sigerson's GAA	29,644	161,463	114,428
Streetbeat Youth Project	82,882	76,806	74,722
Suffolk Community Forum	41,043	30,164	30,305
Synergy@JVC	74,079	65,311	53,930
The Glens Community Association	58,721	76,352	83,436
The Koram Centre	640	67,926	
The Koram Centre, Counselling, Psychotherapy and Psycho Social Support Ltd			70,176
The Old Library Trust			52,582
The Pink Ladies Cancer Support Group			38,122
The Resource Centre Derry			137,729
The Vine Centre	240,807	266,916	152,195
The Whistle Project	3,460	67,382	137,578
Top of the Hill 2010	64,338	64,081	
Triax	318,354	254,214	
Triax Ltd			64,809
Tullycarnet Community Support Services Ltd	81,485	76,079	77,415
Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Collective			65,000
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	183,902	187,541	180,023
Upper Ardoyne Community Partnership	46,279	40,533	37,392
Upper Springfield Development Company Ltd	977,547	972,810	962,064
Upper Springfield Development Trust	32,298		
Waterside Area Partnership	77,160	75,561	
Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership Ltd	95,848	168,479	177,059
WEST - Glen Community Complex	20,639		
West Belfast Athletic & Cultural Society			23,679
West Belfast Parent/Youth Support Group	91,608	80,976	83,557
West Belfast Partnership Board	201,851	125,140	141,240
West Belfast Traders Forum	27,960		
West Kirk Community Project	22,380	11,175	17,565
Willowfield Parish Community Association	12,931	26,376	29,929
Windsor Women's Centre	30,000		
Wishing Well Family Centre	49,579	49,276	49,409
Womens TEC	78,918	74,762	

Business Area: NI Housing Executive

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
4rs Recycling Community Interest Company	90		5,000
7th Larne Scout Group			514
Action For Children			7,992
An Droichead			6,180

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Annadale & Haywood Residents Association			11,000
Annsborough Community Forum		20,000	
Ardglass Residents Group	1,614		
Ardmonagh Family And Community Group Ltd			20,000
Ardoyne Association	14,950	12,500	12,385
Armoy Community Association			1,500
Artsekta	2,395		
Associated Club Apprentice Boy Of Derry	45		
Aughlisnafin Community Association		20,000	
Ballinderry A O H	4,150		
Ballyclare Community Concerns			65
Ballygorman School House Association	4,656		
Ballygowan District Community Assoc	1,614		
Ballykeel Together Development Association	4,991		
Ballymagroarty Hazelbank Community Partnership	500	500	1,000
Ballymena Inter Ethnic Forum			6,450
Ballymena North Cluster Group	2,140	6,949	
Ballymena Womens Aid		33,959	
Ballymurphy Residents			1,000
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	38,793	12,604	
Ballynakelly Residents Association			500
Ballyoran Football Club	900		
Ballysally Bonfire Committee			1,000
Ballywalter Comm Action Group	500		
Ballywalter Rec Youth Football Club			834
Ballywalter Youth & Community Group	5,593		
Band of Brothers			3,450
Bann Valley Community Group			1,300
Barnardos Northern Ireland	354		
Bawnmore & District Residents Assoc	10,802	12,634	13,389
Belfast Healthy Cities	25,000		25,000
Belfast Islamic Centre			315
Bellaghy Village Regeneration			1,500
Bellaghy Womens Group			1,150
Belvoir Players Amateur Dramatic Soc	560		
Belvoir/Besthill Community Assoc	1,000		
Benbradagh Community Support	72		
Benmore Community Association	21,781	23,268	27,908
Better Bonfires Initiative			7,394
Black Mountain Shared Space Project		1,300	5,090

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Blackmountain Action Group	13,475	12,355	15,785
Bloody Sunday Trust	30		
Bloomfield Community Association	3,853	2,620	595
Boata		2,000	
Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum			4,830
The Bogside Artists	10,000	10,000	10,000
Bogside Brandywell Initiative	190	14,301	9,400
Bond Street Community Association			3,000
Bovalley Community Centre			5,000
Bowtown Community Development Group	15,140	17,325	15,000
Branial Community Association		1,500	
Breezemount Community Association	736		
Bridge Women'S Group The		5,000	
Brookfield Combined Community Association	1,286	1,385	
Brownlow Festival	89		
Brownstown Owners & Tenants Assoc	500		
Building Ballysally Together	7,850	1,550	3,141
Burnfoot Community Association	6,043		
Bushmills Residents & Environmental Forum		3,000	
Bushmills Trust			
C L A S P		1,080	
Cairns Residents Group			2,000
Carnagat Community Association		850	2,950
Carnary Community Association			500
Carnlough Community Association		245	1,540
Carnlough Community Development Group Ltd	1,725		
Carrickfergus Community Forum	43,514	36,374	35,490
Carrickfergus Y M C A	33,712	24,053	25,279
Carrosyl Community Association	204		
Carrowshee Pk & Sylvan Hill R Assoc	1,575	1,501	
Castle Community Association	500	795	1,622
Castlemara Community Association			1,100
Causeway Rural & Urban Network		2,000	
Caw/Nelson Drive Action Group	400		5,580
Centre For Democracy And Peace Building			4,000
Centre For Global Education	1,150		
CG Breezemount C.A			465
Chinese Welfare Association	500		645
Clady Community Association		5,000	
Clandeboyne Village Community Association		5,000	855

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Cliftonville Community Reg Forum	26,000	19,500	19,890
Clonard Neighbourhood Dev Partnership		1,248	1,000
Clooney Estate Residents Association	1,970	2,820	500
Cloughey & District Community Assoc	1,300		
Cloughmills Community Action Team	2,160	6,100	3,450
Coiste Ghaeloideachais Chromghlinne	5,000		
Coiste Na Nlarchimi			9,750
Coleraine Borough 50 + Forum		2,005	
Coleraine Street Pastors		5,000	5,000
Colin Glen Trust		188	
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	2,240		375
Community Develop Initiatives	2,871	454	
Community Intercultural Programme		5,000	
Community Mediation Project			5,535
Community Restor Just (Outer Nth)	500		
Community Restorative Justice Ireland	91,250	91,250	40,000
Confederation Of Community Group	500	3,750	5,000
Conlig & District Community Development Group			1,500
Conservation Volunteers N Ireland		8,117	
Cookstown North Committee Group			2,480
Coolessan Community Association			1,500
Corcrair & Redmanville Community Partnership		1,545	1,000
Cosy Club	4,800	2,440	2,445
Council For The Homeless	542,247	544,228	577,200
Craigavon Intercultural Programme	550	5,300	2,755
Cross Glebe Community Assoc	500	500	500
Crumlin Road Gaol		1,151	
Cullybackey Residents Assoc	679	4,150	
Culturlann Mcadam O'Fiaich		3,000	
Davys Street Residents Association			1,000
Dennett Interchange			8,720
Derriaghy Village Community Association	19,460	19,432	18,488
Derry Junior Wardens	10,945	519	
Derrybeg Community Association		500	7,550
Dervock & District Community Assoc			2,715
Disability Action	15,900	16,018	7,950
Disability Equality Group N I			1,620
Divis Youth Project			500
Dixon Park Residents Association	9,060	12,265	10,000
Donegall Pass Community Forum	600		2,750

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Doury Road Development Group		510	
Down Policing & Comm Safety Partnership	1,300		
Downpatrick Community Collective	1,500	4,500	4,200
Drumarg Community Association		300	
Drumbeg North & South Residents Association		500	485
Drumellan Community Association		4,549	500
Drumgor Detached Youth Project			20,000
Drumrallagh Residents Association			700
Drumturn Community Association			2,000
Dunclug Partnership Group	500	1,269	
Dundrum Village Association			750
Dunmurry Community Association	1,000		
East Belfast Mission		4,595	42,545
East End Residents Association	2,300	3,095	
Eastvale/Kilcoole Community Association		500	
Edgarstown Residents Association			7,100
The Extern Organisation Ltd	251,000	233,392	236,310
Factory Community Forum	4,550	3,142	
Faite Feirste Thiar			28,000
Falls Community Council		28,440	
Falls Residents Association	16,608	11,433	24,000
Farney Community Development Group Ltd			148
Fermanagh Men's Shed Drumcoo			3,340
First Housing Aid & Support Services	495,269		13,828
Forthspring Inter Community Group	500		
Forum For Cities In Transition		10,000	
Fountain Street Community Association			10,200
Fox Park Residents Association	2,797	6,354	
The Foyle Haven Association	67,500	67,500	105,500
Foyle Womens Aid	55,840		
Friendly Faces			200
Friends Of St Brigid'S			500
Friends Of The Fallen		500	
First Moy Boys Brigade			3,140
Galbally Youth & Community Assoc	16,667		
Galliagh Womens Group		3,800	5,000
Gasyard Development Trust	62	8,025	3,000
Glen Community Development Assoc	21,261	26,459	23,360
Glenavon Youth Academy	300		
Glenbank Community Association		49,159	32,109

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Glenbawn Residents Association		1,000	
Glenburn Community Association			1,550
Glencolin Residents Association			1,000
Glendowan Community Association		500	
Glenravel & Dist Comm & Residents Association			2,322
The Glens Community Association			3,138
Good Morning Down		3,020	6,125
Gortallowry Park Residents Association	836		
Grace Women'S Development Ltd	743	1,066	
Grand Orange Lodge Of Ireland			200
Greater Dunmurry Positive Relations Partnership		855	690
Greater Shankill Community Council	21,129	24,665	21,094
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	22,480	21,880	32,571
Greater Whitewell Community Surgery		18,668	26,888
Greencastle Community Association		363	
Greenisland Community Association	500	500	500
Greysteel Community Association	3,420		
Greystone Residents Association	4,197	1,760	
Habitat For Humanity NI			200
Happy Tots Group		390	5,740
Harmony Hill Community Group	1,326	1,975	2,300
Bob Harte Memorial Trust			850
Healthy Cities Programme-Youth Programme			3,000
Helping Hands Community Outreach Project		1,300	
Hilden Community Association		39	
Hill Street Residents Group			500
Hillcrest Trust			500
Hillview & Kilmacormick 2 Community Assoc			2,150
The Holding Project			80
Holy Trinity Parish	60		
Holywell DiverseCity Comm Partnership			398
Hollywood Shared Town		500	500
Hospital Road Community Group			2,048
Housing Rights Service	250,638	266,236	260,227
The Hubb Community Resource Centre			7,638
Indian Community Centre (Belfast) Ltd		140	
Innovation & Capacity Building	656		
Institute For Conflict Research		4,620	6,754
Integrate NI			1,000
Irish Street Community & Youth Assoc	150		500

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Kilcooley Sports Forum		5,000	
Killicomaine Jubilee Club			500
Killicomaine Residents Group		430	
Killinchy Community Development Association		15,789	
Killowen Community Association		3,314	2,040
Killowen Drive Residents Association			500
Killyleagh Football Club	8,121		
Killymerron Community Association		250	
Kitty'S Road Community Association		500	
Knockmore Community Association			1,842
Lagan Village Youth & Community Grp	75		5,980
Lagmore Community Forum		2,000	
Langley Road Community Association		500	
Leafair Residents Association		500	6,860
Leckagh Neighbourhood Group	500	500	475
Lenadoon Community Forum	1,958		
Lenadoon Women'S Group			1,000
Leonard Cheshire Disability	4,200	4,200	
Lettershandoney & Dist Dev Group			2,800
Ligoniel Improvement Association		4,930	1,000
Lincoln Court Youth & Community Association			500
The Link Family & Community Centre	12,130	12,130	12,000
Lisanelly Regeneration Group	17,529	20,568	15,467
Lisburn Safe Project			5,000
Lisnafin Ardnalee Trust	4,550		
Lissize Community Association	865	227	108
Living Rivers Trust		19,160	
Loughgiel Community Association Ltd	20,000	1,000	
Loughgilly Together Residents Association			1,348
Loughmacrory Community Development Association	20,000	1,000	
Lower Castledawson Community Association		4,137	
Lower Castlereagh Community Group	286		
Lower Oldpark Community Association	29,122	24,115	37,141
Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group	7,635	2,413	
Lower Shankill Community Association	7,500	19,969	25,290
Macosquin Village Community Forum		1,240	
Manor Park Residents Group			500
Marist Sisters			10,048
Markets Development Association	9,600	900	
Meadowlands Community Association		1,000	

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Mediation Northern Ireland	5,790	5,790	4,825
Melmount & East Bank Estate Community Association Forum	4,000		1,030
Men'S Motivation Group	4,000	2,700	1,350
Mid - Skegoneill Community Group	1,155	1,260	
Mid Ulster South Tyrone Association	14,131		
Middletown & District Comm Dev Assoc	1,550		
Millburn Community Association	1,480	150	5,500
Millisle & District Community Assoc	1,325		4,930
Millisle Youth Forum	5,261		
Moneyslane Community Hub	7,000		
Moortown St Malachy's GAC	3,925		
Mount Vernon Community Dev Forum	3,590		
Mount Vernon Regeneration And Re-Imaging Project		1,350	
Mourneview & Grey Estates Community Association	500	500	2,040
Moy Area Community & Dev Assoc	3,200	3,250	
Moy Parents & Toddlers Group			1,100
Moyle Community Safety Partnership	5,000		
Mt Merrion Parish Church			250
North Belfast Womens Initiative & Support Project	300	2,572	83
N I A C R O	101,000	101,000	101,000
N I H E Retirement Association	1,897	2,254	
N I Womens Aid Federation	113,000	113,000	119,916
N I Youth Forum	7,173	16,876	115
N Ireland Institute For The Disabled			5,000
National Energy Action	40,000	43,750	56,250
National Museums N I	356	224	
National Museums Northern Ireland			520
New Lodge Housing Forum	10,312	10,574	15,000
Newry Street Unite	4,800		600
Newtownabbey Men's Shed			4,739
Newtownabbey Women's Group			3,070
North Belfast Community Development & Transition Group		20,345	
North Belfast Interface Network		1,322	2,000
North Belfast Principals Group			11,000
North Coast Community Transport	320		
North Down Community Network	20,683	21,120	28,160
North Down Y M C A	47,843	54,816	54,011
North Lisburn Community Investment	1,995	500	2,800
North West Migrants Forum			3,035
Northern Ireland Alternatives	91,250	125,642	70,127

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Oasis Catering	3,664		
Off The Streets Committee		500	500
Omawest Community Development Association	528	640	992
One Word Festival			1,000
Over The Hill Sports & Social Club		1,440	
Parents & Kids Together Carrickfergus YMCA		500	
Parkmore Flags Protocols			326
Parkview Community Group			2,472
Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership	30		
Pitt Park Women's Group		670	
Place Initiative	13,085	11,250	
Polish Educational And Cultural Association			87
Polish Saturday School In Belfast		120	200
Portadown Bonfires	500	500	500
Portaferry Community Collective Ltd	1,550	16,102	
Prisoners In Partnership			6,582
Quinn Dylan Dance Theatre			765
Race Relations Fund	184		
Rainbow Child & Family Centre			500
The Rainbow Project	3,000	4,500	1,500
Rasharkin Community Association	2,600	479	2,390
Rath Mor 50 + Club	150		
Rathfern Community Regeneration Group			477
Rathgill Community Association	69,889	74,338	68,717
The Reach Project			41,980
Rectory Residents Association	770		
Redburn & Loughview Community Association	19,536	29,366	20,713
Regenerate			2,156
Regenerate Portadown			340
Resource Centre Derry	90		
Resurgam Community Dev Trust		1,764	2,500
Richview Regeneration Centre			748
Roe Valley Residents Association	4,000	2,500	3,000
Royal British Legion (Cookstown)			480
Royal Ulster Agricultural Society			248
Rural Community Network (NI)			400
Rural Development Council		12,418	
Saint Mary's Community Group	2,000	2,862	
Saintfield Development Association			1,000
Salvation Army			50,000

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Sandy Row Residents Association		3,040	
Saturday Club			4,700
Seaforde & District Community Assoc	1,650		
Seapatrick Community Association			1,300
Seven Towers Comm Cult & Education Association	500	1,600	500
Seymour Hill & Conway Residents Association			3,800
Shantallow Community Residents Association	350	1,425	1,900
Shantallow Men's Group			2,900
Shantallow Youth Intervention Group			500
Short Strand Community Forum	8,980	2,210	
Siege Heroes Museum			75
Simon Community	193,145	162,145	193,000
Sion Mills Community Forum			100
Somerset Residents Association		1,500	
South Antrim Community Transport			178
South Belfast Alternatives		2,500	2,500
South Belfast Roundtable	200	2,873	3,009
South Down Flute Band	500		
South Tyrone Men's Shed		2,250	
Space			4,800
Springfarm & District Comm Assoc	4,455		
Springfield Star Football Club		4,100	
St Brigid'S Accordion Band	2,956		
St Eugenes Hall Committee			320
Seven Towers Community Associations			2,063
Steeple Community Association		550	
Steps Mental Health			1,390
Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project			114
Strangford Community Association	1,500		
Stranocum & District Development Group			2,000
Strathfoyle Community Association Ltd	238	2,009	
Strathfoyle Women's Activity Group Ltd	76,189	72,808	84,471
Success Dragon & Lion Dance Association	150		
Suffolk Community Forum			1,000
Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group	200	1,218	
Sunningdale Community Committee	3,080	6,720	6,370
Supporting Communities Northern Ireland	900,615	448,887	740,924
T A G I T		2,100	
Taghnevan Community Development Association			5,000
Tar Anall	4,225		4,980
Tar Isteach			3,498
Taughmonagh Residents Association		500	

Name of Organisation/Community Group	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)
Td3 Ltd		400	
Teamworks Community Maintenance Cic			4,867
Temple Project		6,250	
Templemore Avenue School Trust	100		
Thornhill Community Association	750	500	500
Tidal			1,000
Tigers Bay	14,400		
Tirgan Community Association	15,000		
Tonagh Neighbourhood Initiative	15,000	9,375	
Toome Initiative Group	5,000		
Tullygarley Community Development Grp	200	578	
Tullysaran Community Association	20,000		
Ulster Aviation Society			700
Upper Springfield Development Co Ltd		3,420	
Upper Springfield Resource Centre	16,088	17,188	26,075
Upperlands Comm Dev Association	11,000		
Wandsworth Community Association	2,500	6,940	
War Years Remembered			5,250
Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership		4,000	
Welcome Community Group	5,000		
Welcome Organisation	360,000	510,541	510,000
The Welcome Project		3,500	
West Belfast Hub CF			425
West Belfast Athletic & Culture Society	29,000	1,859	16,000
West Belfast Orange Hall			5,000
West Belfast Partnership Board		500	
West Winds Development Agency	32,832	27,694	19,792
West Winds Development Association	250		
West Winds Social & Cultural Inst		5,438	12,796
Westend Partnership		4,945	2,144
White City Community Development Association	8,140	2,000	1,720
The White House	35	55	
Whiteabbey Community Group	670	3,910	
Whitehill Community Association	3,754	2,501	450
Whiterock Children'S Centre		1,500	2,000
Whiterock Flute Band		1,800	
Whiterock Westrock Residents Assoc	2,000		1,000
Windmill & Minorca Drive Residents Association	2,080	1,027	1,225
Windyhall Cultural Group		500	500
Wishing Well Family Centre		170	
Woodburn Community Association		500	
Youth & Education Forums	372		

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities how much was spent providing 'bed and breakfast' accommodation each week over the last 12 months for homeless service users in Belfast, itemised against the week when the accommodation was provided.

(AQW 1648/16-21)

Mr Givan: Under the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, the Housing Executive has a statutory responsibility to provide temporary accommodation to homeless applicants in certain circumstances. In order to meet these statutory duties the Housing Executive has at its disposal a pool of temporary accommodation, referred to as its Bed Bureau, which is made up from a range of NIHE and Voluntary Sector hostels and private rented sector accommodation.

In exceptional circumstances, and only where availability on the Bed Bureau is limited, non-standard accommodation such as Bed and Breakfasts, Guest Houses and Hotels can be used. The use of these may be necessary during emergencies such as floods or fires or where vulnerable households require accommodation where no other accommodation is immediately available.

The following table outlines the amounts paid out by week for 'bed and breakfast' accommodation (B&Bs, Guest Houses and Hotels) over the last 12 months for homeless service users in Belfast.

Week ending	Amount paid out
Sunday 17 May 2015	£200.00
Sunday 24 May 2015	£50.00
Sunday 14 June 2015	£91.67
Sunday 12 July 2015	£28.33
Sunday 09 August 2015	£41.67
Sunday 20 September 2015	£180.00
Sunday 22 November 2015	£45.00
Sunday 29 November 2015	£300.00
Sunday 06 December 2015	£296.67
Sunday 20 December 2015	£108.33
Sunday 10 January 2016	£41.67
Sunday 28 February 2016	£340.00
Sunday 06 March 2016	£30.00
Sunday 13 March 2016	£240.00
Sunday 10 April 2016	£33.33
Sunday 17 April 2016	£266.67
Sunday 24 April 2016	£110.00
Sunday 15 May 2016	£300.00
Total	£2, 703.34

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities (i) how much has been spent on welfare fraud investigation in each of the last three years; (ii) how much has been recovered; and (iii) what happens to the money which is recovered.

(AQW 1701/16-21)

Mr Givan:

(i)

Year	Salary Costs
2013-14	£2,685k
2014-15	£2,595k
2015-16	£2,440k

The figures shown reflect solely the salary costs for fraud investigators in the Department's Single Investigation Service and are based on average salary rates. The figures do not include management, support or other costs.

(ii)

Financial Year	*Amounts Recovered
2012-13	£2,193,334

Financial Year	*Amounts Recovered
2013-14	£2,278,296
2014-15	£2,284,911

* Relates only to the amounts recovered in those particular years and takes no account of ongoing recoveries in succeeding years.

Also, the figures take no account of the deterrent effect of fraud investigation. This is better reflected in the overall level of loss through customer fraud and error in social security benefits, which remains at historically low levels of less than 0.7% of benefit expenditure.

(iii) Money recovered from people found guilty of benefit fraud is returned to HM Treasury.

NB: The information provided is an Official Statistic. The production and dissemination of all such statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Communities (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future, that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department for Communities.

(AQW 1711/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Department for Communities currently has (i)(a) no projects being completed or (b) scheduled for the future in East Londonderry that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding.

(ii & iii) The Department for Communities will consider the potential implication of the Referendum result for departmental functions, legislation and regulations, as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. The Northern Ireland Executive will contribute to the United Kingdom Government position for future negotiations with the European Union. Business continues as usual until new arrangements are negotiated and take effect.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Communities (i) to detail the projects (a) in progress; and (b) scheduled for the future in Fermanagh and South Tyrone by his Department, that have received EU funding or are scheduled to receive EU funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Executive Office.

(AQW 1743/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Department for Communities currently has (i)(a) no projects in progress or (b) scheduled for the future in Fermanagh and South Tyrone that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding.

(ii & iii) The Department for Communities will consider the potential implication of the Referendum result for departmental functions, legislation and regulations, as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. The Northern Ireland Executive will contribute to the United Kingdom Government position for future negotiations with the European Union. Business continues as usual until new arrangements are negotiated and take effect.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Communities to outline the steps he is taking to allow local community groups to foster stronger links with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

(AQW 1754/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive has been fostering strong links with communities for over 45 years. It has developed and implemented the following Strategies to assist in this:

Community Involvement Strategy

This strategy is designed to directly involve communities in the everyday issues that affect them. There is a particular focus on building links between the Housing Executive and those in more 'difficult to reach' groups – e.g. people with disabilities, rural residents, youth and those from the Black Minority Ethnic community.

Community Cohesion Strategy

Under this strategy, the Housing Executive works in partnership with local communities and other agencies to promote good relations.

Community Safety Strategy

Through this strategy, the Housing Executive has forged a range of partnerships with agencies and communities to help prevent anti-social behaviour from arising or to tackle it effectively when it does.

Social Enterprise Strategy

The overall aim of this strategy is to improve the health and well-being of communities by investing in their social housing enterprises and in identifying the opportunities for growth of the social economy sector within NIHE estates and communities.

This work includes provision of funding for local residents and groups to either develop or create social enterprises on their estates.

Financial Inclusion Strategy

A key theme of the financial inclusion strategy is a focus on communities. The strategy assists Housing Executive customers to manage their money and sustain their tenancies, whatever the circumstances.

All of these Strategies complement the Housing Executive's Journey to Excellence which puts the customer at the centre of its service delivery.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Communities to detail the level of financial support that has been given by his Department to assist amateur and youth football in Upper Bann in each of the last five years; broken down by each respective football club that has received funding.

(AQW 1861/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department has provided £1,518,874.45 to assist amateur and youth football in Upper Bann during the five years from April 2011 to March 2016.

This investment comprised of capital infrastructure projects funded under the Department's Neighbourhood Renewal Intervention Fund, funding through the Small Grants for Volunteering Programme and investment through a number of Sport NI Programmes.

The detail of the funding has been broken down by Football Club and year and is outlined in Annex A.

Annex A

Financial Support for Football in Upper Bann

Club	Funding Source/Project	Year	Amount	Organisation / Club Total
Annagh United FC	Sport NI – Awards for Sport – increasing Participation	2011/12	£6,982	£252,982
	Sport Matters Community Capital Programme – 3G Pitch & Floodlighting	2013/14	£245,000	
	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2013/14	£1,000	
Association Football Club, Craigavon	Regional Development Office Neighbourhood Renewal Intervention Fund – Upgrade Changing Rooms	2012/13	£3540	£238,560
		2013/14	£156,229.56	
		2014/15	£78,790.44	
Banbridge Rangers	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2011/12	£500	£3,100
		2013/14	£1,500	
		2015/16	£1,100	
Craigavon City FC	Regional Development Office - Neighbourhood Renewal Intervention Fund – New kit and 3G pitch development	2011/12	£21,795.17	£465,719.46
		2012/13	£18,900	
		2013/14	£424,524.29	
		2014/15	£500	
Dollingstown FC	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2013/14	£600	£600
Goalline Youth Trust Portadown	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2013/14	£2,240	£4,390
		2014/15	£1,250	
		2015/16	£900	
Lurgan Town FC	Regional Development Office	2013/14	£15,260.83	£509,926.03
	Neighbourhood Renewal Intervention Fund – Modular Pavilion and Training Pitch	2014/15	£486,204.40	
		2015/16	£8,460.80	

Club	Funding Source/Project	Year	Amount	Organisation / Club Total
Lurgan Oxford Sunnyside	Regional Development Office Neighbourhood Renewal Intervention Fund – New Kit	2012/13	£26,223.96	£26,223.96
Oxford Sunnyside FC	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2013/14	£1,400	£1,400
Seagoe FC	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2014/15	£500	£7,155
	Sport NI – Active Awards for Sport – Coaching Development	2014/15	£5,460	
	Voluntary & Community Unit – Small Grants for Volunteering Programme	2015/16	£1,195	
The Ted Clarke Memorial Trust	Sport NI – Active Awards for Sport Coaching Development	2014/15	£5,658	£5,658
Train to be Smart Juniors	Sport NI – Active Awards for Sport Coaching Development	2015/16	£3,160	£3,160

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Communities what follow-up assistance is available from his Department for persons that have received information and require guidance in completing applications for the Make the Call service.

(AQW 1876/16-21)

Mr Givan: People who use my Department's 'Make the Call' Benefits Advice Line service (0800 232 1271) are provided with a free and confidential Benefit Entitlement Check to assess their potential eligibility to benefits and other supports.

As part of this telephony service, Benefits Advice Line Advisors will also assist customers who raise both general and specific queries regarding form completion.

Should customers require hands on guidance following information they have received, the Benefits Advice Line Advisor will signpost the person to their nearest Customer Enquiry Team, located in all Jobs and Benefits offices across Northern Ireland where assistance can be provided.

Customers who receive information from the 'Make the Call' Benefits Advice Line and are identified as vulnerable through, for example, their age or a medical condition, will be referred to my Department's Community Outreach Service which consists of 20 Community Outreach Officers deployed across Northern Ireland. A visit will be arranged, and the Community Outreach Officer will provide face to face assistance and support with form completion in the customer's own home.

Between 2013 and 2015, over 2,500 vulnerable people were able to make successful claims totalling almost £9million in annual benefits they were entitled to following the intervention and assistance from the Community Outreach Service.

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Communities to outline what work will be undertaken in preparation for any extra powers which will come to his Department as a consequence of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union.

(AQW 1878/16-21)

Mr Givan: It is too early to be definitive about what additional powers are likely to be secured. No decision has been made on triggering Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union to initiate the formal negotiation to leave the European Union.

Until such times as any new arrangements are negotiated and take effect, business will continue as usual. The priority of the Executive will be to ensure that our interests are protected and advanced and that new opportunities are developed as part of any new arrangements.

At the Executive's request, the Head of the Civil Service has established individual departmental teams at senior level to consider the potential implications for each department's functions, legislation and regulations as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. We also asked him to put in an overarching central administrative and political governance structure that will report directly to us.

These teams will liaise with Whitehall, Irish and EU counterparts to ensure we get the best possible deal for Northern Ireland.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister for Communities to outline the vacancy rates in (i) Banbridge; (ii) Lurgan; and (iii) Portadown, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1920/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department launched a new Town Centre Database on 29 June 2016 which will hold information on the performance of town centres. The Database is still in the development stage however its aim is to provide a clear, consistent

set of statistics relating to the 41 urban towns and cities in Northern Ireland. The information relating to non-domestic properties vacancy rates within the various town centres covers the last 3 years only. The vacancy rates in the 3 town centres of Banbridge, Lurgan and Portadown were as follows:

April 2014

Town Centre	No. of Non-Domestic Properties	No. of Vacant Properties	% of Vacant Properties
(I) Banbridge	392	76	19.4%
(II) Lurgan	518	138	26.6%
(III) Portadown	670	187	27.9%

April 2015

Town Centre	No. of Non-Domestic Properties	No. of Vacant Properties	% of Vacant Properties
(I) Banbridge	391	78	19.9%
(II) Lurgan	520	137	26.3%
(III) Portadown	665	166	25.0%

April 2016

Town Centre	No. of Non-Domestic Properties	No. of Vacant Properties	% of Vacant Properties
(I) Banbridge	386	80	20.7%
(II) Lurgan	517	132	25.5%
(III) Portadown	658	183	27.8%

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Communities whether the rent paid by Co-Ownership Housing tenants can be offset in any way against Co-Ownership Housing's capital stake in the property.

(AQW 1926/16-21)

Mr Givan: The rent payments made by Co-Ownership homeowners contributes towards meeting the operational costs of the Co – Ownership scheme. Rent paid cannot be offset against Co –Ownership Housing's capital stake in the home, but homeowners can choose to increase their equity balance at any time through purchasing additional shares in their property. This process is known as staircasing.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Communities whether Co-Ownership Housing makes any profit from rent receipts; and if so, to outline how it is spent.

(AQW 1928/16-21)

Mr Givan: Any surpluses generated within the Co-Ownership Scheme are reinvested in future property purchases. Properties are purchased with a combination of this surplus, public loans in the form of Financial Transactions Capital (FTC), and private finance.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Communities whether Co-Ownership Housing tenants can claim Housing Benefit to assist with the cost of their rent.

(AQW 1929/16-21)

Mr Givan: If a claimant occupies accommodation under a co-ownership scheme granted by the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association, any rent or service charges paid for the accommodation are eligible for Housing Benefit. Any entitlement to Housing Benefit will be assessed in accordance with the same rules applied to other tenants in the social rented sector.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister for Communities to detail within Newry and Armagh (i) the number of people on the social housing waiting list; and (ii) the number in housing stress, in each of the past five years.

(AQW 1973/16-21)

Mr Givan: The number of people on the social housing waiting list and those in housing stress in the Newry & Armagh Parliamentary Constituency in each of the past five years is as follows:

	Waiting List	Housing Stress
March 2016	2,087	1,313
March 2015	2,302	1,303
March 2014	2,249	1,213
March 2013	2,308	1,248
March 2012	2,597	1,279

I hope this information is useful.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities (i) for an update on the five Community Asset Transfer pilots; and (ii) to outline any barriers that are preventing proposals from completion.[R]

(AQW 1994/16-21)

Mr Givan: The demonstration programme of pilot community asset transfer (CAT) projects concluded on 31 March 2016. One of those projects, the former PSNI Station in Broughshane, has been successfully transferred to Broughshane Community Development Association. The remaining 5 projects continue to receive support from Development Trusts NI (DTNI), our delivery partner in the implementation of the CAT policy framework. In each case, the community based groups involved continue to pursue an asset transfer (freehold transfer or long term lease) from a range of public sector asset owners. The current status of each project is detailed in the attached table.

The remaining pilot projects are also in the process of preparing or have prepared cases to acquire the assets at less than market value, including nil. To support such a request, it is essential that a robust case can be made in the form of a viable business plan, which can demonstrate both the monetary and non monetary aspects (social value) of the proposals. The asset owner will then be obliged to subject the plan to economic appraisal to government green book standard.

A key issue that has emerged from the pilot programme has been the capacity of groups to undertake the necessary business planning work. DTNI has played an important role in providing the necessary support directly and linking into other valuable support from sources including local councils and the social enterprise hubs.

Any proposal for a transfer at less than market value creates a challenge for asset owners in the current financial climate and in the context of the NI Executive's asset management strategy and associated capital receipts targets. My Department will continue to roll out the CAT policy framework and work with others through the CAT Oversight Group to address any remaining barriers to the successful implementation of the policy.

Asset	Asset owner	Community Organisation	Status
Former Bangor Courthouse	NICTS	Open House Festival/ Bangor Shared Space	Business Plan under consideration by NICTS
Commercial Unit at Rushmore Drive Lisburn	NIHE	Resurgam Community Development Trust	Business Plan under consideration by NIHE
Managed workspace Royal Avenue Belfast	DfC	Cathedral Quarter Trust	Business plan in preparation
Former Ballygolan Primary School, North Belfast	Education Authority/DE	Greater Whitewell Community Surgery	Revised plan in preparation in conjunction with Apex Housing Association (pending PEACE IV application)
Sports grounds at Galliagh, Londonderry	Derry & Strabane City Council	Leafair	Business Plan under consideration by D&SCC

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Communities to detail the number of staff that will be (i) relocated from; and (ii) relocated to each Social Security Office in the Mid Ulster constituency as a result of the changes to the welfare system.

(AQW 2006/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Department for Communities is a regional based organisation which is committed to having a local office network across Northern Ireland.

Work is currently ongoing both to finalise the roll out of the Department's Universal Credit Service Delivery Model as well the implementation of the different welfare changes agreed as part of the Fresh Start Agreement. These changes will result in the need to review how existing and new services are provided and the Department is committed to ensuring that jobs will

be provided across many towns in Northern Ireland. Until the rollout plans are finalised the Department is unable to confirm the impact on the number of staff required in local offices, however if there is a need to reduce staffing numbers in any office, then staff will be redeployed to other parts of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Communities, pursuant to AQW 1082/16-21, (i) whether he can advise who owns this monument; and (ii) whether the Northern Ireland Housing Executive remain liable for the site.
(AQW 2009/16-21)

Mr Givan: The Housing Executive has advised that:-

- (i) The Housing Executive does not own this monument and is unable to confirm who owns the monument.
- (ii) The land is still owned by the Housing Executive and has not been sold or transferred. The Housing Executive continues to maintain the land but not the monument.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister for Communities to detail his Department's investment in (i) Lurgan; (ii) Portadown; and (iii) Banbridge town centres, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 2030/16-21)

Mr Givan:

Town Centre	Financial Year					Total
	2011/12 £'000	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	£'000
Lurgan	1,056	1,212	550	-	543	3,361
Portadown	600	340	290	49	0	1,279
Banbridge	112	439	429	192	97	1,269
ABC wide projects excl Armagh	-	-	18	-	155	173
Total	1,768	1,991	1,287	241	795	6,082

Mr McKee asked the Minister for Communities what assurances he can give to stakeholders in his departmental portfolio that they and Northern Ireland will not be disadvantaged as the outcome of the EU Referendum is implemented.
(AQW 2055/16-21)

Mr Givan: No decision has been made by HM Government on triggering Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union to initiate the formal negotiation to leave the European Union. Until such times as any new arrangements are negotiated and take effect, business will continue as usual.

The priority of the Executive will be to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and that new opportunities are developed as part of any new arrangements. At the Executive's request, the Head of the Civil Service has established individual departmental teams at senior level to consider the potential implications for each Department as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. We also asked him to put in an overarching central administrative and political governance structure that will report directly to us.

These teams will liaise with Whitehall, Irish and EU counterparts to ensure we get the best possible deal for Northern Ireland.

Mr McKee asked the Minister for Communities for his assessment of the implications of the result of the EU Referendum for (i) the voluntary and community sector; (ii) all other aspects of his departmental portfolio; and what relevant contingencies are in place.
(AQW 2056/16-21)

Mr Givan: No decision has been made by HM Government on triggering Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union to initiate the formal negotiation to leave the European Union. Until such times as any new arrangements are negotiated and take effect, business will continue as usual. Therefore, it is too early to make a meaningful assessment of the implications of the result of the referendum for the voluntary and community sector or any other aspect of my Department's portfolio.

The priority of the Executive will be to ensure that our interests are protected and advanced and that new opportunities are developed as part of any new arrangements.

At the Executive's request, the Head of the Civil Service has established individual departmental teams at senior level to consider the potential implications for each department's functions, legislation and regulations as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. We also asked him to put in an overarching central administrative and political governance structure that will report directly to us.

These teams will liaise with Whitehall, Irish and EU counterparts to ensure we get the best possible deal for Northern Ireland.

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Communities in light of and in preparation for the United Kingdom exiting the European Union, will his Department now commission a programme of work to identify the legislation, imposing EU directives, to be repealed.

(AQW 2098/16-21)

Mr Givan: At the Executive's request, the Head of the Civil Service has established individual departmental teams at senior level to consider the potential implications for each department's legislation, regulations and functions. We also asked him to put in an overarching central administrative and political governance structure that will report directly to us on these issues.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Communities for his assessment of current library provision in Upper Bann.

(AQW 2117/16-21)

Mr Givan: Libraries NI has informed me that all the libraries in Upper Bann currently offer a wide range of programmes and services for children and adults. Programmes such as 'Rhythm and Rhyme', 'Quality Assured Class Visits', the 'Summer Reading Challenge' and 'Family Fun days' are designed to attract families and young children into the libraries. The 'One to One Assistance' and other IT programmes, such as 'Got IT?' and 'Go ON!' are designed to help people in the local community to improve their IT skills and to use library IT services. In Upper Bann, Libraries NI also run a number of activities to encourage people in local communities to come to libraries in order to learn more about how they can improve their health and well-being and tackle issues such as stress, mindfulness and nutrition. The libraries also continue to provide free internet access either through on site public access computers or free WiFi for users with their own devices.

A number of initiatives are also being taken forward in the libraries in Upper Bann through partnerships with other Government Departments and bodies. These include Job clubs to support the unemployed; basic IT training for farmers, rural dwellers and those seeking employment. In addition, Libraries NI also provide homecall and mobile library services in the area which not only provide stops for the general public to use but also a number of primary schools, mainly in more rural areas, to enable children who live some distance from a branch library to use the book lending facility.

As community hubs, libraries are free, inclusive, shared, accessible and trusted spaces, embedded in communities and used by people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. As 89% of the population lives within two miles of a branch library or mobile library stop, I recognise that moving forward there is tremendous potential for libraries, including those in Upper Bann, to provide local access to, and support for, a range of citizen-focused services.

In order to widen access to libraries as far as possible, Libraries NI and my Department believe that greater joined up working is essential in order to meet the challenges ahead. I fully support this approach and my officials, in conjunction with Libraries NI, are exploring other areas of potential collaboration with other Departments; including organisations which now form part of DfC; to ensure that every opportunity is used to widen access to libraries and to ensure they provide as wide a range of services as possible.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Communities, in relation to his urgent submission to the Executive Office on the implications of a UK withdrawal from the EU, what were the estimated losses to schemes administered by his Department; and what perceived benefits were included in that report.

(AQW 2133/16-21)

Mr Givan: Until such times as any new arrangements are negotiated and take effect, business will continue as usual. Therefore, over the next two years no losses are anticipated to the schemes that my Department administers. My Department will continue to pursue relevant EU funding opportunities while they are available.

Over the longer term, the possible effects of the UK's withdrawal from the EU depend on the terms of the new arrangements that are negotiated. The priority of the Executive will be to ensure that our interests are protected and advanced and that new opportunities are developed as part of any new arrangements. We will also work to ensure that any current mutually beneficial arrangements will be continued after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Mr Kelly asked the Minister for Communities when his Department will publish the Anti-Poverty Strategy for public consultation.

(AQW 2135/16-21)

Mr Givan: A new Social Strategy is being developed as part of our approach to the Programme for Government. This Strategy will seek to tackle the root causes of poverty and social exclusion and, subject to Executive agreement, I would expect it to be published for consultation in the autumn.

Mr Allen asked the Minister for Communities to outline progress made in implementing the football Sub-Regional Stadia Strategy.

(AQW 2140/16-21)

Mr Givan: A 12 week consultation on the proposals for the Sub Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer took place from 30 November 2015 until 22 February 2016. The proposals contained within the Sub Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer consultation document were based on the agreement reached by the Executive in March 2011 to "meet the strategic needs of

football including those as outlined in the IFA's paper entitled "Strategic Facility Need" (dated March 2011)." The consultation document therefore reflected the five priorities outlined in the IFA's draft Facilities document.

The IFA subsequently updated their 2011 Facilities Strategy, however it was only proper that the consultation was based on what was in place at the time the Executive endorsed the investment.

During the consultation, the Department facilitated 5 public consultation events and also met with a number of individual stakeholders. The Department received 1,279 responses to the consultation, 98 from named organisations and 1,181 from individuals.

Responses to the consultation document will help to shape the programme going forward; including the eligibility criteria for the programme.

Statistical analysis of the consultation responses was completed in April 2016.

Officials in the Stadia Team are currently carrying out detailed consideration and analysis of the responses to the consultation together with all other relevant information before making recommendations to me on the way forward.

I anticipate that the programme will be launched and open for applications later in 2016.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Communities to outline the impact of an exit from the European Union on the plans of Housing Associations to build social housing with support from the European Social Bank.
(AQW 2170/16-21)

Mr Givan: The vote to leave the European Union will have no impact on the recently announced funding contract by local Housing Associations with the European Investment Bank.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister for Communities (i) to detail how many cases have been brought to his attention regarding the illegal purchase and sale of alcohol from private-hire taxis; and (ii) to outline the steps his Department has taken to address this issue.

(AQW 2179/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department:-

- (i) does not hold any information regarding the illegal sale and purchase of alcohol from private-hire taxis;
- (ii) is not responsible for the regulation of private hire taxis.

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Communities for an update on the Empty Homes Strategy.
(AQW 2227/16-21)

Mr Givan: As part of the Empty Homes Strategy which was introduced in September 2013, an Empty Homes Unit was established within the Housing Executive. They developed the empty homes website where members of the public can report an empty home and a comprehensive mapping exercise showing where the empty properties were by Council area against the housing need in that area. A Matching Service similar to the "Matchmakers Scheme" in England was launched in September 2015. The Matching Service allows prospective buyers to view potential properties with a view to purchasing.

The Department has also worked with Clanmil and Apex Housing Associations. Clanmil has received £9.2m FTC loan funding, to bring 153 empty homes back into use within two years. Apex funding of £4.7m was also loan funding from Get Britain building, with a target of 153 homes over the same period. Both are on track to achieve their target.

One of the major challenges is tracing the owners of empty homes. The Housing Amendment Bill which received Royal Assent in May 2016 permits Land and Property Services (LPS) to share information with this Department on empty homes and data sharing protocols are currently being drawn up between both Departments.

Whilst steady progress has been made on the Empty Homes Strategy, the Department is due to commence work on revisiting the strategy with the emphasis on examining various options to progress the strategy, taking into account good practise in other jurisdictions.

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister for Communities what commitment he can give that there will be a stand-alone Anti Poverty Strategy.
(AQW 2283/16-21)

Mr Givan: My Department is developing a new Social Strategy as part of our approach to the Programme for Government. This Strategy will be developed to meet the requirements of Section 28e of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) for an Executive Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy. Subject to Executive agreement, I would expect it to be published for consultation in the autumn.

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister for Communities to outline a timeline for the implementation of the Sexual Orientation Strategy.
(AQW 2284/16-21)

Mr Givan: The good relations strategy, Together: Building a United Community, gives a commitment to publishing a Sexual Orientation strategy. The Stormont House Agreement and the Fresh Start document both state that the Together: Building a United Community will be implemented in full.

The Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21, which included 14 outcomes supported by 42 indicators for change. Included within the outcomes are references to 'a more equal society' and 'a shared society that respects diversity'. These are very high level outcomes that we need to develop supporting actions to deliver against. Detailed work has started with the launch of the Framework for public consultation and I would welcome the views of everyone as part of that consultation process.

Mr Allen asked the Minister for Communities what measures would need to be taken to allow the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to borrow money; and (i) whether; and (ii) when, he intends to take these measures.

(AQW 2311/16-21)

Mr Givan: Having established the future investment requirement of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Social Housing Reform Programme in my Department is currently identifying and assessing the options for how that need might be met.

The borrowing capability of options is a significant part of this work which it is anticipated will be completed and available for my consideration late in the summer of this year.

Department of Education

Mr K Buchanan asked the Minister of Education whether positive educational achievement reduces or removes the requirement for statement in a child with physical and mental health issues.

(AQW 1537/16-21)

Mr Weir (The Minister of Education): Positive educational achievement may remove the need for the statement however in many cases positive educational achievement is as a result of the suitable provision named on the statement removing barriers to learning.

Therefore each case will always be considered on an individual basis and consideration given to the views of all stakeholders and re-assessments carried out. Parents must be consulted in cases where the Education Authority (EA) is considering removing a statement or indeed amending the provision named in the statement. If a parent is not in agreement with the EA they can challenge the decision through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. All parents in these circumstances would be advised of this opportunity.

Mr K Buchanan asked the Minister of Education whether statementing for children relates to both physical and mental health issues.

(AQW 1538/16-21)

Mr Weir: Statements are provided for children and young people where the assessment process identifies barriers to learning whether this is for physical or mental health reasons and where additional resources are required that could not otherwise be made available in the absence of a statement.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of schools, broken down by sector, where the provision of learning has been deemed by the Education and Training Inspectorate to be below satisfactory for (i) 2013-14; (ii) 2014-15; and (iii) 2015-16

(AQW 1546/16-21)

Mr Weir: Complete inspection data is currently not available for the 2015/16 Academic Year. The number of schools, broken down by sector, where the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has reported the provision of learning as being below satisfactory in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 Academic Years was as follows:

2013/14 Academic Year

Sector	Number of Schools
Controlled	4
Maintained	Nil
Integrated	Nil
Irish Medium	Nil
Voluntary Grammar	Nil
Special	Nil

2014/15 Academic Year

Sector	Number of Schools
Controlled	Nil
Maintained	2
Integrated	Nil
Irish Medium	Nil
Voluntary Grammar	Nil
Special	1

The ETI applies a Proportionate Risk Based model of inspection and cohorts inspected in each year are not directly comparable.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail the number and percentage of schools, broken down by sector, where a majority of school leavers entitled to free school meals did not achieve at least 5 GCSEs at grades A-C, including English and Maths, in 2014-15.

(AQW 1547/16-21)

Mr Weir: The requested information is contained in the table below, data has been provided for year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals as school leavers information is not reported at school level:-

Number and percentage of schools, broken down by sector, where a majority (more than 50%) of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals did not achieve at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (inc equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths, in 2014/15

Sector	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
Controlled/Controlled Integrated	43	64.2%
Voluntary	0	0.0%
Catholic/Other Maintained	46	70.8%
Grant Maintained Integrated	12	80.0%
Total	101	51.8%

Source: Summary of Annual Examination Results, 2014/15

Excludes special and independent schools.

The overall percentage of year 12 pupils who are entitled to free school meals and who did not achieve at least 5 GCSEs (including equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths in 2014/15 was 54.4%. This equates to 51.8% (101) of schools where a majority (over 50%) of year 12 pupils did not achieve at least 5 GCSEs (including equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of staff that took severance pay within (a) his Department; and (b) the Education Authority; and (ii) the value of each award broken down for 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16. **(AQW 1548/16-21)**

Mr Weir:

- (i) the number of staff that took severance pay within (a) the Department of Education ; and (ii) the value of each award broken down for 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16 is detailed below:

(a) Department Staff

- (i) Under the terms of the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme a total of 98 DE staff, including 7 staff on a career break, received compensation lump sum payments in 2015-16. No staff left the Department under voluntary exit in the 2013-14 or 2014-15 years.
- (ii) The value of each compensation lump sum paid under the 2015-16 NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme is broken down in the following table:

Severance Compensation Payment	Financial Year 2015-16
Up to £25k	34
£25k - £50k	45
£50k - £75k	12

Severance Compensation Payment	Financial Year 2015-16
Over £75k	7
Total	98

(b) **Education Authority Staff**

- (i) The number of staff that took severance pay within (b) the Education Authority; and
- (ii) the value of each award broken down for 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16 is set out in the table below:

Severance Compensation Payment ¹	Financial Year		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Up to £25k	12	0	51
£25k - £50k	16	0	73
£50k - £75k	2	0	31
Over £75k	5	0	50
Totals	35	0	205

- 1 This figure is reflective of the severance payment awarded to the employee and does not include other associated severance costs such as pension actuarial costs.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of teaching staff; and (ii) school-based non-teaching staff that took severance pay; and the value of each award broken down for 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16.

(AQW 1549/16-21)

Mr Weir:

- (i) The number of teaching staff that took severance pay; and the value of each award broken down for 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16 is detailed below:

Total Cost of Severance	Financial Year		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Up to £25k	Breakdown not available	7	30
£25k - £50k	Breakdown not available	64	110
£50k - £75k	Breakdown not available	19	50
£75 and over	Breakdown not available	1	5
Total	292	91	195

- (ii) The number of school-based non-teaching staff that took severance pay; and the value of each award broken down for 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16 is detailed below:

Total Cost of Severance ¹	Financial Year		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Up to £25k	251	187	181 ²
£25k - £50k	20	9	21
£50k - £75k	2	2	4
£75 and over	0	0	0
Totals	273	198	206

- 1 These figures are reflective of the severance payment awarded to the employee and do not include other associated severance costs such as pension actuarial costs.

- 2 This figure includes a total of 9 catering and cleaning staff who, whilst school based, are employed by the Direct Services in EA.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Education to list the volunteer and community groups that received funding from his Department, or legacy Department, in each of the last three years, including the amount given each year.
(AQW 1644/16-21)

Mr Weir: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to outline when an external painting scheme was last provided to enhance the exterior of school buildings.
(AQW 1684/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority (EA) is responsible for maintenance of controlled and maintained schools. The EA does not carry out routine or cyclical external decoration by way of a planned programme. Each building is considered on its own merits and appropriate investment is targeted towards the most urgent work, in line with the available budget.

Maintenance of Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated schools is the direct responsibility of the schools themselves, with the cost being met from within the school's own budget. It will therefore be for the schools to plan their maintenance activities, in line with their budget.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education whether he plans to ensure that departmental budgets will be finalised earlier so that schools and other agencies will be provided their budgets in early January, rather than close to the new financial year.
(AQW 1688/16-21)

Mr Weir: My intention is that in future financial years, I will provide schools and other arms length bodies with their final budgets as early as possible. However, this can only be done after the NI Executive has finalised and agreed the overall NI budget allocation.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future, that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department of Education.
(AQW 1710/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department's ability to access EU funding is directly linked to the applicability of EU funding streams to the core business of the Department.

My Department has focused on maximising the support available from the EU's Erasmus+ programme which was launched on 1 January 2014 for a seven year period. The British Council in partnership with Ecorys, is the National Agency responsible for delivering the EU's Erasmus+ programme.

The Peace IV programme was launched on 22 January 2016 and covers the period up to 2020 (with eligibility until 31 Dec 2023), the total funding is €35.3m for shared education (€30m EU funding through the European Regional development Fund (ERDF) plus €5.3m match funding provided from central funds); the application process for programme delivery bodies is currently in progress and successful applicants will be notified by January 2017.

Until a withdrawal agreement has been negotiated and we know the details, it is too early to comment on future funding.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of teachers that have applied for early retirement during the current calendar year; and when a decision will be made.
(AQW 1716/16-21)

Mr Weir: Teachers who have reached Normal Pension Age² can apply to retire early, on appropriate terms, at any point in the year. To date, the Department has processed 129 applications for early retirement in the current calendar year.

Additionally, the Department of Education has led a Strategic Cost Based Teaching Reduction Programme over the last number of years. The overall aim of the Programme is to help schools reduce their cost base, through reduction in their Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) teaching numbers. However, this Programme is a redundancy scheme, not an early retirement scheme.

To date, the Department has received and approved 130 applications for teacher redundancy. Employers have been advised.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the amount of funding his Department facilitated from European funding streams during each of the last five years; and (ii) how many students have participated in European funded programmes in each of the last five years; and (iii) what financial plans his Department has put in place to mitigate any loss of income as a result of the vote to leave the EU.
(AQW 1740/16-21)

2 Normal Pension Age (NPA) is 60 for those members who joined the NITPS on or before 31 March 2007 and have a date of birth of 1 April 1962 or before, and 65 for those members who joined between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2015 and have a date of birth of 1 April 1957 or before.

Mr Weir: My Department's ability to access EU funding is directly linked to the applicability of EU funding streams to the core business of the Department.

Based on information available within my Department the table below details the funding received in the last 5 years from the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in NI and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II) and the NI Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (BSP) from 2000-2006.

Contribution from EU - DE acting as principal for EU*

Financial Year	£000
2011-12	5,594
2012-13	1,976
2013-14	0
2014/15	0
2015/16	0

* The amounts shown all relate to match funding.

The programmes funded through Peace II and BSP ended more than five years ago and my Department does not hold numbers of students who participated. Although income has been received in the last 5 years, this is due to the claims process and subsequent timing of income.

My Department has focused on maximising the support available from the EU's Comenius and Youth in Action Programmes which ended on 31 December 2013 and the EU's Erasmus+ programme which was launched on 1 January 2014.

The British Council was the National Agency for the Comenius and Youth in Action programmes and the British Council in partnership with Ecorys, is the National Agency responsible for delivering the EU's Erasmus+ programme. The education service here has been able to benefit from the following amounts drawn down by the National Agency in each of the last available 5 financial years:

Financial Year**	Drawdown
2010/11	£1.4m
2011/12	£1.2m
2012/13	£1.6m
2013/14*	£2.2m
2014/15*	£1.8m

* Erasmus+ drawdown for Year 3 (2013/14) and 4 (2014/15) is provisional.

** Erasmus+ drawdown for 2015/16 is not yet available.

My Department does not hold details of the number of students who have participated in these EU programmes although statistics and results for the Comenius, Youth in Action and Erasmus+ programmes are available at:

- Comenius Programme - <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/statistics-and-results-for-comenius>
- Youth in Action Programme - <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/statistics-and-results-from-youth-in-action>
- Erasmus+ Programme - <https://erasmusplus.org.uk/funding-results>

Until a withdrawal plan has been negotiated and we know the details, it is too early to comment on financial plans to mitigate any loss of income as a result of the vote to leave the EU.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the projects (a) in progress; and (b) scheduled for the future in Fermanagh and South Tyrone by his Department, that have received EU funding or are scheduled to receive EU funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Executive Office.

(AQW 1742/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department's ability to access EU funding is directly linked to the applicability of EU funding streams to the core business of the Department.

My Department has focused on maximising the support available from the EU's Erasmus+ programme which was launched on 1 January 2014 for a seven year period. The British Council in partnership with Ecorys, is the National Agency responsible for delivering the EU's Erasmus+ programme.

The Peace IV programme was launched on 22 January 2016 and covers the period up to 2020 (with eligibility until 31 Dec 2023), the total funding is €35.3m for shared education (€30m EU funding through the European Regional development Fund

(ERDF) plus €5.3m match funding provided from central funds); the application process for programme delivery bodies is currently in progress and successful applicants will be notified by January 2017.

Until a withdrawal agreement has been negotiated and we know the details, it is too early to comment on future funding.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future in East Derry that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department of Education.

(AQW 1768/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department's ability to access EU funding is directly linked to the applicability of EU funding streams to the core business of the Department.

My Department has focused on maximising the support available from the EU's Erasmus+ programme which was launched on 1 January 2014 for a seven year period. The British Council in partnership with Ecorys, is the National Agency responsible for delivering the EU's Erasmus+ programme.

The Peace IV programme was launched on 22 January 2016 and covers the period up to 2020 (with eligibility until 31 Dec 2023), the total funding is €35.3m for shared education (€30m EU funding through the European Regional development Fund (ERDF) plus €5.3m match funding provided from central funds); the application process for programme delivery bodies is currently in progress and successful applicants will be notified by January 2017.

Until a withdrawal agreement has been negotiated and we know the details, it is too early to comment on future funding.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education why Sunflowers Early Years Playgroup in Fintona did not receive financial support from his Department's Pathway Fund in the 2016-2017 year; and to outline his Department's efforts to offer advice and support to Sunflowers Early Years Playgroup for the future.

(AQW 1789/16-21)

Mr Weir: Sunflower Early Years Playgroup was a recipient of the former DE Early Years Fund.

Groups in receipt of the Early Years Fund were advised by DE in July 2015 that this funding would end on 31st March 2016 and that the new Pathway Fund would be introduced from 1st April 2016. They were informed that the Fund would be open to all providers or facilitators of registered early years education and learning services focused on children aged 0-4 and not just the groups that had received support from the Early Years Fund.

Sunflower Playgroup applied to the Pathway Fund as one of 286 applicants. Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children (EYO), which administers the Fund under contract to DE, evaluated applications against the eight published Fund criteria. The Playgroup's application did not demonstrate sufficiently high need when evaluated against the Fund's published criteria, and were notified accordingly by EYO.

As Fund administrator, EYO has liaised directly with the group to provide both feedback on their application and how it could be enhanced going forward; and information on alternative sources of funding. EYO is available to provide such guidance, to groups that were not awarded Pathway funding, throughout the funding period.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education what benefits accrue to a school when it is categorised as an Extended School; and whether his Department will consider the merits of taking into account the number of pupils entitled to Free School Meals when determining whether or not to include a particular school in the Extended Schools initiative.

(AQW 1790/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Extended Schools (ES) programme is targeted at schools serving the most disadvantaged communities.

ES resources are made available to support those schools which meet set eligibility criteria, currently enabling almost 550 schools to provide a wide range of interventions and additional learning support activities outside of the traditional school day.

The current eligibility criteria for the 2016-17 ES programme is:-

- 51% or more of pupils drawn from a Neighbourhood Renewal Area or the 30% most disadvantaged wards/super output areas using both the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure and the Education Domain; and/or
- 37% or more of pupils with a Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME). In the case of Nursery Schools, 37% or more of pupils with a FSME or parent/s in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education when was the last review of his Department's arms-length bodies; and whether he is planning a new review.

(AQW 1839/16-21)

Mr Weir: Reviews of the governance and organisational structures of Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education were carried out in 2014. A similar review was also carried out in relation to the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools in 2015. On 1 April 2015, the 5 Education and Library Boards and their Staff Commission were

replaced by the Education Authority (EA), although a review of the EA is unlikely to be carried out before 2020. There are no current specific plans to review other arm's length bodies, but this a matter I will keep under review.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1327/16-21, to detail how the catchment areas are determined for Sure Start projects.

(AQW 1938/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Sure Start Programme is a targeted service which has a distinct geographical remit, defined by ward boundaries.

Sure Start was initially delivered in the 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. A recent expansion initiative to extend the programme to the 25% most deprived areas, as defined by the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, is expected to complete during 2016/17.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Education (i) whether it was a Ministerially approved decision to cut funding for the nurture unit in Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin and Scoil An Droichid; (ii) to detail the educational sectors in which the nurture pilot has been, and is being, run; (iii) to outline the reasons for the decision; and (iv) whether he will reverse this decision.

(AQW 1939/16-21)

Mr Weir: Although the former Education Minister had decided on 15 March 2016 to introduce a new one year nurture group pilot for schools in the Irish Medium sector from September 2016, funding could not be secured at that time, nor has funding become available in 2016-17. Funding was therefore not cut, but not available in the first place.

Funding is currently being provided to thirty nurture groups, to sustain existing nurture group provision. Fifteen nurture groups are located in Controlled schools, and fifteen are within the Maintained sector.

The 2016-17 budget position for Education is extremely challenging and unfortunately I am unable to provide funding for this pilot at this time.

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Education whether a pilot nurture group in Scoil An Droichid and Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin was included in his Department's bid or input into the June Monitoring Round; and if so, was it successful.

(AQW 1962/16-21)

Mr Weir: I think it is important to set out the position.

Funding for a pilot nurture group in the two schools was not withdrawn, as the funding had not been confirmed.

The former Education Minister had decided to bring forward a one year nurture group pilot for schools in the Irish Medium sector. It was made clear that the commencement of the pilot remained contingent upon securing funding.

As explained by the Finance Minister to the Assembly, on Tuesday 14 June 2016, we are in a new regime regarding Monitoring rounds and I am not going to comment on any individual bids or easements that may, or may not, have been made on behalf of my Department in the 2016-17 June Monitoring round.

I do welcome the additional Resource funding, as set out below, to my Department's opening 2016-17 Resource baseline:

- The £20m Funding Commitment has now been addressed;
- Special education Needs £5m; and
- Schools Surplus drawdown £5m.

The 2016-17 budget position for Education is extremely challenging and unfortunately, I am unable to provide funding for this pilot at this time.

I would encourage the schools to maximise the training provided and explore how best to develop and implement a whole school nurturing approach, to the benefit of all pupils attending the schools.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education in relation to a parent wishing to register a child for Primary 1 enrolment in a particular school nearest to what will be their address at the time of commencing Primary 1 (i) to outline the correct procedure in advance of the stating of address, specifically whether this should be the address at time of registration or the pending address at the proposed time of Primary 1 commencement; (ii) whether there is a policy in place ensuring that school Principals follow the correct procedure on the issue of stating current or pending addresses; and (iii) to provide or place a copy of same in the Assembly Library,

(AQW 1964/16-21)

Mr Weir: The relevant legislation (Article 16 (4) (b) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997), states that, in relation to admissions criteria, a Board of Governors of a school must draw up criteria which "shall provide for all children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school to be selected for admission to the school before any child, not so resident, may be selected for admission". My Department interprets the term 'at the time of their proposed admission' to equate to the point at which an application is made to a school (i.e. the point at which admission is 'proposed').

My Department also takes the view that the same principle should apply to children moving address within Northern Ireland.

During the application processes, a date is set up to which changes in exceptional circumstances (such as a house move) will be accepted. For the 2016 primary admissions process, this date was 6 April.

All Boards of Governors have a duty to verify qualifying information contained within applications to their schools if, at the point of applying the admissions criteria, it has general knowledge or belief of a problem with false information within applications. Use of the address at which the child resides at the point of application enables Boards of Governors to fulfill this duty more effectively.

This advice is not currently captured within guidance on the operation of school admissions processes, however my Department will consider how this can be included in future.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Education to outline any changes to children's school bus services within the Western Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 1974/16-21)

Mr Weir: School transport assistance is an operational matter for the Education Authority and delivered in accordance with the Department of Education transport policy. I understand that arrangements for school transport assistance available to eligible pupils are currently being finalised by the Authority and will be communicated to parents over the coming weeks.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Education whether teachers aged 60 years and over will be eligible to retire under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme.

(AQW 1980/16-21)

Mr Weir: Those teachers aged 60 years who have not reached Normal Pension Age³ can apply to leave the teaching profession under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme. Normal Pension Age is dependent on the individual's age, date of birth and date of joining the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS).

Teachers who have reached Normal Pension Age are not eligible to retire under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme, as they can already access their pension at a time of their choosing.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Education why Fleming Fulton nursery school is closed despite shortages in special school pre-school provision.

(AQW 1981/16-21)

Mr Weir: The provision of nursery education at Fleming Fulton School is a matter for the Education Authority (EA) in the first instance.

The EA is currently reviewing nursery provision in all special schools.

The EA is also preparing an Area Plan for special schools covering the period April 2017 to March 2020 for submission to my Department by July 2016.

The Area Plan will be informed by the recommendations in the Review of Special Schools provision NI, one of which was progress towards the 3-19 provision in special schools. The Area Plan will be supplemented by an Annual Action Plan providing further detail about proposed actions to implement the Area Plan.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education to outline how the £4 million allocated to the Education Authority for Special Educational Needs provision will be used.

(AQW 1983/16-21)

Mr Weir: The additional £4million for Special Educational Needs allocated to the Education Authority will be used to address in-year pressures in the provision of Special Education Needs in both mainstream and special schools.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the cost of the KPMG review of Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (ii) whether a report of the outcome and recommendations of this review is available.

(AQW 2000/16-21)

Mr Weir: The cost of the KPMG review of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools was £27,500 plus VAT and I can confirm that a report of the outcome and recommendations of this review is held by the Department.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education to detail a gender breakdown of the number of classroom assistants for whom there was deemed insufficient opportunity to initially conduct openly advertised public recruitments, employed in the last school year across all controlled and maintained schools for which the Education Authority is the employer of non-teaching staff.

(AQW 2011/16-21)

3 Normal Pension Age (NPA) is 60 for those members who joined the NITPS on or before 31 March 2007 and have a date of birth of 1 April 1962 or before, and 65 for those members who joined between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2015 and have a date of birth of 1 April 1957 or before.

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has advised that the gender breakdown of classroom assistants employed in post without an advertised recruitment process for the period September 2015 – June 2016 is as follows:

Female	2743
Male	231
Total	2974

It should be noted that this count has not been able to isolate those staff who may have been offered temporary work as a result of being selected as reserve candidates for an advertised position, nor those who have been recruited by the school directly through Jobcentre online, nor those who may have been appointed to temporary positions from a 'standing list' drawn up following an advertisement.

The EA has confirmed that Schools are only required to advertise the position if the vacancy is for more than 6 months.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Education , pursuant to AQW 1449/16-21, to describe the process whereby transfer officers work with families to secure suitable post-primary school places for children leaving primary school.

(AQW 2025/16-21)

Mr Weir: During the admissions process for transferring from primary school to post-primary school, the Education Authority has confirmed that Transfer Officers act as follows so that parents/guardians can make informed parental choices.

Transfer Officers:

- provide information/advice regarding the admissions process either directly with a parent/guardian or through their child's primary school;
- distribute Transfer Forms, guidance on how to complete the form and key points relating to the Transfer process via the primary school for the attention of parents/guardians;
- provide information regarding the Transfer process on behalf of the Department of Education to parents/guardians through their child's primary school;
- publish the admissions criteria for schools and make available online to parents/guardians and if requested in hardcopy format. A reference booklet is also made available in primary / post-primary schools and public libraries;
- publish a list of Open Days/Evenings to parents/guardians through their child's primary school;
- provide information on the Education Authority's website for parents/guardians relating to admission to post-primary education, including information on the Transfer procedure and a search facility where parents/guardians will find admissions information on schools they may be considering;
- co-ordinate and monitor the process for transferring parental preferences to schools during the admissions process;
- publish a list of schools with vacancies online at the end of the admissions process;
- administer the appeals process and provide information to parents/guardians accordingly and
- continue to follow up parental preference with parents/guardians in the absence of a placement for 1 September and refer to the Education Authority's Education Welfare Service as applicable.

Further information on the above can be accessed via www.eani.org.uk/admissions

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Education , pursuant to AQW 1449/16-21 when parents, guardians and the 46 children will receive confirmation of offers for places at post-primary schools.

(AQW 2034/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority (EA) advises that parents/guardians of the children who have not yet secured a post-primary place will receive confirmation of placement when they nominate a school from the list of schools that still have vacancies; the list of schools is published online by the EA at www.eani.org.uk/admissions.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister of Education , pursuant to AQW 1449/16-21, what is the breakdown by constituency of the forty six Year 7 children that remain unplaced in a secondary school as of 20 June 2016.

(AQW 2035/16-21)

Mr Weir: Pursuant to AQW 1449/16-21, the Education Authority has provided the following constituency level breakdown:

Education Authority Office	Breakdown by constituency of the 46 Year 7 children that remain unplaced in a secondary school as of 20 June 2016
Armagh	3 in Fermanagh & South Tyrone 4 in Newry & South Armagh 2 in Upper Bann 4 in the Republic of Ireland

Education Authority Office	Breakdown by constituency of the 46 Year 7 children that remain unplaced in a secondary school as of 20 June 2016
Ballymena	3 in East Antrim 1 in South Antrim 1 in Mid Ulster
Belfast	6 in East Belfast 3 in North Belfast 4 in South Belfast 4 in West Belfast
Dundonald	3 in Lagan Valley 1 in North Down 2 in Belfast East 1 in Belfast West
Omagh	2 outside of Northern Ireland 1 in Tyrone West 1 in Fermanagh & South Tyrone.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the implications of the result of the EU Referendum for all aspects of his departmental portfolio; and to detail what relevant contingencies are in place as a consequence.
(AQW 2060/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department has focused on maximising the support available from the EU's Erasmus+ programme which was launched on 1 January 2014 for a seven year period.

The Peace IV programme was launched on 22 January 2016 and covers the period up to 2020 (with eligibility until 31 Dec 2023). Under the current arrangements, €35.3m is to be made available for Shared Education through the PEACE IV Programme covering Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. The €35.3m total funding comprises €30m through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) plus €5.3m government matched funding.

My Department has established a team at senior level to consider the potential implications for the department's functions, as well as identifying future challenges and opportunities. However, until such times as a withdrawal agreement from the EU is negotiated and takes effect, I will not be in a position to fully assess the implications.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education to list the trade unions involved in negotiating the Investing in the Teacher Workforce Scheme.
(AQW 2092/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme is at an advanced stage of development, in collaboration with the employers and teaching unions.

The Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC), which is comprised of the five recognised teaching unions, UTU, NAHT, INTO, ATL and NASUWT, is represented on the working group.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Education how the Investing in the Teacher Workforce Scheme will effect the number of naturally occurring teaching redundancies in future years.
(AQW 2093/16-21)

Mr Weir: There will always be a need for teaching posts to be declared redundant on an annual basis, for reasons including reorganisation of the school estate; pupil enrolments; changes to the curriculum; challenging budgets and statutory entitlement to redundancy.

The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme will run independently to the established Strategic Cost Reduction Programme for teaching redundancies, and will provide an innovative means of managing the situation in ways other than purely focussing on a whole scale reduction of teacher numbers.

However, I must clarify that staffing levels within schools are at the determination of each Board of Governors (BoG). As such, each BoG decides on the number of posts to be declared redundant by managing the redundancy process in accordance with the Redundancy Procedure for Teachers (Teachers' Negotiating Committee agreed procedure, TNC 2010/1).

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education (i) how many newcomer pupils have been registered in schools in the current academic year; (ii) what newcomer funding has been provided for these pupils; and (iii) what measures are taken to ensure schools spend this money on newcomer pupils and their needs.
(AQW 2129/16-21)

Mr Weir:

- (i) There are currently 12,568 newcomer pupils registered in schools.
- (ii) My Department provides an additional factor of £1010 per year, via the Common Funding Formula (CFF), to schools, for each pupil designated as a newcomer, that is, a pupil who does not have a language in common with the teacher in order to access the curriculum.
- (iii) I recognise that each school may have a different approach as to how best to use funding to support newcomer pupils within the school. Therefore schools must be afforded the flexibility to determine the best way of teaching language & numeracy skills to newcomers to enable them to access the curriculum. My expectation however is that schools make best use of the additional funding to support the needs of newcomers and my Department provides funding to the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) to assist schools in this regard.

Key services provided by the IDS include interpreting and translation services, a multi-lingual website for teachers and parents and provision of information, training and resources for schools. IDS has many years of experience in supporting newcomer children to make the transition into the classroom and supporting schools in relation to appropriate teaching methods.

In addition, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) considers the support provided to newcomer pupils at an individual school, as part of the overall inspection process.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) all recorded health and safety breaches in school kitchens within the North Eastern Region of the Education Authority between 2014-15 and 2015-16; and (ii) what actions were taken to remedy these breaches.

(AQW 2142/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority has advised that within its north eastern region, five health and safety breaches in school kitchens were recorded in 2014/15 and three in 2015/16. Minor accidents are recorded at unit kitchen level and data on these is not available due to summer closure.

Where an accident has been reported, managers take remedial action, depending on the individual circumstances. Appropriate risk management and remedial actions are discussed and agreed with the Health and Safety Officer.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Education to detail all voluntary and community organisations in Newry and Armagh which have received funding from his Department; broken down by year for each of the last five years.

(AQW 2159/16-21)

Mr Weir: Details of voluntary and community organisations in Newry and Armagh which have received funding directly from my Department and indirectly via the Education Authority in each of the last five years are included in the tables below:

Funded by the Department of Education

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Benburb Community Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Buttonmoon Playgroup	-	√	√	√	√
Clady Tiny Tots	√	√	√	√	√
Counselling 4 Youth	√	√	√	√	√
Dara Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Earlybird Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Familyworks	-	-	-	√	√
Forkhill pre school playgroup	-	-	√	-	-
Girlguiding Armagh, Gosford House	√	√	-	-	-
Happy Faces	-	-	-	√	-
Keady Community Playgroup	-	-	√	-	-
Kidzone Playgroup - Newry	√	√	√	√	√
Killeen Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Little Acorns Playgroup Derrynoose	√	√	√	√	√
Little People Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Little Villagers Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Loughgall Playgroup	-	-	√	-	-
Naiscoil an Chamlocha	-	-	√	-	-
Naiscoil an Chreagain	√	√	√	√	√
New Life Counselling	√	√	√	√	-
O'Fiaich Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Orana Nursery	√	√	√	√	√
Poyntzpass Community Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
St John Bosco, Newry	√	√	-	-	-
The Firs Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
The Orchard Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Tiny Tots Corner Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√

Funded by the Education Authority

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
12th Armagh Slievegullion CBSI	√	√	√	√	√
1st Annaghmore BB	√	√	√	√	-
1st Armagh Co BB	√	√	√	√	√
1st Armagh Guides	√	√	√	√	√
1st Armagh Scouts	√	√	√	√	√
1st Donaghcloney BB	√	√	√	√	√
1st Donaghmore BB Newry	√	√	√	√	√
1st Dromore Scout Group Newry	√	√	√	√	√
1st Druminnis BB	√	√	√	√	√
1st Glenanne Brownie Pack	√	√	√	√	√
1st Keady & District Scouts	√	√	√	√	√
1st Killyleagh Guides	√	√	√	√	√
1st Markethill Scout Grp	√	√	√	√	√
1st Mountnorris GG	√	√	√	√	√
1st Mountnorris Rangers	√	√	√	√	√
1st Mullaglass Brownie's	√	√	√	√	√
1st Mullaglass Rainbows	√	√	√	√	√
1st Newry Scouts	√	√	√	√	√
1st Newtownhamilton Scouts	√	√	√	√	√
1st Rathfriland GG	√	√	√	√	√
1st Rathfriland Scout Grp	√	√	-	-	√
1st R'Friland GB/BB	√	√	√	√	√
1st Tullyallan and Mountnorris Boys Brigade	√	√	√	√	√
1st and 2nd Armagh Catholic Scouts	√	√	√	√	√
2nd and 3rd Rathfriland Presbyterian Youth Fellowship	√	√	√	√	√
2nd Annalong BB	√	√	√	√	√
2nd Keady Pres YC	√	√	√	√	√

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Aghavilly YC	√	√	√	√	√
Ahorey BB	√	√	√	√	√
Ahorey GB	√	√	√	√	√
Annaghmore GFS	√	√	√	√	√
Annalong Free Pres Fellowship	√	√	√	√	√
Annalong GB	√	√	√	√	√
Annalong Yth Enterprise	√	√	√	√	√
Apple Blossom Playgroup	-	-	-	√	√
Ardaragh Young Peoples Fellowship	√	√	√	√	√
Armagh ACF Detachment	√	√	√	√	-
Armagh Baptist YC	√	√	√	√	√
Armagh City Temple	√	√	√	√	√
Armagh Elim Youth	√	√	-	-	√
Armagh FPC Youth Fellowship	-	-	-	-	√
Armagh GB	√	√	√	√	√
Armagh(Co)Guides(Gos Hse)	√	√	√	√	√
Atticall Youth Club	-	-	-	√	√
Ballyhagan YC	√	√	√	√	-
Ballyholland Development Association	-	√	-	√	-
Ballymartin Community Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√
Ballymore Duke Of Edin Ctr	√	√	√	√	√
Ballymore Parish GFS	√	√	√	√	√
Barcroft Y Comm Cent Newry	√	√	√	√	√
Barnmeen&Drumgath YC	√	√	√	√	√
Beehive Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√
Buttonmoon Pre-School	√	√	√	√	√
Cairde Teo	√	√	√	√	√
Caledon Guide Company	√	√	√	√	√
Caledon Parish Yth F/ship	√	√	√	√	√
Callan St YC	√	√	√	-	-
Carrickcruppen YC	√	√	√	√	√
Cedar Foundation	√	√	√	√	√
Charlemont&Cranagill GB	√	√	√	√	√
Christ Church Bessbrook Youth Club	-	-	√	√	√
Christchurch Kilkeel GB	√	√	√	√	√
Clady Tiny Tots	√	√	√	√	√
Clare Reformed GB	√	√	√	√	√
Clonduff Presby YC	√	√	√	√	√
Clonduff YC	√	√	√	√	-
Cloveneden Campaigners	√	√	√	√	√
Club Oige An Iuir	-	-	-	√	-

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Colaiste Ui Fhiaich	-	√	√	√	√
Collone Young Farmers	√	√	√	√	√
Dara Pre-School	√	√	√	√	√
Darkley Club House	√	√	√	-	√
Derrybeg Youth Group	-	-	-	-	√
Derrynoose YC	√	√	√	√	√
Dominician @ Early Years	√	√	√	√	√
Dorsey YC	√	√	√	√	√
Dromintee And Jonesborough Playgroup	√	√	√	-	-
Drop Inn Youth	√	√	√	√	-
Drumarg Community Group	√	√	√	-	-
Drumhillery GB	√	√	√	√	√
Druminnis Saturday Night Club	√	√	√	√	√
Earlybird Pre-School	√	√	√	√	√
Epic Youth Group	√	√	√	√	√
Forkhill Pre-School Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Greater Cloughreagh Youth Club	-	-	-	√	-
Happy Days Playgroup Newry	√	√	√	√	√
Happy Faces NI	-	-	√	√	√
Hilltown&Clonduff GB	√	√	√	√	√
Jesus Is My Saviour Youth Centre	√	√	√	√	√
Keady Community Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Kidzone Playgroup Bessbrook	√	√	√	√	√
Kilkeel AFC Detachment	√	√	-	√	-
Kilkeel Baptist Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√
Kilkeel BB	√	√	√	√	√
Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association	√	√	√	-	-
Kilkeel Presbyterian Yth Council	√	√	√	√	√
Kilkeel Sea Cadets	-	-	-	-	√
Killeen Playschool	√	√	√	√	√
Killylea Methodist YC	√	√	√	√	√
Kingdom Youth Centre	√	√	√	√	√
Kingsmill Good News Club	-	-	-	√	√
Kingsmills Presbyterian YC	√	√	√	√	√
LA Project (Lisanally & Alexander)	√	√	√	√	√
Lislea YC	√	√	√	√	√
Lisnacree YC	√	√	√	√	√
Little Acorns Playgroup Derrynoose	√	√	√	√	√
Little People Pre-School	√	√	√	√	√
Little Villagers Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Longstone Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Loughgall Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Loughgall Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√
Lower Mourne Gaelic League	-	√	-	√	√
Magnet YAC,	√	√	√	√	√
Markethill Area Youth Project (FUSE)	-	-	√	√	√
Markethill Elim Campaigners	√	√	√	√	√
Markethill Free Presbyterian Youth	√	√	√	√	√
Markethill Pres GB	√	√	√	√	√
Markethill Pres YC	√	√	√	√	√
Meigh Community Pre-School	√	√	√	√	√
Mountnorris Rainbow Guides	√	√	√	√	√
Mourne Yth Council	√	√	√	√	√
Mullabrack BB	√	√	-	-	√
Mullabrack GFS	√	√	√	√	√
Mullaglass Free Presbyterian Church	√	√	√	√	√
My Club	√	√	-	√	-
My Youth Group	-	-	√	√	√
Naiscoil An Cheide	-	-	-	-	√
Naiscoil An Chreagain	√	√	√	√	√
Naiscoil An Iuir	√	√	√	√	√
Naiscoil Chamlocha	√	√	√	√	√
Naiscoil Na Pairce Glaise	-	-	√	√	√
Naiscoil Shliabh Gcuilinn	√	√	√	√	√
Naomh Tomas CGGI Jonesboro	√	√	√	-	-
Newry Cadet Firefighters	√	√	√	√	√
Newry Shamrocks YC	-	-	-	-	√
Newry&Dist Gateway Club	√	√	√	√	√
Newtownhamilton YFC	√	√	√	√	√
O'Fiaich Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Orchard Pre-School	√	√	√	√	√
Order Of Malta, Armagh	√	√	√	√	√
Our Lady/Angels CGGI, Kilkeel	√	√	√	√	√
Poyntzpass Community Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Poyntzpass Scout Group	√	√	√	√	√
Rainbow Stop Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Rascals 'N' Ruffians Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Rathfriland 2nd Choice	-	-	√	-	-
Rathfriland YFC	√	√	√	√	√
REACT	-	-	√	√	-
Redrock BB	√	√	√	√	√
Redrock GB	√	√	√	√	√

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Redrock YC	√	√	√	√	√
Richhill BB	√	√	√	√	√
Richhill GFS	√	√	√	√	√
Richhill Pres YC	√	√	√	√	√
Riding For The Disabled (Longstone)	√	√	√	√	√
Social Partners for Recognition and Investments in New Generations	√	√	√	√	√
Salt Cellar YC Armagh	√	√	√	√	√
Sandown YC Newry	√	√	√	√	√
Sandy St&Down Rd YC Newry	√	√	√	√	√
Shelagh YC C'maglen	√	√	√	√	√
Smarteens Na Mbraithre Criostai	-	√	-	-	-
St Aidans CIB&CGB	√	√	√	√	√
St Brigids Acc Band/Yth J'Boro	√	√	√	√	√
St Brigids YC Glassdrummond	√	√	√	√	√
St Bronaghs YC Rostrevor	√	√	√	√	√
St Catherines GG Newry	√	√	√	√	-
St Columbas GFS	√	√	√	√	√
St John Bosco YC Newry	√	√	√	√	√
St Johns AmbCadets Armagh	√	√	√	√	√
St Malachys YC C'maglen	√	√	√	√	√
St Marks YC Killylea	√	√	√	√	√
St Marys YC Burren	-	-	-	-	√
St Marys YC Newry	√	√	√	√	√
St Matthews YC Richhill	√	√	√	√	√
St Oliver Plunkett, Crossmaglen	√	√	√	√	√
St Patrick's YC Keady	√	√	√	√	√
St Patrick's YC Mayobridge	√	√	√	√	√
St Peter'S Playgroup, Collegelands	√	√	√	√	√
Tandragee Dist Guide Assoc	√	√	√	√	√
Tandragee Pres Co GB	√	√	√	√	√
Tandragee Presbyterian BB	√	√	√	√	√
Tartaraghan Presbyterian Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√
Tattaraghan Pres GB	√	√	√	√	√
The Loft YC	√	√	√	√	√
The Net - Annalong	√	√	√	√	√
The Zone, Richill Presbyterian Church	√	√	√	√	√
Tiny Tots Corner Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Tullyvallen YC	√	√	√	√	√
Tynan Youth Club	√	√	√	√	√
Village Explorers	-	-	-	√	√

Community/Voluntary Group	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Vinecash YC	√	√	√	√	√
Warrenpoint Youth Choice	√	√	√	√	√
Whitecross YC	√	√	√	√	√
Windmill Playgroup	√	√	√	√	√
Woodford Every Boys/Girls Rally	√	√	√	√	√
The Y Youth Club, Markethill	√	√	√	√	√
Young Carers Project	√	√	√	√	√
Youth Challenge Fellowship	√	√	√	√	√

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education whether he will consider measures to ensure that the extra budgetary allocation made to schools, for pupils classified as newcomers, is spent on specific educational activities which give extra support for English language skills.

(AQW 2176/16-21)

Mr Weir: My expectations for newcomer pupils are no less than for any other young person.

My Department provides an additional factor of £1010 per year, via the Common Funding Formula (CFF), to schools, for each pupil designated as a newcomer, that is, a pupil who does not have a language in common with the teacher in order to access the curriculum.

I recognise that each school may have a different approach to how it best supports its newcomer pupils. Therefore schools must be afforded the flexibility to determine the best way of teaching language & numeracy skills to newcomers to enable them to access the curriculum. My expectation however is that schools make best use of the additional funding to support the needs of newcomers.

My Department also provides funding to the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS). Key services provided include interpreting and translation services, a multi-lingual website for teachers and parents and provision of information, training and resources for schools. IDS has many years of experience in supporting newcomer children to make the transition into the classroom, and supporting schools in relation to appropriate teaching methods.

In addition, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) considers the support provided to newcomer pupils at an individual school, as part of the overall inspection process.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 52351/11-16, to advise of the results of the equality screening on the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme.

(AQW 2180/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme has been developed to an advanced stage in consultation with key stakeholders, specifically the Trade Unions and Employers. Equality considerations are being carried out as part of this process, in line with statutory obligations.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 52351/11-16, whether a full Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme.

(AQW 2181/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme has been developed to an advanced stage in consultation with key stakeholders, specifically the Trade Unions and Employers. Equality considerations are being carried out as part of this process, in line with statutory obligations. The Scheme will be launched in September 2016.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what research his Department has commissioned into the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in schools; and when any such research will be published.

(AQW 2197/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Department is awaiting final delivery of research carried out on the "Post Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGB&T)".

Once the final report has been signed-off by the Project Steering Group the publication date will be considered, in line with standard departmental practice of publication of research reports.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education whether he will support the provision of defibrillators for all schools, to be used both in school and also during off-campus activities.

(AQW 2211/16-21)

Mr Weir: A defibrillator is an optional addition to first aid provision in schools and should be considered in the context of the school's first aid risk assessment. Therefore the decision of a school to acquire a defibrillator and train staff in its use is a matter for each school. I have no plans to place a requirement upon schools to have a defibrillator on site but will keep the issue under review.

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Education to detail any progress made on Recommendation 13 of the Inquiry into post Special Educational Need (SEN) Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2263/16-21)

Mr Weir: Recommendation 13 of the Inquiry into post Special Educational Need (SEN) Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland is detailed below.

"Recommendation 13: The Committee recommends that as the lead Department, on the Ministerial Sub group on transition for those with severe learning disabilities DEL should hand the Action Plan over to the Department for the Communities for the next mandate. After reporting its progress to the Bamford Monitoring Group the Minister should make a statement in Plenary to highlight what progress has been made."

This recommendation is the responsibility of the Department for Communities and/or the Department for the Economy.

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Education to detail the targets set by the public authorities currently under his remit for how social consideration can be brought forward into contracts during this Comprehensive Spending Review period.

(AQW 2270/16-21)

Mr Weir: My Department (DE) and its Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) are subject to Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy. As such, DE and its NDPBs will seek to incorporate the Buy Social Construction Model into relevant contracts throughout this Comprehensive Spending Review period. The key employment targets and relevant thresholds are 52 person weeks of paid employment to be provided for new entrant trainees for each £1m of contract value, for building contracts valued at £2m and above. More details, including model contract clauses, are available from the Central Procurement Directorate's website (<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/proposal-promoting-equality-and-sustainable-development>).

In addition, my Department is participating in collaborative contracts, in which Strategic Investment Board in conjunction with the Central Procurement Directorate is piloting the Buy Social model in services contracts. These include contracts for Cleaning, catering and ancillary services for the NICS estate; temporary workers; and postal services. My Department looks forward to the outcome of these pilots and the extent to which they will inform the wider roll-out of the Buy Social model.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education (i) to outline the current status of a Development Proposal to amalgamate three Catholic Maintained primary schools in the parish of Donaghadey; (ii) whether his Department is aware of any dissatisfaction among the community regarding the management of the process to date; and (iii) to detail the next steps in the process of working towards this amalgamation.

(AQW 2281/16-21)

Mr Weir: The Education Authority published Development Proposals (DP) 433,434,435 & 436 on 16 March 2016, proposing that Altishane, Loughash and St Patrick's Primary Schools, should close from 31 August 2016 and a new school be established from 1st September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter. The statutory two month objection period ended on 16 May 2016.

DP's 433-436 are currently under consideration and all views on these proposals will be fully reflected in the advice to me from my officials. The submission I base my decision on will be published on my Department's website as soon as the schools involved have been notified of the decisions.

Once the decisions are made it will be a matter for the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) as the managing authority to implement the decision.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education what additional support is provided in schools for pupils diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome.

(AQW 2287/16-21)

Mr Weir: The statutory responsibility for the provision of support to children with any special educational needs (SEN) rests with schools, and the Education Authority (EA). The support provided for pupils with autism, including asperger's syndrome, will be based on the individual needs of each pupil.

There is a range of educational provision to support children with SEN including autism. This includes support within mainstream schools, learning support centres, including autism specific centres, that are attached to mainstream schools and support within special school settings.

The EA's Autism Advisory Service can provide tailored support to match the individual needs of a child, including training and advice to teachers and individual interventions with pupils as well as support to parents.

In addition the Middletown Centre for Autism, funded by the Department of Education, provides free training to professional staff, including teachers and classroom assistants, who are working directly with children with autism and to parents. The Centre also provides direct support and intervention to children referred to them by the EA with more complex autism.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the adequacy of current levels of additional support provided in schools for pupils diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome.

(AQW 2288/16-21)

Mr Weir: As per my response to your AQW 2287/16-21, the member will be aware that there is a range of support available to pupils with autism, including asperger's syndrome.

The Education Authority (EA) is working to regionalise its autism services and I am content that this will enhance equity and access to these services.

The EA has undertaken a review of learning support centre provision in mainstream schools, and it proposes to enhance autism specific provision. As the EA consolidates services and enhances provision it is intended that more specific training will be provided to Key Stage 2 teachers in learning support centres to further enhance their specific skills and competencies in meeting the needs of children with autism.

Since the launch of the NI Executive Autism Strategy the Department of Education has been working closely with the EA and the Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA) to develop support and provision for children and young people with autism, including asperger's syndrome. This includes delivering training programmes for teachers, educational professionals, youth workers and parents and providing ongoing effective support for pupils with autism.

I am confident that these actions will help to ensure that children and young people with autism, including asperger's syndrome, are provided with high quality education services that evolve to meet their needs as they progress through the education system.

Department of Finance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance whether Land and Property Services can recover rates payments which are due following the incorrect application of charitable rates exemptions; and to detail the financial years in which this applies.

(AQW 207/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir (The Minister of Finance): Land & Property Services (LPS) can legally recover rates that are properly due following the incorrect allocation of a charitable exemption for up to a maximum of six years from the commencement of the rating year in which the incorrect exemption was discovered.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance to detail the grounds on which charities, whose properties are exempt from rates, sub-let offices to political parties or political representatives and maintain rates exemption on the entirety of their property.

(AQW 208/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The granting of charitable exemption from rates is legislated by Article 41 of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 and informed by considerable case law which establishes precedent. When considering the grounds for exemption the legislation directs that the property must be occupied by a charity; 'occupation' requires a sufficient level of control over the property under consideration. Also, the legislation directs that the property must be used "wholly or mainly for charitable purposes"; a certain minimal level of non charitable use is, therefore, permissible. This is a matter of scale and degree. Each situation will be individually assessed by the District Valuer within Land & Property Services who may decide to separately value a non charitable use such as political offices or other uses, depending on the physical size and characteristics, and degree of control by the occupier.

Mr Smith asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 50737/11-16, to detail the current level of Executive net debt at 31 March 2016, broken down by (i) the source of debt and; (ii) the total level of interest paid on each type of debt.

(AQW 211/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir:

- (i) The current level of Executive net debt as at 31 March 2016 totalled £2,051,605,438.

The main component of Executive debt is borrowing from the National Loans Fund. This consists of two elements:- borrowing to fund onward lending to councils, schools and the NI Housing Executive; and borrowing under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative to fund departmental capital expenditure

In addition the Executive has small amounts of residual debt relating to historic borrowing through Ulster Savings Certificates and Ulster Development Bonds. The sale of Ulster Savings Certificates ceased in 1991, with the

opportunity to reinvest in Ulster Savings Reinvestment Issue Certificates which were subsequently withdrawn in March 1997. Ulster Development Bonds were last issued in 1985 with the last claim being made during the 1995/96 financial year.

(ii) A breakdown of the source of debt is shown in Annex A.

(iii) Total interest paid is shown in Annex B.

Annex A

Analysis of Public Debt	2015-16 £000
Ulster Savings Certificates	1,650
Ulster Development Bonds	12
National Loans Fund	253,641
National Loans Fund iro RRI	1,796,302
	2,051,605

Annex B

Analysis of Interest Paid	2015-16 £000
Ulster Savings Certificates	21
National Loans Fund	20,369
National Loans Fund iro RRI	55,077
	75,467

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance whether his Department intends to introduce full rate relief for Community Amateur Sports Clubs that do not have a licensed bar.

(AQW 264/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department has recently completed a consultation to inform drafting of regulations to give effect to the policy proposals. The new legislation will be presented to the Finance Committee prior to my asking the Assembly to approve in September. Qualifying clubs will then have to apply for enhanced relief.

At the very latest this will take effect next financial year but I will be asking Land and Property Services to explore options for implementation for the remainder of this current year, bearing in mind that legally it cannot be backdated to April past.

Looking beyond that I will also be asking my officials to look at more fundamental changes that could be made to the treatment of amateur sports clubs, as part of the wider review of rating policy, to ensure reliefs are better targeted.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance for an update on the resolution of the Northern Ireland Civil Service equal pay issue affecting Northern Ireland Office / Police Service of Northern Ireland staff; and whether the departmental paper of 2014 has been discussed by the Executive.

(AQW 386/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As I stated during the Assembly debate on Monday 20 June, I have every sympathy for those staff affected by this issue.

Resolution of this issue will be difficult. As Sammy Wilson, in his capacity as Finance Minister stated in May 2013, "The arguments put forward by those lobbying on this issue do not change the fact that the position in terms of eligibility has been clear from the outset of the equal pay settlement and this has now been upheld in the County Court, which found that the settlement applied only to periods of service in the 11 NICS departments and did not apply to bodies such as the NIO and PANI/PSNI, who had lawfully received delegation for pay matters, which was still in effect during the relevant time period. No legal liability has been established upon which to base any rationale to approve payment of the settlement to PSNI staff".

In addition, any resolution would undoubtedly have to take account of the repercussive risk that other groups will demand similar treatment, as well as the serious risk of undermining the original equal pay settlement, both of which would, of course, require even more funding.

For the reasons set out above it is difficult to be positive about how to find a resolution which would satisfy those affected. However, I will fully consider the issue and make an early decision to finally settle the matter for those affected.

The paper on this issue, originally circulated by Minister Hamilton in May 2014 and re-circulated by Minister Storey in February 2016, was not considered by the previous Executive and fell at the end of that Assembly session.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance how he plans to encourage cycling on the Stormont Estate.

(AQW 445/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The publicly accessible areas of the Estate are a popular location for visitors including walkers, runners and cyclists. Families and schools regularly visit the Mo Mowlam play park and use the wider Estate for a range of recreational activities.

Cyclists are very welcome on the roads within the Estate during daylight hours, 365 days per year. Whilst no restrictions exist on the pathways, cycling in those areas can be dangerous both for cyclists and other visitors and for this reason has not been encouraged.

Covered cycle storage is provided by my Department at the following locations:

- Parliament Buildings, main visitor car park;
- Castle Buildings;
- Dundonald House (x3);
- Craigantlet Buildings; and
- Stormont Castle

Each location has the capacity to store approximately 15 bicycles, except for Dundonald House which can store 45 bicycles. A cycle rack is also available in the Mo Mowlam play park.

I have written to Sustrans to ask them how I might encourage cycling on the Estate and I would welcome all suggestions for how it can be made more attractive to visitors.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance whether he will be bringing his predecessor's proposals to resolve the NICS and PSNI civilian pay dispute to the Executive for approval.

(AQW 458/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As I stated during the Assembly debate on Monday 20 June, I have every sympathy for those staff affected by this issue.

Resolution of this issue will be difficult. As Sammy Wilson, in his capacity as Finance Minister stated in May 2013, "The arguments put forward by those lobbying on this issue do not change the fact that the position in terms of eligibility has been clear from the outset of the equal pay settlement and this has now been upheld in the County Court, which found that the settlement applied only to periods of service in the 11 NICS departments and did not apply to bodies such as the NIO and PANI/PSNI, who had lawfully received delegation for pay matters, which was still in effect during the relevant time period. No legal liability has been established upon which to base any rationale to approve payment of the settlement to PSNI staff".

In addition, any resolution would undoubtedly have to take account of the repercussive risk that other groups will demand similar treatment, as well as the serious risk of undermining the original equal pay settlement, both of which would, of course, require even more funding.

For the reasons set out above it is difficult to be positive about how to find a resolution which would satisfy those affected. However, I will fully consider the issue and make an early decision to finally settle the matter for those affected.

The paper on this issue, originally circulated by Minister Hamilton in May 2014 and re-circulated by Minister Storey in February 2016, was not considered by the previous Executive and fell at the end of that Assembly session.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance whether he will work with the Minister of Justice to resolve the issue of equal pay for PSNI, Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Office personnel.

(AQW 641/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As I stated during the Assembly debate on Monday 20 June, I have every sympathy for those staff affected by this issue.

Resolution of this issue will be difficult. As Sammy Wilson, in his capacity as Finance Minister stated in May 2013, "The arguments put forward by those lobbying on this issue do not change the fact that the position in terms of eligibility has been clear from the outset of the equal pay settlement and this has now been upheld in the County Court, which found that the settlement applied only to periods of service in the 11 NICS departments and did not apply to bodies such as the NIO and PANI/PSNI, who had lawfully received delegation for pay matters, which was still in effect during the relevant time period. No legal liability has been established upon which to base any rationale to approve payment of the settlement to PSNI staff".

In addition, any resolution would undoubtedly have to take account of the repercussive risk that other groups will demand similar treatment, as well as the serious risk of undermining the original equal pay settlement, both of which would, of course, require even more funding.

For the reasons set out above it is difficult to be positive about how to find a resolution which would satisfy those affected. However, I will fully consider the issue and make an early decision to finally settle the matter for those affected.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance whether his Department will continue with an appeal to the First Tier Tribunal in respect of the Information Commissioner's ruling that certain documentation relating to legal advice obtained for Mr Peter Robinson, following a BBC Spotlight programme in January 2010, can be released; if so, to outline the reasons for continuing and the cost.

(AQW 850/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Department lodged an appeal against the Information Commissioner's decision dated 31st March 2016 because it considered that information which the Commissioner had ruled should be released is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, the Information Commissioner has now revised his position and decided that certain of the documents which he originally ordered to be disclosed should not in fact be disclosed. Having carefully considered this development, the Department sees no need to continue with the appeal. The Tribunal has been informed of the Department's request to withdraw the appeal.

Ms S Bradley asked the Minister of Finance what level of responsibility his Department has in funding a Narrow Water bridge; and whether other Executive Departments will contribute any funding to the scheme.

(AQW 983/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Department for Infrastructure will lead on delivering this important project of which I am very supportive. I have asked my officials to work proactively with the Department for Infrastructure and other key stakeholders, such as Louth County Council and the Irish Government, on delivering the project. However, there is a need to ensure that the process is followed but in an expeditious fashion.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Finance for an update on the equal pay issue for PSNI, Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Office staff; and what he is doing to resolve this issue.

(AQW 1471/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As I stated during the Assembly debate on Monday 20 June, I have every sympathy for those staff affected by this issue.

Resolution of this issue will be difficult. As Sammy Wilson, in his capacity as Finance Minister stated in May 2013, "The arguments put forward by those lobbying on this issue do not change the fact that the position in terms of eligibility has been clear from the outset of the equal pay settlement and this has now been upheld in the County Court, which found that the settlement applied only to periods of service in the 11 NICS departments and did not apply to bodies such as the NIO and PANI/PSNI, who had lawfully received delegation for pay matters, which was still in effect during the relevant time period. No legal liability has been established upon which to base any rationale to approve payment of the settlement to PSNI staff".

In addition, any resolution would undoubtedly have to take account of the repercussive risk that other groups will demand similar treatment, as well as the serious risk of undermining the original equal pay settlement, both of which would, of course, require even more funding.

For the reasons set out above it is difficult to be positive about how to find a resolution which would satisfy those affected. However, I will fully consider the issue and make an early decision to finally settle the matter for those affected.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 429/16-21, if it is possible to access how far this convention impacts on National Asset Management Agency-related documentation within his Department.

(AQW 1637/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Department had already provided all NAMA related papers to the then Finance and Personnel Committee, of which I was a member, to assist with its enquiry during the last Assembly term.

Given the Finance Committee's ongoing consideration of this matter and the significant public interest, I instructed my officials to review the previously redacted information in those papers to ascertain whether further information could be released. And as you will be aware, additional unredacted papers were recently provided to the Committee. Given the largely factual nature of that information, its release was in no way impacted or limited by the convention.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to detail what rate relief will be available to premises used in or associated with pigeon racing following the enactment of all the provisions of the Rates (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

(AQW 1689/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As Finance Minister I cannot confer rate relief on anyone. Aside from the rare special cases that manage to secure hardship rate relief, LPS has no discretion in exercising its statutory role. Any reliefs that are awarded must be done so in accordance with the legislation. The mere listing of pigeon clubs within the regulations to be made under Article 31 of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 will not provide blanket rate relief to premises occupied by properly constituted pigeon clubs. When the legislation is commenced individual Pigeon Clubs will have to apply to LPS for relief.

This is because the other requirements of the legislation must be met and that includes the 'sole use' and 'physical effort' provisos. It is possible these can be satisfied in some instances but every case must be assessed on its own merits by LPS. These matters were explained in my Department's recent consultation document, a copy of which was provided on 4 March.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to outline why he will not confer rate relief on premises used for activities associated with pigeon racing even though pigeon racing will feature as an addition to the list in rating legislation.

(AQW 1691/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: As Finance Minister I cannot confer rate relief on anyone. Aside from the rare special cases that manage to secure hardship rate relief, LPS has no discretion in exercising its statutory role. Any reliefs that are awarded must be done so in accordance with the legislation. The mere listing of pigeon clubs within the regulations to be made under Article 31 of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 will not provide blanket rate relief to premises occupied by properly constituted pigeon clubs. When the legislation is commenced individual Pigeon Clubs will have to apply to LPS for relief.

This is because the other requirements of the legislation must be met and that includes the 'sole use' and 'physical effort' provisos. It is possible these can be satisfied in some instances but every case must be assessed on its own merits by LPS. These matters were explained in my Department's recent consultation document, a copy of which was provided on 4 March.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to detail how many consultations his Department has issued in the last twelve months that refer to Assembly votes being unexpectedly passed by majority vote in the Assembly.

(AQW 1692/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department is aware of one consultation document that made such a reference. That was the March 2016 document entitled "DFP Consultation - Enhanced Sport and Recreation Rate Relief".

The reference to "unexpected" arises from the fact that the Assembly voted in favour of the amendment despite the then Finance Minister explaining that the provision was legislatively and operationally defective in relation to its stated aims.

You should note, however, that the consultation paper also expressly stated that, "the Department will ensure that pigeon racing is placed on future prescribed lists, as this was the will of the devolved Assembly as reflected in the primary legislation."

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance to outline when each provisions of the Rates (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 will be commenced.

(AQW 1693/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The substantive provisions within the Rates (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 commence in accordance with section 6 of that Act, following the making of a commencement order. This was stated on the face of the Assembly Bill.

A commencement order will be made once I have made final decisions on the findings of the consultation exercise.

As there is a statutory duty for my Department to make legislation under the revised powers inserted by section 1 of the Act, commencement will take place during September 2016 at the latest.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance (i) why the Department of Finance and Personnel held a meeting with Neil Adair on 2 December 2015; (ii) who requested this meeting; and (iii) who was in attendance.

(AQW 1791/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: In responding to the previous Finance and Personnel Committee's request for all Departmental papers relating to NAMA and the sale of its northern portfolio, officials sought to engage with a number of individuals, including Mr Adair, to ascertain their views about sharing personal information contained in those papers with the Committee. As part of that process, officials met with Mr Adair to outline the information contained in Departmental documents relevant to him. That meeting took place on 2 December 2015 and was attended by Mr Adair, the Deputy Director of Strategic Policy Division and one other departmental official from the same Division.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance, pursuant to AQW 1208/16-21, to detail, for each Department, (i) how many Special Advisers have been appointed; (ii) of those appointed how many are new appointments; (iii) whether the new appointments are compliant with current guidelines; (iv) the salary that was agreed; (v) how many of the Special Advisers were given an increased salary on re-appointment; (vi) how many Special Advisers were made redundant following the 2016 election; and (vii) how much redundancy was paid.

(AQW 1917/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: My Department does not hold the information regarding Special Advisor appointments for all departments. The Member should contact each department individually in order to gain the information he seeks.

I provided the information requested for DoF in my answer to AQW 1208/16-21.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance to outline the criteria used by each Department to decide who qualified for the Voluntary Exit Scheme.

(AQW 1958/16-21)

Mr Ó Muilleoir: The Voluntary Exit Scheme was open to nearly all permanent NICS staff below Permanent Secretary (and analogous) grades. The eligibility requirements for the Scheme are set out in the Scheme Information booklet which can be accessed on the Scheme website at http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/working-in-the-nics/nics_voluntary_exit_scheme.htm

Department of Health

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health to detail the reason for the delay in enhancing the diagnostic clinic in Belfast.
(AQW 1195/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Health): Plans for the establishment of a specialist Children's Heart Centre have been developed within the context of an overall business case and implementation plan for establishing the All-island Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Network, which was received by my Department earlier this year. As the Children's Heart Centre is an integral part of the Network it was necessary to progress these investment proposals as one. My Department has been working closely with the Belfast Trust to finalise these plans. I plan to make an announcement about the way forward for the CHD Network in the coming weeks, setting out the next steps for the development of the overall all-island CHD Network including the Children's Heart Centre in Belfast.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health for an update on the Cancer Focus NI campaign.
(AQW 1196/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has established a clinically-led task and finish group to reform the Individual Funding Request following public consultation on proposals to improve access to all specialist drugs, including cancer drugs, and introduce greater transparency in the decision making process. The group will report to me this summer and I aim to introduce the new arrangements during 2016/17 on a phased basis subject to available funding.

Mr Poots asked the Minister of Health for an update on surgery being provided by podiatrists.
(AQW 1234/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department remains committed to the establishment of a podiatric surgical service and the Health and Social Care Board has developed a draft service specification for this service. However, my Department is currently unable to introduce the service due to the current budget constraints and other high priority service developments requiring the limited funds available for new investment.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health for an update on the establishment a podiatric surgery regional service.
(AQW 1244/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department remains committed to the establishment of a podiatric surgical service and the Health and Social Care Board has developed a draft service specification for this service. However, my Department is currently unable to introduce the service due to the current budget constraints and other high priority service developments requiring the limited funds available for new investment.

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health , pursuant to AQW 623/16-21, on what date the 2016 advice was given to her Department.
(AQW 1259/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The report referred to in AQW 623/16-21 was sent to my Department on 27 April 2016 by the secretariat of the expert group on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO).

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health , pursuant to AQW 623/16-21, to detail how and by whom, within or on behalf of the Department, the 2016 advice referred to was interrogated.
(AQW 1260/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The report referred to in AQW 623/16-21 was sent to my Department on 27 April 2016 by the secretariat of the expert group on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO). The report was prepared by the staff of the NHSBT/PHE Epidemiology Unit.

The URL for the report is:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497060/NHSBT_PHE_Epidemiology_Unit_Annual_Review_2014.pdf

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health whether she is aware of the current funding difficulties faced by the Northlands Addiction Unit, Derry; and to outline what action she proposes to ensure the survival of the centre.
(AQW 1330/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I visited the Northlands Centre on 30 June 2016 and I personally acknowledged the good work that Northlands has undertaken over many years in the field of alcohol and drug misuse. My Department provides core grant funding to Northlands to support the achievement of its aims around the development and delivery of substance misuse policy and strategy, and addressing the harm related to alcohol and drug misuse.

My Department is currently in the process of developing a new HSC Innovation Scheme, the aim of which is to promote innovation in the delivery of health and social care services by voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. It is intended that the new Scheme will open for applications during the 2016/17 financial year. The Scheme will be open to any VCSE organisation. Consultation on scheme proposals ended recently. Proposals were developed on a co-design basis, involving VCSE organisations across the region. All current core grant arrangements in are being phased out over a 3-year period, ending in 2018/19.

In the 2014/15 financial year, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) invested £368,000 on behalf of the Western and Northern Trusts, for the provision of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Treatment Services. The HSCB has since negotiated an increase in bed rates with the Northlands Centre. I understand there is no plan to reduce this funding from the Commissioner. At our meeting, I encouraged Northlands to continue to engage with the HSCB in this regard.

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Health for an update on the Northern Ireland Rare Diseases Implementation Plan, and for her assessment of whether the plan would be implemented should the UK vote to leave the EU.
(AQW 1418/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is committed to the full implementation of the Rare Diseases Implementation Plan subject to available resources. We have progressed one of the priority actions in the Plan to establish a Genomics Medicine Centre (GMC) based in the Belfast Trust. Funding has been secured for the GMC and contractual arrangements are being finalised with Genomics England Limited to allow local participation in the 100,000 Genomes Project to commence in autumn this year. Funding is also in place to progress the remaining priority actions from the Plan, including scoping a communications review, training needs analysis and a local register for rare diseases.

The Implementation Plan contains an additional theme, not contained in the Plans produced by the Health Authorities in Britain, which recognises the benefits of collaboration on rare diseases throughout Ireland and commits my Department to working with the Department of Health in the South to achieve this. I am determined to deliver this commitment alongside all beneficial All-Ireland approaches to health and social care by addressing the uncertainties and challenges that now exist following the referendum.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health to outline how her Department will address recent findings that one in five of students self harm due to feelings of anxiety, loneliness and addiction.
(AQW 1422/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Intervention to prevent and reduce self harming is delivered through the Self Harm Intervention Programme (SHIP) which offers counselling services, in line with NICE guidance, to those who self harm. SHIP is provided by the community and voluntary sector operating in partnership with statutory mental health services. It has been available to adults since Oct 2015. Plans are in place to expand the service to those aged 15 to 17 starting in the Southern Trust area in coming weeks, with other Trust areas to follow shortly thereafter.

The Public Health Agency and Health and Social Care Trusts also deliver a range of suicide prevention services which are relevant to the needs of young people who self harm or who are at risk of self harming. This includes counselling, awareness-raising, training, the Lifeline service, and the "Card Before You Leave" appointments system for patients who present as a result of self injury. Drug and Alcohol services are also relevant and are available in each Trust area.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Health to detail how the additional £72million allocated to her Department in the June Monitoring Round will be spent.
(AQW 1458/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The additional revenue resources of £67m will help address a range of front line pressures right across the health and social care sector, including unscheduled care, improving patient flow through our hospitals and additional social care provision to help meet increasing demands.

The additional capital funding of £5m will support the ICT capital investment programme, including projects such as providing system support for the hearing screening programme for new born babies and the Ambulance Service 999 response system.

Mr Middleton asked the Minister of Health to outline the timeline for the new protect life strategy publication; and when the consultation is expected to close.
(AQW 1460/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Work is ongoing to finalise the Protect Life 2 Strategy and to issue the draft document for eight weeks public consultation by the end of the summer. The new Strategy will issue in early 2017.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health what is the life expectancy of a new born baby in each constituency; and what measures are being taken by her Department to overcome health inequalities which impact on people in West Tyrone. (AQW 1477/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The latest available figures for Life Expectancy at Birth by Constituency, which were derived using data for the three year period 2011 to 2013, are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Period Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex and Constituency, 2011-2013

Constituency	Number of years	
	Male	Female
Belfast East	77.5	81.5
Belfast North	74.9	80.7
Belfast South	78.4	82.4
Belfast West	73.9	79.8
East Antrim	78.7	82.6
East Derry	78.8	82.5
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	78.2	83.2
Foyle	76.5	80.7
Lagan Valley	79.5	83.5
Mid Ulster	79.3	83.8
Newry and Armagh	78.0	81.9
North Antrim	78.6	83.4
North Down	79.3	82.7
South Antrim	78.7	82.7
South Down	79.1	83.4
Strangford	79.5	83.0
Upper Bann	78.2	82.8
West Tyrone	78.8	83.3
Total	78.1	82.4

Source: Demography Methodology Branch, NISRA

Health inequalities are determined by a range of factors, many of which are outside the control of the health service. Specifically within the West Tyrone area, work is underway through a range of PHA and Western HSC Trust programmes as well extensive cross-sectoral collaboration with DfC, DAERA, Local Government and others. Examples include:

- Early Intervention Support Services and Family Support Hubs
- Parenting programmes such as Parenting Ur Teen and Strengthening Families
- Alcohol and Drugs services such as Voices - Hidden Harm and
- CAMHS Alcohol Service
- Western Home Environmental Assessment Project
- WHSCT Health and Well-being - signposting service for older people
- Mental Health and Wellbeing programmes such as Mental Health Training & Support, Lifeskills Programme and Bereavement support
- Obesity initiatives such as targeted nutrition and physical activity referral
- Fuel Poverty projects
- Regional Initiative to increase access to services, grants and benefits in rural areas (MARA).
- Projects in communities, including through Neighbourhood Renewal.

My department's agencies will continue to collaborate with other agencies and sectors including through the community planning process to target the health inequalities experienced by disadvantaged and hard to reach communities.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 466/16-21, (i) whether details of the missing separated persons have been reported as missing persons; (ii) whether any have since been located; and (iii) given their adult status, who has responsibility for their welfare.

(AQW 1494/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Our records confirm that information on 24 of the 26 missing children was reported to the PSNI, and, in some cases, other bodies such as the [then] Border Agency. In two cases, we have no record of a report to the PSNI. However, I can confirm that one of the two young people was in contact with HSC Trust staff throughout the period of absence and both were located.
- (ii) Six of the people who went missing have since been located.
- (iii) Individuals, who have been treated as separated children and are later assessed to be adults, are directed to appropriate services on the basis of need.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health the processes in place to extend specialist services for people with ME; and how the Health and Social Care Board will ensure effective engagement with people with ME and charities that represent them.

(AQW 1503/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) plans, subject to the identification of additional resources, to: extend the specialist healthcare currently provided for people diagnosed with ME in the Belfast and Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, to all HSC Trusts; and, appoint a regional Consultant lead to provide specialist advice and guidance to GPs and other staff delivering Trust services to ME patients.

The HSCB has engagement processes in place for service users and their representatives, including ME charities, and ensures involvement of stakeholders at important milestones.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health to detail the current waiting times for counselling services, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1530/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The term "counselling" covers a wide spectrum of services provided in a variety of settings mainly by the voluntary and community sectors.

Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts offer a number of interventions to individuals through their provision of mental health services. Therapeutic counselling may be viewed as an appropriate intervention based on the clinical needs of the individual.

The tables overleaf detail the waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Adult Mental Health Services and Psychological Therapies Services at 31 May 2016 by HSC Trust.

Table 1 – Waiting Times for CAMHS at 31 May 2016

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (Weeks)				Total
	0 - 3	>3 - 6	> 6 - 9	>9	
Belfast	201	109	73	12	395
Northern	58	55	19	0	132
South Eastern	0	0	0	0	0
Southern	109	70	32	0	211
Western	84	87	57	13	241
Total	452	321	181	25	979

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Please note that the Belfast HSC Trust provides CAMHS for the South Eastern HSC Trust

Table 2 – Waiting Times for Adult Mental Health Services at 31 May 2016

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (Weeks)				Total
	0 - 3	>3 - 6	> 6 - 9	>9	
Belfast	558	369	311	497	1,735
Northern	498	286	125	4	913
South Eastern	333	144	45	0	522

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (Weeks)				Total
	0 - 3	>3 – 6	> 6 – 9	>9	
Southern	307	352	327	104	1,090
Western	291	233	118	21	663
Total	1,987	1,384	926	626	4,923

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Table 3 – Waiting Times for Psychological Therapies Services at 31 May 2016

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (Weeks)				Total
	0 - 3	>3 – 6	> 6 – 9	>9	
Belfast	92	91	73	442	698
Northern	568	180	136	383	1,267
South Eastern	109	152	97	753	1,111
Southern	67	112	97	103	379
Western	150	140	120	313	723
Total	986	675	523	1,994	4,178

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the provision that exists for child counselling services in the Western Health and Social Trust; and (ii) the current waiting time for these services.

(AQW 1531/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Counselling services are one of a range of interventions provided to children and young people aged 5 to 18 years who are referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

At 31 May 2016, the maximum waiting time to access a routine appointment for counselling services through CAMHS in the Western HSC Trust was 13 weeks. All referrals are screened upon receipt and those that are deemed to be an emergency are seen within 24hrs.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health to outline why ophthalmology services were moved from Bangor Community Hospital, Ards Community Hospital and Ulster Hospital to Downe Hospital.

(AQW 1536/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: No decision has been taken on the future location of ophthalmology services. The proposals for future service delivery arrangements are currently out for full public consultation which ends on 5 August 2016.

The consultant documents are available on the website: <http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/Consultations.htm>

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to outline what action she will take to improve emergency services at Craigavon Area Hospital.

(AQW 1558/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has progressed a number of new developments to improve Craigavon Area Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) and to maintain good access for patients requiring admission. This includes recruiting additional ED consultants, improving senior decision making resources in the ED and recruiting additional Emergency Nurse Practitioners. The Trust is currently working with key stakeholders including local GPs and local service commissioners to discuss further additional initiatives.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health to detail the reasoning provided by Bridges Family Practice in relation to their proposal to close their surgery in Tullycarnet.

(AQW 1568/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Bridges Family Practice is based at 115 Newtownards Road Belfast, with a branch surgery at Tullycarnet. The branch surgery at Tullycarnet operates on Monday and Friday mornings between 9am and 11am.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) is responsible for commissioning GP services under the Health and Personal Social Services (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations (NI) 2004. The HSCB has advised that a number of reasons have been provided by the practice in relation to its proposal for closure of the branch surgery.

The branch surgery operates from a mobile unit which was erected over 10 years ago and which does not meet the minimum standards required for patient needs. Patients attending the branch surgery are required to attend the main surgery for medical follow-ups, treatments and management of chronic conditions. Services such as blood tests, dressings, injections and vaccinations are provided at the main surgery, as are other services, examples of which include long term condition management, midwifery clinics, minor surgery and smear test clinics. The current arrangements can result in inconvenience and delays for patients and increase practice staff workload.

There are also financial implications in terms of staffing and clinical resources across the two sites. The running costs of the branch surgery could be channelled into improving patient care in the main surgery.

The practice recently moved into a new purpose built main surgery which will enhance the services provided to all its patients.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future of Roslea Health Centre.
(AQW 1571/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 1267/16-21.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to outline the process by which each Health and Social Care Trust conducts internal financial audits.
(AQW 1572/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Internal financial audits for the HSC Trusts are conducted by the BSO's Internal Audit Service under the terms of a Service Level Agreement with each organisation. The BSO's Internal Audit Service undertakes its work in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and agrees an audit plan at the outset of each financial year with each organisation.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health to detail all waiting lists for allied health professionals, broken down over the last five years by Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 1584/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The tables overleaf show all waiting lists for allied health professionals by Health and Social Care Trust at 31 March in the given year.

Table 1

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (weeks) at 31 March 2012					Total
	0 – 3	>3 – 6	>6 – 9	>9 – 13	>13	
Belfast	2,917	2,192	1,225	223	81	6,638
Northern	3,751	2,730	786	23	2	7,292
South Eastern	2,560	1,910	627	62	24	5,183
Southern	2,644	2,036	973	217	122	5,992
Western	2,012	1,705	817	65	10	4,609
Total	13,884	10,573	4,428	590	239	29,714

Source: HSCB

Please note that figures during 2011/12 were collected fortnightly and therefore figures reported are those closest to 31 March.

Table 2

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (weeks) at 31 March 2013					Total
	0 – 3	>3 – 6	>6 – 9	>9 – 13	>13	
Belfast	2,980	2,493	985	47	4	6,509
Northern	3,723	3,213	997	0	0	7,933
South Eastern	2,949	2,137	593	26	0	5,705
Southern	2,885	2,270	1,278	211	36	6,680
Western	1,971	1,999	745	82	19	4,816
Total	14,508	12,112	4,598	366	59	31,643

Source: HSCB

Please note that figures during 2012/13 were collected fortnightly and therefore figures reported are those closest to 31 March.

Table 3

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (weeks) at 31 March 2014					Total
	0 – 3	>3 – 6	>6 – 9	>9 – 13	>13	
Belfast	3,524	2,348	1,617	823	419	8,731
Northern	3,341	3,514	1,961	615	836	10,267
South Eastern	3,112	2,333	781	53	30	6,309
Southern	3,036	2,428	1,432	274	132	7,302
Western	1,725	2,419	1,634	656	312	6,746
Total	14,738	13,042	7,425	2,421	1,729	39,355

Source: HSCB

Table 4

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (weeks) at 31 March 2015					Total
	0 – 3	>3 – 6	>6 – 9	>9 – 13	>13	
Belfast	3,094	2,206	1,665	1,534	3,192	11,691
Northern	3,717	3,110	2,108	1,339	2,665	12,939
South Eastern	3,688	2,453	1,047	206	156	7,550
Southern	3,209	2,546	1,959	989	1,436	10,139
Western	2,038	2,514	1,587	991	1,923	9,053
Total	15,746	12,829	8,366	5,059	9,372	51,372

Source: HSCB

Table 5

HSC Trust	Waiting Times (weeks) at 31 March 2016					Total
	0 – 3	>3 – 6	>6 – 9	>9 – 13	>13	
Belfast	3,068	3,024	1,999	1,813	1,759	11,663
Northern	3,395	3,030	2,007	1,770	7,214	17,416
South Eastern	3,226	2,875	1,777	625	185	8,688
Southern	2,563	2,851	2,395	1,894	3,459	13,162
Western	1,949	2,505	1,814	1,247	2,693	10,208
Total	14,201	14,285	9,992	7,349	15,310	61,137

Source: HSCB

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 212/16-21, (i) for her assessment of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Child Development Clinic's waiting lists for pre-school assessments; (ii) what impact waiting lists are having on the ability of children to access the early intervention special education provision they need; and (iii) what action she is taking to reduce these waiting lists, late notifications to the Education Authority and referrals to the Educational Psychology Service. (AQW 1594/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The long waiting lists for pre-school assessments at Belfast HSC Trust's Child Development Clinic (CDC) are a consequence of demand for this service exceeding capacity. The Trust has had difficulties in recruiting Community Paediatricians however it will soon advertise again soon with a more flexible aspect to the posts and it has also prioritised Paediatric Services as part of its ongoing International Recruitment Strategy.

In addition, changes to the Education Authority's referral criteria for the Belfast region, have also meant that mechanisms are no longer in place within the Trust for children to access support from Educational Psychology whilst awaiting a CDC appointment.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health to outline how she will implement the Rural Needs Act.

(AQW 1612/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I understand that DAERA is working to review the existing rural proofing guidance, training and practices in the context of the new functions set out in the Rural Needs Act and to develop new arrangements for monitoring and reporting on rural proofing.

I will ensure that my Department works closely with DAERA and continues to focus on the needs of rural dwellers to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaged and enjoy the same quality of life as others in the North.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health whether she has been given any assurances by the Minister of Justice that the disposal of the remainder of the Desertcreat site will not impact upon the ability of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to conduct training on live fires at its training facility.

(AQW 1614/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The planning application which was approved in January 2013 included the Burn House and other combustion emission facilities on the Desertcreat site. The Fire and Rescue Service plan to build the Burn House as per the original approved planning application.

Training exercises involving live fires can be carried out at Desertcreat.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health whether one of her priorities is to address health inequalities.

(AQW 1620/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: We continue to experience stark health inequalities, for example, the gap in life expectancy between the 20% most and least deprived areas for males is 7.5 years, and for females it is 4.3 years.

Health inequalities - the different health and wellbeing outcomes experienced by different groups within society - are wholly or partly a result of differences in the wider socio economic circumstances of people's lives. I have said that among my priorities I will place a focus on reducing health inequalities so that no matter where you live, you have the same chance of living a long and healthy life.

This will be an ongoing challenge which goes beyond the remit of my Department, and will require long-term coordinated effort and strengthened partnership working across government and at regional and local levels in line with the strategic direction provided by the public health framework Making Life Better. This framework seeks to create the conditions for individuals, families and communities to take greater control over their lives and be enabled and supported to lead healthy lives.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health whether the £25.8 million investment announced for Craigavon Area Hospital will include enhanced maternity services, particularly for parents whose babies are born sleeping.

(AQW 1621/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The new £6m investment in a paediatric centre at Craigavon Area Hospital will include dedicated ward accommodation, outpatients and ambulatory care services.

There is no specific suite for the delivery of babies born sleeping within these plans but maternity and paediatric staff work closely, following Perinatal Palliative Care Guidelines taking a range of measures to ensure the safety and dignity of the family in a sensitive way.

My Department's regional bereavement guidance has been recently updated and is available on the Department's website. The Guidance is used in conjunction with specific care pathways for pregnancy loss at all gestations and is implemented by all HSC Trusts.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health to outline what her Department is doing to protect the health and wellbeing of nurses.

(AQW 1622/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department is assured that all Health and Social Care Trusts have a health and wellbeing at work strategy in place which includes a wide range of policies and procedures for the purpose of protecting, supporting and actively promoting the health and wellbeing of all staff including nurses.

These include a range of initiatives, such as, training programmes (e.g. on nutrition, oral health, sexual health, smoking cessation, emotional well being, etc.) guidance leaflets, physical activity classes, cycle to work schemes, Carecall, Occupational Health Services, amongst others. Further information is available via Trust websites.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health whether she is considering the development of a comprehensive cancer strategy; and if so, for a timetable for initiating this process.

(AQW 1623/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Meeting the challenge posed by cancer is, and will continue to be, one of my highest priorities. We have made great strides in tackling cancer and have seen significant progress in the decade since the opening of the Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital. I can assure you that I will give due consideration to the need for a comprehensive cancer strategy.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health what steps her Department is taking to implement the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Clinical Guideline on Fertility (CG156) which recommends that eligible women should receive three full cycles of IVF.

(AQW 1628/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has endorsed (NICE) Clinical Guideline 'Fertility problems: assessment and treatment' (CG156). However, due to budget pressures facing my Department, it has not yet been possible to fully implement the clinical guideline against other competing pressures for new investment in service development. It is not possible to be precise about the number of women who would be eligible to receive the additional cycles of IVF available under the guideline. However, based on a number of assumptions the most recent estimate by the Health and Social Care Board (July 2015) indicates that full implementation would cost in the region of an additional £3.0m to £3.5m per year recurrently.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the cost of one full cycle of IVF; and (ii) the expected cost of implementing the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Clinical Guideline on Fertility (CG156) which recommends that women should be offered three full cycles of IVF.

(AQW 1629/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has endorsed (NICE) Clinical Guideline 'Fertility problems: assessment and treatment' (CG156). However, due to budget pressures facing my Department, it has not yet been possible to fully implement the clinical guideline against other competing pressures for new investment in service development. It is not possible to be precise about the number of women who would be eligible to receive the additional cycles of IVF available under the guideline. However, based on a number of assumptions the most recent estimate by the Health and Social Care Board (July 2015) indicates that full implementation would cost in the region of an additional £3.0m to £3.5m per year recurrently.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health how her Department promotes health awareness during and post pregnancy; and to outline any plans she has to increase awareness or training for expectant mothers.

(AQW 1630/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Department of Health officials are involved in the work of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) and the implementation of the North of Ireland's Maternity Strategy. Part of EITP incorporates a new approach to delivering antenatal education (the 'Solihull' training) which assists parents-to-be in making positive choices that will contribute to their health and the health of their infant.

This work, along with the evidence based care outlined in the women's Maternity Hand Held Records and the widely distributed 'Pregnancy Book' all contribute to expectant mother's health awareness during and post pregnancy.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health how many cycles of Health Service funded IVF have been completed in each of the last five years; and to outline the success rate.

(AQW 1631/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Regional Fertility Clinic in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust provides 750 cycles of HSC-funded in-vitro fertilisation/intracytoplasmic sperm injection (IVF/ICSI) treatment per year. Information on the success rate as specified by the Member is not available.

Ms Hanna asked the Minister of Health how many women would be eligible to receive the extra cycles of IVF available if the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Clinical Guideline on Fertility (CG156) was fully implemented.

(AQW 1632/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has endorsed (NICE) Clinical Guideline 'Fertility problems: assessment and treatment' (CG156). However, due to budget pressures facing my Department, it has not yet been possible to fully implement the clinical guideline against other competing pressures for new investment in service development. It is not possible to be precise about the number of women who would be eligible to receive the additional cycles of IVF available under the guideline. However, based on a number of assumptions the most recent estimate by the Health and Social Care Board (July 2015) indicates that full implementation would cost in the region of an additional £3.0m to £3.5m per year recurrently.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister of Health to outline the plans her Department has for the old health centre building and related site in Banbridge.

(AQW 1639/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Banbridge Health Centre and its related site are owned by the Southern HSC Trust. The Trust no longer requires this building and its related site for the delivery of health related service. The disposal process for this Trust property asset is currently underway.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health to outline her plans to improve public health outcomes for staff in her Department.
(AQW 1656/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department will continue to take a proactive role in supporting the health and wellbeing of its staff by utilising the corporate services available to all NICS staff through the Occupational Health Service (OHS) and Centre for Applied Learning (CAL).

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health to outline her plans to develop a sexual health strategy.
(AQW 1675/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2013 and its update "Progress and Priorities" ran to the end of December 2015. I have asked officials to provide me with briefing in relation to the development of sexual health strategy. The Public Health Agency and Health and Social Care Board are working on an action plan to implement recommendations from a RQIA report on the provision of specialist sexual health services.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister of Health whether the new paediatric ward in Craigavon Area Hospital includes a dedicated space for parents whose babies are born sleeping.
(AQW 1677/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The new £6m investment in a paediatric centre at Craigavon Area Hospital will include dedicated ward accommodation, outpatients and ambulatory care services.

There is no specific suite for the delivery of babies born sleeping within these plans but maternity and paediatric staff work closely, following Perinatal Palliative Care Guidelines taking a range of measures to ensure the safety and dignity of the family in a sensitive way.

My Department's regional bereavement guidance has been recently updated and is available on the Department's website. The Guidance is used in conjunction with specific care pathways for pregnancy loss at all gestations and is implemented by all HSC Trusts.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Health to detail the expected timeframe from an Electroencephalography taking place to the family or individual being made aware of the results (i) on a routine basis; and (ii) in the case of an issue or abnormality being identified.
(AQW 1696/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested is not available in the format specified by the Member.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Health to outline (i) the provisions in place for low income working class families with no disposable income whose child is sent to England with a congenital heart disease and that requires surgery, to have the resources and finance available to hand to remain with the child in England while it undergoes surgery; and (ii) the family support provisions available if they are either a single parent or if the spouse needs to continue to work and therefore cannot travel.
(AQW 1697/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: In August 2015, following consultation with stakeholders, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) revised its policy for providing financial assistance and reimbursement for travel, accommodation subsistence or other expenses incurred by patients and their families/carers who need to access assessment or treatment in other jurisdictions. This includes families of children with a congenital heart condition. Under this policy, which is not means tested, travel and accommodation for one or two carers can be arranged and paid for in advance by the HSCB, or otherwise reimbursed where families prefer to undertake these arrangements themselves. A per diem subsistence rate of £15 per parent/carer is also provided.

My Department is not aware of any deficiency in the above support affecting either single parent families or in families where the spouse needs to continue to work and therefore cannot travel. If the member is aware of any particular cases and brings these to my attention my Department will give them careful consideration.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health for an update on the status of the new building for Oakridge Social Education Centre, Dungannon.
(AQW 1720/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Following appraisal by my Department, the Outline Business Case for Oakridge Social Education Centre was forwarded in June 2015 to the Department of Finance for their approval. In July of last year this approval was obtained. However, whilst a reasoned case for investment has been made, this project was not considered high on the Trust's latest analysis of capital priorities. Delivery of it will therefore have to be considered alongside other capital investment priorities and will be dependent on future budget availability and affordability.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health to outline any plans she has to create an all-Ireland transplant waiting list; and whether she has discussed this with her counterpart in Dublin.

(AQW 1724/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I have discussed all-island collaboration in health and social care with the Minister for Health in the South, and agreed to explore opportunities for further collaboration in areas including organ transplantation. Our Departments will work closely and report to us later this year. It is my intention to pursue initiatives that can lead to better outcomes for patients on the transplant waiting list.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health how many people are awaiting a kidney transplant.

(AQW 1725/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: At the 31st December 2015 there were 121 patients awaiting a kidney transplant within HSC hospitals in the North of Ireland.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of kidney transplants that have been performed in each year since 2011.

(AQW 1726/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of kidney transplants that have been performed each year in the North of Ireland since 2011/12 is detailed in the table below.

Financial Year	Number of Transplants
2011/12	84
2012/13	80
2013/14	101
2014/15	99
2015/16	116

Source: NHS Blood and Transplant

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health what consideration the Northern Health and Social Care Trust is giving to reform of health services in Ballycastle.

(AQW 1727/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust's reform and modernisation programme entitled 'Shaping the Future Together', sets out a strategic framework for the future of health and social care in the Northern Trust area. With regard to reform of health services in Ballycastle: 'The Dalriada Pathfinder', is a partnership model initiative involving Health and Social Care organisations working together with local community representatives and the voluntary sector to bring support to older people and those living with chronic conditions.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health what percentage of the health budget has been spent on prevention in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1728/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Substantial expenditure is incurred by HSC Trusts, independent family practitioners and DHSSPS, as well as the Public Health Agency in delivering public health and prevention interventions. In addition, funding is allocated to some community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver health promotion/ill-health prevention services.

Given that prevention activity is often embedded in the core work of the Health and Social Care (HSC) wider system and not just as standalone service, it is difficult to capture fully how much has been allocated to these measures. Using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition of preventative services as "services designed to enhance the health status of the population as distinct from the curative services, which repair health dysfunction", it is estimated that HSC expenditure on public health and prevention in North of Ireland in 2012/13 was £180m. This represents 4.0% of total health and social care spend.

However, recently published figures from the Office for National Statistics, suggest that total expenditure on preventative activity was approximately £5.5bn across England, Scotland, Wales and the north of Ireland in 2014, representing 3.9% of total government-funded healthcare spending, and approx £7.4bn or 4.1% of all healthcare spending. Indicative data from the North suggests that HSC spending on preventative activity here is consistent with the government funded figure.

The strategic framework for public health, Making Life Better, demonstrates that social, economic and environmental issues affect people's health more than individual health behaviours and more than clinical services. It is therefore also important to acknowledge the contributions made by many other Departments and agencies to addressing broader factors that influence health and wellbeing.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health whether she will commit to the development of Carrickmore Health Centre both in terms of capital investment and the delivery of services.

(AQW 1733/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Plans for a new Health and Care Centre in Carrickmore are included in the Health and Social Care Board's Strategic Implementation Plan for primary care. Future investment in new primary care facilities cannot be progressed until the pilot projects for health and care centres in Lisburn and Newry are evaluated. This evaluation is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

Delivery of the implementation plan, including plans for a new health centre in Carrickmore will be considered alongside other capital investment priorities and will be dependent on future budget availability, value for money and affordability.

Any development in premises would also require a review of the existing services which are provided from the current Health Centre in order to ensure that the needs of the local population are addressed appropriately.

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health (i) how the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust waiting list panel operates; (ii) who is on the panel; and (iii) how it decides who gets an appointment.

(AQW 1739/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Integrated Elective Care Protocol governs the management of waiting lists across all Health and Social Care Trusts rather than a panel type arrangement. The Protocol sets out the principle that patients will be treated on the basis of their clinical urgency with urgent patients seen and treated first. The definition of clinical urgency is defined by specialty, procedure and/or service. Patient referrals are triaged by a consultant within the relevant area to determine clinical priority.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Health to outline how she intends to ensure the Meningitis B vaccine is available to all recommended age groups that fall outside the national vaccination programme.

(AQW 1753/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The eligibility age for the Men B vaccination programme is based on a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert advisory committee.

JCVI has not recommended offering the Men B vaccine to anyone aged 5 months or above.

There are a small number of other individuals outside of the children's programme for whom the Men B vaccine is recommended under the Green Book immunisation guidance (such as patients with asplenia or splenic dysfunction). These individuals should be identified and vaccinated in due course via their GP who will write a HS21 (NHS) prescription for the vaccine.

Those who fall outside of the target group for the children's programme or the Green Book categories are not eligible to receive the vaccine via Health and Social Care.

I understand there had been a shortage of the Men B vaccine outside of the children's programme and while I understand this may now have eased, the supply of the vaccine outside of the national childhood programme is a matter for the vaccine manufacturer.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future of acute services at Daisy Hill hospital.

(AQW 1755/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Daisy Hill Hospital is a vital part of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) acute hospital network and will continue to deliver essential high quality hospital services now and in the future. There is ongoing discussion between the Southern Local Commissioning Group and the SHSCT about plans to enhance acute services at Daisy Hill Hospital. These plans include the delivery of critical care beds and enhancement of the medical rota.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Health for an update on the future provision of stroke services at Daisy Hill Hospital.

(AQW 1756/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: In 2014, following public consultation, a decision was taken to create a single specialist stroke inpatient unit within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, at Craigavon Area Hospital. The Trust is proposing to provide a consistent and specialist service 24 hours a day, seven days a week in one centre rather than spreading the specialist team of staff across four sites. Daisy Hill will continue to provide ongoing rehabilitation and support through community stroke teams. The Trust will continue to engage with service users, carers, staff and the local community as implementation plans are developed which are vital to ensuring the highest quality health care is provided in the Southern Trust.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Health to detail the level of out-of-hours GP provision in Newry and Armagh.

(AQW 1757/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Access to GP out of hours services for all patients in the Southern area—including Newry and Armagh—is via telephone in the first instance. For patients who require a face to face consultation Newry out of hours centre in Daisy Hill Hospital is open 6pm-8am, Monday – Friday and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Armagh out of hours

centre, a part-time base in Armagh Community Hospital, is open 7pm-11pm, Monday – Friday and 9am-11pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

If an appointment is needed outside of these times, or on occasions when there is insufficient medical cover to deliver out of hours services across all bases in the Trust area, all patients will have access to telephone advice and where necessary will be offered an appointment in one of the other out of hours centres in the Trust area. Home visits may also be provided if this is deemed clinically appropriate.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 938/16-21, for a financial breakdown of all costs (i) incurred and (ii) expected to be incurred to (a) salary re-imbursement; (b) travel and subsistence expenses; and (c) administrative costs associated with organising meetings and events.

(AQW 1760/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: It is estimated that the Review Panel will cost in the region of £120,000 in total. It is not possible to provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure at this time as the Panel has not yet completed its work and all costs have not yet been billed for.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of procedures that have been cancelled in the South West Acute Hospital in each of the last three years; and how many were cancelled as a result of (i) the patient not being present; (ii) pressures on hospital resources; and (iii) the consultant/surgeon not being present.

(AQW 1775/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of elective operations cancelled¹ in the South West Acute Hospital in each of the last three years.

Year	Patient Cancellations	Due to Hospital Resources	Surgeon Unavailable	Total Cancellations
2013/14	373	58	40	659
2014/15	269	75	18	581
2015/16	244	106	46	534

Source: P9 Cancelled Operation Information Return

¹ Includes only those operations cancelled on the day of, or up to two days before the planned operation.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister of Health to detail the (i) average; and (ii) longest length of time an outpatient has been waiting for a first consultant led appointment in the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 1776/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) Western Health and Social Care Trust have advised that the average waiting time for a first consultant led outpatient appointment in the South West Acute Hospital is 19.5 weeks. This includes all specialties.

(ii) The longest length of time, at 31st May 2016, a patient has been waiting for a first consultant led outpatient appointment in the South West Acute Hospital is 81 weeks.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health between January to March 2016, to detail (i) how many Category A 999 responses were over the target time limit; and (ii) by how much, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1780/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

(i) The number of Category A calls taking longer than the target response time in each HSC Trust between January and March 2016 is detailed in Table 1 below.

HSC Trust	Within 8 minutes	Over 8 minutes	Total
Belfast	2,498	1,365	3,863
Northern	1,573	1,817	3,390
South Eastern	1,250	1,329	2,579
Southern	1,237	1,389	2,626
Western	1,401	1,000	2,401
Total	7,959	6,900	14,859

Source: NIAS

- (ii) The length of time taken to respond to Category A calls in each HSC Trust between January and March 2016 is detailed in Table 2 below.

HSC Trust	<8 mins	8-15 mins	15-30 mins	30-45 mins	45-60 mins	> 60 mins
Belfast	2,498	1,081	233	26	14	11
Northern	1,573	967	734	96	14	9
South Eastern	1,250	771	475	65	6	9
Southern	1,237	735	570	68	8	8
Western	1,401	546	380	57	10	7
Total	7,959	4,100	2,392	312	52	44

Source: NIAS

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health between January to March 2016, to detail the proportion of Category A calls that have been met within the target time, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1783/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on the proportion of Category A calls responded to within the target time (8 minutes) between January and March each year, is published on an annual basis and available to view or download from:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hs-emergency-care-2015-16.pdf>

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) all groups including volunteer, community, sporting or otherwise that received funding from his Department; and (ii) the amount allocated, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1786/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Details of all voluntary and community organisations which have received funding from my Department, together with the amount allocated in each of the last three years are listed on the Government Funder's Database. This can be accessed at www.volcomgrantsni.gov.uk.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health when a decision will be taken on the allocation of this year's Early Years Development Fund; and how this will be communicated to providers.

(AQW 1804/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has allocated £1.747 million to Child Care Partnerships (CCPs) from the Early Years Development Fund (EYDF) in 2016/17. CCPs play a key role in the development of high quality services for children aged 0-14 years and include representation from statutory, voluntary, community and independent sectors. The allocated funds will be spent in a number of ways, including local and regional contracts with a range of providers for parental and child development services and to improve access to Early Years services. All decisions in relation to EYDF are taken in partnership with CCPs and these decisions are communicated to providers by CCP managers. The decisions about regional contracts and regional training initiatives have already been communicated to providers by CCP managers.

A number of small grant initiatives including schemes for children with additional needs and quality improvements across the child care sector will also be funded. Providers will be informed of these decisions later in the year.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health to detail the (i) age; and (ii) nationality of the separated children missing from care between 2005 and 2014.

(AQW 1812/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested is set out in the table below.

Age	Nationality
15 – not confirmed	Somalian
17 – later found to be an adult	Chinese
17 – later found to be an adult	Chinese
16	Egyptian
16 – later found to be an adult	Chinese
17	Chinese

Age	Nationality
16	Vietnamese
16 – not confirmed	Chinese

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health what is the current waiting time for an appointment with the Immunology Department in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1816/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on the waiting time, in weeks, for an outpatient appointment with the Immunology Department in Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust, as at 24th June 2016, is shown in the following table broken down by service type.

Table 1: Number of people waiting, in weeks, for an outpatient appointment at Belfast HSC Trust Immunology Department, at 24th June 2016

Service Type	Number of patients waiting, in weeks							
	0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18-26	>26-52	>52
Immunology	16	20	14	9	16	44	41	0
Allergy	167	82	83	45	68	143	493	1,094
Paediatric Immunology	25	10	8	*	*	*	*	0
Paediatric Allergy	23	11	11	15	14	28	112	6

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

* Cells with values less than 5 have been masked to protect patient confidentiality

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Health (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future in East Derry that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for her assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or her Department.

(AQW 1819/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department received €30m from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the Interreg IVA cross-border programme 'Putting Patients, Clients and Families First'. The programme ran from 2009 until the second quarter of 2015 and supported a range of cross-border health-based projects, as well as projects aimed at tackling social exclusion and fostering positive mental health, for people in the border area. While the programme supported activity in East Derry, no definitive records are held by constituency area. All projects funded under Interreg IVA have now been completed.

The Interreg VA funding programme runs from 2014 to 2020 and has allocated €53m to support health and social care projects across the north of Ireland, the border area of the south and western Scotland. The north would expect to receive €31.8m from the programme in the period to 2020 and applications for funding are currently undergoing assessment.

The implications of the outcome of the EU referendum for the Interreg VA funding programme are as yet unclear, but it has caused uncertainty in regards to the many EU funding programmes the north benefits from. It would be my aim to ensure that this important programme is implemented and that we maximise drawdown of the available EU funding.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future, that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or her Department.

(AQW 1822/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department received €30m from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the Interreg IVA cross-border programme 'Putting Patients, Clients and Families First'. The programme ran from 2009 until the second quarter of 2015 and supported a range of cross-border health-based projects, as well as projects aimed at tackling social exclusion and fostering positive mental health, for people in the border area. All projects funded under Interreg IVA have been completed.

The Interreg VA funding programme runs from 2014 to 2020 and has allocated €53m to support health and social care projects across the north of Ireland, the border area of the south and western Scotland. The north would expect to receive €31.8m from the programme in the period to 2020 and applications for funding are currently undergoing assessment. The implications of the outcome of the EU referendum for this funding programme are as yet unclear. However, it is anticipated that the Executive will contribute to the negotiations with the EU on this issue and my aim will be to ensure that the programme is implemented and that we maximise drawdown of the available EU funding.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health (i) to detail the projects (a) in progress; and (b) scheduled for the future in Fermanagh and South Tyrone by her Department, that have received EU funding or are scheduled to receive EU funding; (ii) for her assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Executive Office or her Department.

(AQW 1827/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department received €30m from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the Interreg IVA cross-border programme 'Putting Patients, Clients and Families First'. The programme ran from 2009 until the second quarter of 2015 and supported a range of cross-border health-based projects, as well as projects aimed at tackling social exclusion and fostering positive mental health, for people in the border area. All projects funded under Interreg IVA have been completed.

The Interreg VA funding programme runs from 2014 to 2020 and has allocated €53m to support health and social care projects across the north of Ireland, the border area of the south and western Scotland. The north would expect to receive €31.8m from the programme in the period to 2020 and applications for funding are currently undergoing assessment.

The implications of the outcome of the EU referendum for this funding programme are as yet unclear. However, it is anticipated that the Executive will contribute to the negotiations with the EU on this issue and my aim will be to ensure that the programme is implemented and that we maximise drawdown of the available EU funding.

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister of Health to outline the restrictions, if any, placed on pharmacies regarding the minor ailment scheme.

(AQW 1843/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The following conditions can be treated in community pharmacies under the minor ailments scheme: diarrhoea; headlice; threadworms; vaginal thrush; athlete's foot; fungal infection of the groin; cold sores; removal of earwax; mouth ulcers and inflammation; and oral thrush. However, pharmacists can only supply products included in the Minor Ailments formulary.

Patients are eligible for the scheme if they are over the age of three months and registered with a GP Practice in the north of Ireland. Details of the scheme and products available on the formulary is available from: www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/2055.htm

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health whether she plans to introduce legislation on adoption.

(AQW 1846/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I intend to seek Executive agreement to consult on a draft Bill on adoption, with a view to introducing the Bill in the Assembly during the current mandate.

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health to outline any funding earmarked by the Executive for summer scheme provision for children and young people with special educational needs.

(AQW 1850/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Executive has allocated £83k to Child Care Partnerships across the North to support the provision of childcare for children with a disability during school holiday periods. This funding will support disabled children who have special educational needs.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health how many nurses have retired in each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1857/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested, relating to normal retirement of qualified nurses, is provided below.

HSC Trust	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Belfast	85	149	106	97	88
Northern	46	53	69	108	83
South Eastern	48	39	62	61	78
Southern	21	38	42	65	91
Western	30	32	54	54	64

Source: HSC Trusts

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health to outline the international recruitment drives that have taken place in each of the last three years in an effort to fill employment gaps in the Health Service.

(AQW 1858/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Business Services Organisation (BSO) was tasked by my Department this year to co-ordinate International Recruitment for the HSC Trusts in relation to Band 5 Nurses and a range of Medical posts. Campaigns have been undertaken as follows:

Nurses

- Romania – 1 Campaign in May 2016;
- Philippines – 1 Campaign in May 2016; and
- Italy – 1 Campaign in June 2016.

Medical Posts

Preparations for international recruitment are currently underway but to date there have been no regionally co-ordinated recruitment drives for Medical posts.

In addition to these regional recruitment drives, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust participated in the following drives for Medical posts:

- February 2015: Emergency Medicine (Consultant/ Specialty Doctors/Clinical Fellows) targeting the South of Ireland, Britain & Europe especially Denmark & Germany; Australia & New Zealand
- December 2015: Emergency Medicine (Consultant/ Specialty Doctors/Clinical Fellows) targeting the South of Ireland, Britain & Europe; Australia & New Zealand
- May 2016: Locum Appointment to Service in Core Medicine advertised targeting Europe, Australia & New Zealand

The Western Health and Social Care Trust has appointed, from 2015 to date, 20 doctors from European and international sources.

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has sourced European Doctors for a number of hard to fill specialties in June 2016.

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health to detail current waiting times for breast cancer surgery in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1867/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on waiting times for cancer services is measured on the basis of how long patients waited, rather than how long they are currently waiting, for treatment.

Information on average waiting times for breast cancer surgery from decision to treat in March 2016, where surgery was the patient's first treatment is shown in the table below.

Trust Where Patient Received Surgery	Average Wait (days)
Belfast	12.0
Northern	16.8
South Eastern	10.9
Southern	11.8
Western	7.7
Total	12.0

Source: CaPPS

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 1453/16-21, how many patients were on the medical-surgical wards in the Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 1870/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: On Sunday 19th June between the hours of 08.00 – 20.00, there were 161 patients on a medical/surgical ward within Causeway Hospital.

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 1453/16-21, how many medical-surgical wards are there at the Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 1871/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Within Causeway Hospital there are three surgical wards, including gynaecology, and five medical wards including coronary care and 2 rehabilitation wards.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail how much it would cost to increase GP training places.

(AQW 1888/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Each place on the three-year GP specialty training programme provided by the Medical and Dental Training Agency costs in the region of £90k per annum.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health whether her Department has considered establishing a medical school in (i) Derry; or (ii) Fermanagh.

(AQW 1891/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has not considered proposals for a Medical School in (i) Derry; or (ii) Fermanagh. I understand that proposals for a Graduate Entry Medical School in the North West are at an early stage of development by Ulster University and I look forward to seeing the outcome of that work in due course.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Health (i) for her assessment of the challenges that diabetes poses to the National Health Service; and (ii) to outline what action will be taken to deal with such challenges.

(AQW 1899/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Diabetes continues to be one of the most challenging long term conditions, affecting more than 85,000 people across the North of Ireland. The numbers of people diagnosed with diabetes in the north of Ireland continues to grow rapidly, with more than three thousand new cases added annually. This poses a burden not only on individuals and their families but the wider Health and Social Care system. It is also estimated that approximately ten percent of the Health and Social Care Budget is spent on treating diabetes and its complications.

A Draft Strategic Framework and accompanying Implementation Plan for diabetes was published by the Department for consultation in March 2016. The draft framework identifies a number of priorities in order to tackle the rising numbers of newly diagnosed cases which include public health measures to help prevent Type 2 diabetes, improving access to structured diabetes education, building capacity and expertise in the workforce, improving services for vulnerable groups and encouraging innovation in care for people living with diabetes.

The consultation closed on 31st May and the responses are currently being analysed with a consultation report to be published in early Autumn and finalised framework and implementation plan to follow soon afterwards subject to my approval.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 656/16-21, to provide a copy of the review of hypermobility and musculoskeletal pain in children published in 2012 by researchers based in Queen's University, Belfast, (Scand J Rheumatol. 2012 Oct; 41 (5): 329-38).

(AQW 1909/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The systematic review of hypermobility and musculoskeletal pain in children was published in 2012 by researchers based in Queen's University Belfast. (Scand J Rheumatol. 2012 Oct;41(5):329-38).

The Health and Social Care Research & Development Division has advised that the best approach would be to write to the authors and request a copy which they may be willing/able to provide free of charge depending on whether or not they hold print copies of the article and what copyright arrangements are in place. Alternatively, any person requesting a copy could register and pay for it online, or a library might provide a copy for a fee.

A further possibility is to seek a copy through the NI Assembly library service.

Mr McEliduff asked the Minister of Health to detail the prevalence of youth smoking in each Health and Social Care Trust; and to outline her Department's efforts, including partnership working with schools, community organisations and youth clubs to prevent children and young people from taking up smoking.

(AQW 1914/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The prevalence of youth (i.e. those aged 11 to 16) smoking in each Health and Social Care Trust is set out below:

Belfast HSC Trust	Northern HSC Trust	South Eastern HSC Trust	Southern HSC Trust	Western HSC Trust	Overall
8.7%	5.9%	5.0%	2.9%	4.6%	5.0%

Source: Young Persons' Behaviour & Attitude Survey 2013

My Department's 10-year tobacco control strategy includes preventing young people from taking up smoking as a key objective. In keeping with this objective, a range of tobacco control legislation has been enacted in recent years. This includes: raising the age of sale for tobacco products from 16 to 18 years; banning sales of tobacco from vending machines; and banning displays of tobacco products at point of sale.

New measures introduced in 2016 include: standardised packaging for tobacco products; larger health warnings; a ban on 10 packs of cigarettes; a requirement for all tobacco retailers to register; and new laws providing that retailers who repeatedly sell tobacco to children may be banned from selling tobacco for up to 3 years.

In addition, a number of initiatives aimed at preventing children and young people from taking up smoking are supported the Public Health Agency. These include:

- Smokebusters - a primary school smoking prevention programme delivered by Cancer Focus NI.
- Year 9 Schools Programme - a half day programme delivered by a smoking cessation specialist to Year 9 pupils (age 12-13 years) in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.
- Smokefree School Gates Initiative - a PHA scheme to make 'Smokefree School Gates' signage available to all primary schools in the North of Ireland during 2014-2016.
- Dead Cool – a post primary smoking prevention programme for year 8-10 pupils designed by Cancer Focus NI which has recently been trialed across 18 schools.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health (i) to outline a timeline for the completion and opening of the new Enhanced Local Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex; (ii) for an update on the range of services to be delivered there; and (iii) for an update on discussions with Translink on necessary public transport links from Omagh town centre to the new hospital.

(AQW 1916/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: It is expected that construction of the new enhanced Local Omagh Hospital will be completed by December 2016. Following handover, there will be a period of commissioning by the Western Health and Social Care Trust before the new hospital opens in Spring 2017. Services will include: intermediate care and palliative care; day surgery; imaging; urgent care and treatment centre; cardiac assessment unit; sub-regional renal unit; hospital pharmacy; outpatients services; sterile services; intervention treatment centre; children's services; women's and family health unit; allied health professionals; GP practice; GP out of hours; community pharmacy and medical records. Discussions between the Trust and Translink, on the range of public transport services, are ongoing.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Health how many people in each constituency are registered blind.

(AQW 1918/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on the number of people known to be blind is not available at constituency level but can be provided by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. Information on the number of adults known to be blind is collected by the HSC Board and can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of adults known to be blind at 31 March 2016

HSC Trust	Number of Adults Known to be Blind
Belfast	1,250
Northern	1,284
South Eastern	564
Southern	739
Western	488
Total	4,325

Source: HSC Board – Provisional Figures

Ms Mallon asked the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQW 1288/16-21, for her assessment of the adequacy of current provision in meeting the demand for drug and alcohol support services among children and young people; and, following the amended motion passed in the Assembly on Monday 6 June 2016, whether her Department intends to take any additional action.

(AQW 1949/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: As outlined in my answer to AQW 1288/16-21, a full range of alcohol and drug education, early intervention, and treatment and support services were launched in July 2015 across all five Health and Social Care Trust areas. A number of these services are targeted specifically at children, young people and their families, and work is ongoing to improve awareness of the services. It will of course require time for these relatively new services to bed in properly and to allow for meaningful assessment of their effectiveness. In the meantime, the need for any additional support will continue to be monitored and kept under review.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health (i) whether she is aware of the difficulties for staff and service users at the current Oakridge Social Education Centre site due to the condition of facilities; and (ii) whether she will visit the centre.

(AQW 1967/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware of the difficulties for staff and service users. Despite these environmental shortcomings management and staff working within Oakridge Social Education Centre carry out their duties diligently and with utmost attention given to providing quality day care for service users.

My Department has cleared the Southern Trust's business case to replace Oakridge but, in light of other priorities expressed by the Trust and the availability of budget, funding has not yet been released for this scheme. The Trust is however progressing with temporary modifications and accommodation solutions.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Health to detail all voluntary and community organisations in Newry and Armagh which have received funding from her Department, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 1969/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Details of all voluntary and community organisations which have received funding from my Department, together with the amount allocated in each of the last five years are listed on the Government Funder's Database. This can be accessed at www.volcomgrantsni.gov.uk.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health for her assessment of the British Medical Association's Report General Practice in Crisis – a report on primary care in Northern Ireland.
(AQW 2026/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: GPs are an essential part of our health and social care system. They provide high quality advice and treatment to the population here and, together with the wider primary care team, play a vital part in supporting people to manage and improve their own health and wellbeing.

However, I recognise that in hours and out of hours GP services are under pressure. GP workload has increased significantly over the last decade, largely as a result of a growing and ageing population. And as we seek, rightly, to treat people as close to home as possible, GPs are seeing more people with multiple complex conditions and are managing these patients in the primary care setting. The GP workforce is also changing—a number of GPs may choose to retire over the next five years and it is important that younger doctors see general practice as an attractive career option. While GPs across the north are experiencing these pressures, I know that the challenges are particularly acute in rural areas and in smaller GP practices.

All of these challenges are reflected in the findings of the BMA's recent General Practice in Crisis report. I have noted the actions identified by the BMA as being necessary to address the challenges facing general practice, and indeed action is already underway in a number of these areas.

There has been significant investment in general practice over recent years aimed at increasing capacity, developing new models of care to help meet rising demand for services, increasing the GP workforce, and building the wider primary care team. In 2015/16, an investment package of up to £5.1 million was agreed for general medical services, including additional funding to build capacity in GP out of hours services, to increase skills mix in general practice, to support GP Federations, and to support improvements in premises. Further non-recurrent funding was also provided in 2015/16 to invest in GP Federations, to develop a leadership training package for GPs, and to pilot a phone and online triage system. In 2016/17 my Department will invest a further £7 million in general practice, including £2m to help meet additional demand, £1.7m to continue to rollout the practice-based pharmacists programme, and £160,000 to develop online booking and repeat prescribing systems. In addition to this, further investment of £1.2 million per year is being provided to increase the number of GP training places available here each year to 85, up from 65.

A working group set up to make recommendations aimed at addressing the difficulties facing general practice reported in March. The findings of that working group, and the actions identified by the BMA's recent report, will inform my consideration of the next steps required to ensure that everyone here has access to high quality, sustainable GP services.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health (i) for her assessment of the current provision of GP in and out of hours services; and (ii) to outline what is being done to reduce the risks and pressure on these services.
(AQW 2028/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: GPs are an essential part of our health and social care system. They provide high quality advice and treatment to the population here and, together with the wider primary care team, play a vital part in supporting people to manage and improve their own health and wellbeing.

However, I recognise that in hours and out of hours GP services are under pressure. GP workload has increased significantly over the last decade, largely as a result of a growing and ageing population. And as we seek, rightly, to treat people as close to home as possible, GPs are seeing more people with multiple complex conditions and are managing these patients in the primary care setting. The GP workforce is also changing—a number of GPs may choose to retire over the next five years and it is important that younger doctors see general practice as an attractive career option. While GPs across the north are experiencing these pressures, I know that the challenges are particularly acute in rural areas and in smaller GP practices.

All of these challenges are reflected in the findings of the BMA's recent General Practice in Crisis report. I have noted the actions identified by the BMA as being necessary to address the challenges facing general practice, and indeed action is already underway in a number of these areas.

There has been significant investment in general practice over recent years aimed at increasing capacity, developing new models of care to help meet rising demand for services, increasing the GP workforce, and building the wider primary care team. In 2015/16, an investment package of up to £5.1 million was agreed for general medical services, including additional funding to build capacity in GP out of hours services, to increase skills mix in general practice, to support GP Federations,

and to support improvements in premises. Further non-recurrent funding was also provided in 2015/16 to invest in GP Federations, to develop a leadership training package for GPs, and to pilot a phone and online triage system. In 2016/17 my Department will invest a further £7 million in general practice, including £2m to help meet additional demand, £1.7m to continue to rollout the practice-based pharmacists programme, and £160,000 to develop online booking and repeat prescribing systems. In addition to this, further investment of £1.2 million per year is being provided to increase the number of GP training places available here each year to 85, up from 65.

A working group set up to make recommendations aimed at addressing the difficulties facing general practice reported in March. The findings of that working group, and the actions identified by the BMA's recent report, will inform my consideration of the next steps required to ensure that everyone here has access to high quality, sustainable GP services.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health to detail the investments her Department has made in the area of drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation, in the last two years.
(AQW 2068/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Through New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase Two (NSD), the Health & Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency commission a full range of alcohol and drug services. Each year my Department allocates approximately £8million to NSD and a further £8million is invested in statutory substance misuse treatment and support services through the mental health budget.

The services commissioned encompass: information, education and prevention; community support; early intervention; harm reduction/low threshold; and specialist treatment and support. A list of all services is available online at: <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ni.info/services-near-you/>

We continue to review and improve the effectiveness and accessibility of these services. For example, Tier 4 inpatient substance misuse services were reviewed in 2014 and a new regional network is now being embedded, and a review of Tier 3 Community Addiction Services is currently being undertaken by the Health and Social Care Board.

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health to detail the percentage of her budget that went to the Public Health Agency in each of the last seven years.
(AQW 2069/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below sets out the percentage of the Department's Non Ring-fenced Resource DEL budget that was allocated to the Public Health Agency in each of the last seven years:

	% Total Budget
2009/10	1.5%
2010/11	1.5%
2011/12	1.8%
2012/13	1.9%
2013/14	2.1%
2014/15	2.2%
2015/16	2.2%

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health for an update on the reform of Health Service structures.
(AQW 2070/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: There is consensus that our commissioning and planning systems are not working as well as they could, and work has taken place in respect of the design of the new structures. This work however cannot be considered in isolation but in tandem with the recommendations from the report on the configuration of health and social care services in the North of Ireland carried out by Professor Bengoa and his expert panel.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health for an update on the proposed eight-bed Detox Crisis Unit in Omagh.
(AQW 2075/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The planned refurbishment work for the proposed Omagh Complex Detox Unit is now completed. The Ward Manager has been recruited and nursing staff appointments have been made. However, the post of Consultant Psychiatrist remains unfilled despite being advertised, therefore, as an interim measure, the Western Trust will seek to recruit a locum Consultant. The Western Trust is hopeful that services will now commence from late September 2016.

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of people diagnosed with a mental health condition over each of the last 10 years.
(AQW 2121/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Mental Health is one of the disease registers in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), the purpose of which is to reward General Medical Services contractors for the provision of quality care. Further information on the QOF can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research/quality-outcomes-framework-qof>, whilst all available QOF data can be accessed on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/qof-achievement-data>.

In relation to mental health, the contractor establishes and maintains a register of patients with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses and other patients on lithium therapy. The total number of patients on the register, in each of the last 10 years, is shown in Table 1 below. Between 2006/07 and 2013/14, the register included only patients with serious mental illness, defined as schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder or other psychoses. From 2013/14, the register definition was expanded to include other patients on lithium therapy, so the register is therefore no longer fully comparable with previous years.

Table 1 Number of patients on the QOF Mental Health register, in each of the last 10 years.

Year	Number of patients on the QOF Mental Health register
2006/07	13,665
2007/08	14,055
2008/09	14,407
2009/10	14,958
2010/11	15,415
2011/12	15,709
2012/13	16,110
2013/14*	16,401
2014/15*	16,696
2015/16*	17,114

Source: Payment Calculation and Analysis System

* From 2013/14, the register definition was expanded to include other patients on lithium therapy, so the register is therefore no longer fully comparable with previous years.

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Health to detail expenditure on mental health for each of the Health and Social Care Trusts; broken down by year for each of the last three years.

(AQW 2122/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below outlines the expenditure on mental health for each of the Health and Social Care Trusts from 2012/2013 – 2014/2015. This information is taken from Trust Financial Returns. Final figures for 2015/2016 are not yet available.

Trust	Year		
	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Belfast Trust	71,098,030	71,755,962	74,127,496
Northern Trust	52,183,522	53,051,669	57,421,275
South Eastern Trust	31,958,446	33,786,517	34,387,764
Southern Trust	37,272,458	37,060,467	38,697,268
Western Trust	37,333,194	38,124,208	39,003,052
Grand Total	229,845,649	233,778,822	243,636,856

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of General Practitioners employed within Fermanagh and South Tyrone; broken down by year for each of the last five years.

(AQW 2163/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of General Practitioners employed within the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency, at 31st March in each of the last five years, is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of General Practitioners employed in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency, as at 31st March, 2012-2016

Year	Number of General Practitioners employed
2012	71
2013	70
2014	69
2015	73
2016	73

Source: HSC Business Services Organisation

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health whether her Department has plans for a new health centre in Lisnaskea.
(AQW 2164/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Future investment in new primary care facilities cannot be progressed until the pilot projects for health and care centres in Lisburn and Newry are evaluated. This evaluation is expected to be completed before the end of the year. Recognising that constraint, the Western Health and Social Care Trust is currently in the process of finalising a business case for the provision of a new health and care centre within Lisnaskea. It is expected that the business case will be submitted to my Department for consideration in the Autumn.

When that is finalised, delivery of a new health and care centre in Lisnaskea will be considered alongside other capital investment priorities and will be dependent on future budget availability, value for money and affordability.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister of Health to outline what progress has been made on the introduction of legislation, in line with England and Wales, to ban smoking in cars with children.
(AQW 2204/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, which came into effect on 12 May, contains regulation-making powers which will allow my Department to ban the use of tobacco in cars when a person under the age of 18 is present.

My Department is in the process of drafting these regulations. It is intended that the draft regulations will be published for public consultation later this year.

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the levels of sickness within the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) how these levels subsequently affect planned surgeries and waiting times for routine patients.
(AQW 2206/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The level of sickness absence in the Western Health and Social Care Trust was 7.03% as at 31st May 2016.

In the event of the level of absence impacting on the safe delivery of surgery, theatre lists are reviewed and may result in the cancellation of non-urgent and non-cancer related cases. Any cancelled cases are rescheduled as soon as possible. Patient safety and experience is always a priority for the Trust.

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health detail the increase in urgent referrals within the Western Health and Social Care Trust in the last three years.
(AQW 2207/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on the number of urgent referrals for a first consultant led outpatient appointment in the Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust in each of the last three years is shown in the table below.

HSC Trust	Number of urgent referrals for a first consultant led outpatient appointment		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Western	31,585	39,888	45,533

Source: Western HSC Trust

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the new hourly rate; and (ii) the previous hourly rate, paid to domiciliary care providers in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 2231/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The average hourly rate paid by the Western Health and Social Care Trust to independent sector domiciliary care providers in 2016/17 is £11.42. The average hourly rate paid by the Western Health and Social Care Trust to independent sector domiciliary care providers in 2015/16 was £10.87.

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health when the 1 per cent pay increase for Health Service workers agreed by her predecessor will be implemented.

(AQW 2239/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The 2016/17 HSC Pay Award effective from 1 April 2016 is expected to be implemented by early autumn.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Health to detail (i) the number of people on GP training schemes in each of the last five years; and (ii) the number of applicants for GP training places for 2016.

(AQW 2255/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

(i) The number of people on GP training schemes in each of the last five years is as follows –

	Number on GP Training Programme
August 2011	223
August 2012	232
August 2013	235
August 2014	240
August 2015	245

(ii) The number of applicants for GP training places in 2016 was 149.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister of Health to detail how many bed days were lost because of discharge delays, in each hospital last year.

(AQW 2301/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below details the total time that discharges were delayed in the North of Ireland from April 2015 to March 2016, by hospital site.

Hospital	Total Delay (Days)
Altnagelvin	7,016
Antrim	9,712
Belfast City	5,636
BCH - Cancer	140
Causeway	2,701
RBHSC	134
Craigavon Area	3,478
Daisy Hill	860
Downe	1,033
Lagan Valley	2,466
Mater	2,452
Mid Ulster	57
Musgrave Park	615
Royal Victoria	8,840
South West Acute	4,443
Ulster	17,124
Whiteabbey	1,185

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Health to detail the number of people with (i) type 1; and (ii) type 2 diabetes, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 2305/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill: Diabetes is one of the disease registers in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), the purpose of which is to reward General Medical Services contractors for the provision of quality care. Further information on the QOF can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/quality-and-outcomes-framework-qof-statistics-annual-report>, whilst all available QOF data can be accessed on the Department of Health's website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/qof-achievement-data>.

In relation to diabetes, the contractor establishes and maintains a register of all patients aged 17 or over with diabetes mellitus, which specifies the type of diabetes where a diagnosis has been confirmed. Although each practice must record whether a patient has Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, this level of detail is not collected centrally, therefore the register size cannot be disaggregated by type of diabetes. The total number of people on the diabetes register, in each of the last 10 years, is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of patients on the QOF diabetes register, in each of the last 10 years

Year	Number of patients on the QOF diabetes register
2006/07	56,924
2007/08	60,822
2008/09	65,066
2009/10	68,980
2010/11	72,693
2011/12	75,837
2012/13	79,072
2013/14	81,867
2014/15	84,836
2015/16	88,305

Source: Payment Calculation and Analysis System

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Health to detail the (i) target waiting times for psychological treatments; and (ii) current waiting times for same, in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 2306/16-21)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Commissioning Plan Direction Target 4.13 states that, 'from April 2016, no patient waits longer than 13 weeks to access psychological therapies'.
- (ii) Table 1 overleaf details waiting times at 31 May 2016 for psychological therapies in each Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.

Table 1

HSC Trust	Waiting Time (Weeks)					Total
	0 – 3	>3 – 6	>6 – 9	>9 – 13	> 13	
Belfast	92	91	73	81	361	698
Northern	568	180	136	154	229	1,267
South Eastern	109	152	97	152	601	1,111
Southern	67	112	97	56	47	379
Western	150	140	120	138	175	723
Total	986	675	523	581	1,413	4,178

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Department for Infrastructure

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure who will fund the additional public expenditure required as a result of the remediations works necessary at the Mobuoy Road illegal landfill and the impact on the A6 road project.

(AQW 394/16-21)

Mr Hazzard (The Minister for Infrastructure): Your question regarding funding for the remediation works is a matter for Department Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), however, I have been advised by my Ministerial colleague in DAERA that in law there is currently limited opportunity to ensure that the polluter pays for illegal dumping of waste. DAERA is looking to see how this can be improved. In the meantime, the funding of the remedial costs is an issue currently being considered by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

I am content that, should the contamination issue remain unresolved when the A6 dualling is being constructed, cost effective measures can be deployed to remedy the undesirable effects of the waste.

Discussions remain ongoing with the DAERA which is currently considering the management of the site and long-term options for remedial measures. My Department's TransportNI will align any proposed works with any potential remediation solutions.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) to detail the Terms of Reference of the LED pilot scheme in Upper Bann; (ii) when the first findings will be available; and (iii) what consultation will be undertaken with communities affected by the change.

(AQW 430/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The main aims of the LED pilot project were to gain direct experience of how my Department can best deliver the necessary surveys, design, equipment specification, procurement and installation of the new LED street lighting equipment, and to assess the LED technology, costs and savings in a wide range of scenarios.

It is expected that a report on the findings from the LED project will be completed by the end of the summer 2016.

Whilst no specific consultation with communities affected by the change is planned all issues raised will be fully investigated, and any feedback from communities to my Department during the course of the project will be included in the report on the project.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Infrastructure for a list of the planned roadworks in Lagan Valley.

(AQW 489/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has programmed the following roadworks:

Surface Dressing

■ Lower Slievenacloy Road	■ Ballypitmave Road	■ Tullyard Road
■ Scotstown Road	■ Old Park Road	■ Ballyworphy Road
■ Bog Road	■ Moss Road	■ Bresagh Road
■ Tullynewbank Road	■ Ballymagarick Road	■ Cluntagh Road
■ Crewe Hill	■ Mill Road	■ B177 Ballynahinch Road
■ Crewe Park Road	■ Mealough Road	■ Lakelands Road
■ Belshaws Road	■ Back Road	■ Springmount Road
■ Irwinstown Lane	■ Upper Mealough Road	■ Begney Road
■ Old Moira Road	■ Gardeners Road	■ Croft Road
■ Brackenhill Road	■ Mullaghdrin East Road	■ Balliesmills Road
■ Yewtree Hill Road	■ Carricknaveagh Road	■ Ballymullan Road.
■ Hillhead Road	■ Pattersons Road	
■ Legatarriff Road	■ St Johns Road	

Cold Asphalt Overlay

■ Glenwood Court	■ Belvoir Crescent	■ Burnbrae Avenue
■ Granville Drive	■ Belvoir Park	■ Carnreagh Avenue.

Carriageway / Footway Resurfacing

■ Kilwarlin Road currently on site	■ Benson Street from Thiepval Road to Antrim Road
■ Lavery's Bridge Road currently on site	■ Brokerstown Road
■ Lurganure Road currently on site	■ Causeway End Road
■ Carnreagh, Hillsborough	■ Rathmore Park footways currently on site
■ Moira Road from Rosevale Meadows to Hulls Lane	■ Mullaghglass Road
■ Main Street Moira refurbishment from Old Kilmore Road to Meeting Street	■ Culcavy Road
	■ Antrim Road footways from Antrim Street car park to

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Benson Street ■ Beechdene Park footways ■ Beechdenes Drive footways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Beechdene Gardens footways ■ Warren Park footways |
|---|--|

Road Improvements

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hillhall Road currently on site ■ A24 Saintfield Road at Temple Crossroads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A49 Old Ballynahinch Road |
|---|---|

NIW Water Main Replacements

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Queensway ■ The Cutts ■ Glenburn Park ■ Braemer Crescent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ventnor Park ■ Kensington Gardens ■ Lisburn Street ■ Moira Road |
|---|--|

NIW Sewer Replacements

- Antrim Street
- Antrim Road

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail all capital projects that are (i) currently being completed; and (ii) are expected to be completed in the next three years in West Tyrone.

(AQW 543/16-21)

Mr Hazzard:

- i) The following capital projects within West Tyrone are due to be completed in the current financial year

TransportNI

In the case of TransportNI, the information you have requested is not readily available in this format but can be found in the published annual reports as detailed below.

Fermanagh & Omagh

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-fermanagh-and-omagh-district-council-2016>

Mid Ulster

The Mid Ulster report will be made available from 1 July 2016, once presented to Council, on the Department's Publication scheme. The scheme can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications>

NI Water

- Omagh Phase 2 Watermain Rehabilitation
- Western Area Telemetry Needs
- Erganagh Waste Water Pumping Station Replacement
- Ballymagorry Waste Water Treatment Works
- Magheramason Waste Water Treatment Works
- Artigarvan Waste Water Treatment Works
- Strule River Omagh Trunk Water Main Repair
- Lismourne Place Strabane Foul Sewer Extension for Invest NI
- Chambre Park Waste Water Pumping Station

Translink

- Omagh Bus Station Yard Resurfacing

Rivers Agency

- Rivers Agency Regional Headquarters at Omagh.
- Eccelsville Flood Alleviation Scheme, Fintona
- Contract to reline culvert at Killyclogher Burn (branch A) to extend the life of the defective culvert
- U1708 Scotstown Road Clady, Co Tyrone
- U1706 Castlesessiagh Stream, Castlederg
- Mountfield Road Stream
- U1306 Arlestone Burn, Omagh

- ii) The following capital projects within West Tyrone are expected to be completed in the next three years (i.e. April 2017 – 2020)

NI Water

- Watermain infrastructure investment model Phase 2 Lough Braden Drumquin Work Package
- Bridge Street Waste Water Pumping Station, Strabane
- Sustainable Catchment Area Management Project (SCAMP Ireland)
- Victoria Bridge Waste Water Treatment Works
- Tamlaght Road Waste Water Pumping Station, Omagh
- Glenhordial Water Treatment Works expansion of existing sludge plant
- Glencam road Omagh Storm Sewer Extension
- Strathroy Link Road, Omagh

Translink

- Cycle Shelters Programme - Omagh, Strabane and Dungannon

Rivers Agency

- Omagh Town flood
- Hunter's Crescent Floodwall on the River Strule,
- Fintona Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Clady flood defences
- Stephenstown Drain, Clady
- Tamlaght Drain, Tamlaght Rd Omagh

TransportNI

The extent of capital programmes and consequently schemes/projects to be included, are entirely dependent on availability of funding. Budgets for 2017 – 2020 have not been finalised, nor programmes developed, at this time.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the total spend by her Department on the regeneration of the Ulster Canal.

(AQW 738/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There has been no spend by my Department to date on the regeneration of the Ulster Canal thus far. Work currently underway on the restoration of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Castlesaunderson is being fully funded by the Department for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the procedure by which Transport NI collate inspection reports on road deficits into an on-going programme for the Fermanagh area.

(AQW 816/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Department has a statutory duty to maintain public roads in a safe and serviceable condition. To this end TransportNI operates a system of regular safety inspections to ensure that essential response maintenance is identified and completed, as per the current road maintenance standards.

The safety inspections help identify the condition of public roads and footpaths, and this information is then used in the preparation and prioritisation of annual reconstruction and resurfacing programmes.

As with all areas, programmes in Fermanagh are prepared on the basis of a number of factors including usage, general surface condition, structural deformation and numbers of public liability claims. They are also influenced by the level of finance available in a given year.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the (i) completed; (ii) ongoing; and (iii) future capital programmes funded through his Department in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 817/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The capital programmes funded by my Department during the last five years are detailed below. In the case of TransportNI, the information you have requested is not readily available in this format but can be found in a number of published annual reports as detailed below.

- (i) Completed Capital Projects

2011/12

- U5503 Arney Road Drain, Bellanaleck - new grille
- Killynure Lough Drain at Erneside - flood defence and control structure
- Killynure Lough Drain Tempo Road - grille at cemetery

- Garvey, Belleek - fish counter
- Derryvarrymore Drain - accommodation bridge replacements
- Secure boundary at Enniskillen bus station
- CCTV system at Enniskillen Buscentre
- Dungannon bus station entrance and exit yard refurbishment
- Replacement storage tanks at Dungannon
- Castor Bay to Dungannon Strategic Trunk Mains
- MIMP West (Major Incident Mitigation Project West Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Killyhevlin water treatment works standby generator replacement
- Killyhelvin Water Treatment Works (WTW) Flood Prevention
- MIMP North (Major Incident Mitigation Project North Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Enniskillen Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW)
- Orchard Park, Aughnacloy Foul & Storm Sewer Extension
- Carland Service Reservoir
- Old Omagh Road, Ballygawley, Storm Sewer Extension
- Grange Park, Dungannon Waste Water Pumping Station (WWPS) Upgrade
- Empire Meats Ltd, Dernawilt Road Rosslea Sewage Pumping Main Extension
- Aghadrumsee New Primary School Foul & Storm Sewer Extension
- Market Square, Dungannon Foul Sewer Extension
- Whites Road Cabragh Foul Sewer Extension
- Bush WWTWs
- Castor Bay/ Shanmoy Zone
- Lisnarrick WWTW
- Derrylaney, Teemore Foul Sewer
- Churchview, Armagh Rd, Moy WWPS Upgrade

2012/13

- Clonee, Ederney - accommodation bridge replacement
- Clabby Village - Urban Drain - 54.6 m of Structural Grade 4 repaired
- Brookeborough - Urban Drain - 68.8 m of Structural Grade 4 repaired
- Lisnaskea - U5813 Rathowen Drain culvert upgrade
- Tempo - U5812 Meadowbrook Drain culvert and grille upgrade
- Tattymacall, Lisbellaw - bank repairs and grille repair
- Granshagh Drain - new culvert and grille
- Blaney Mill Race - grille upgrade
- Agharainey Old Tempo Road, Enniskillen - grille repairs
- Drumbadmore Drain, Lisnaskea – head wall and flap valve were constructed and manhole upgrade
- Brookborough – grille upgrade
- Ballinamallard - U5202 grille upgrade
- Monea - grille upgrade
- Silver Hill, Enniskillen - grille upgrade
- Enhance disability access at Muckcross, Loughside Park
- Upgrade access and signage at Corradillar loughshore path
- Replacement branding at Enniskillen Buscentre
- CCTV at Dungannon bus station
- Rossory WWPS Upgrade
- Watts Park/Trewmount Road, Killyman, Dungannon, Storm SEwer Extension
- MIMP West (Major Incident Mitigation Project West Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Killyhevlin water treatment works standby generator replacement
- MIMP North (Major Incident Mitigation Project North Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Dannys Mill Road Enniskillen Sewer Rehabilitation
- Grange Park, Dungannon WWPS Upgrade
- Bush WWTWs
- Pumping Station Maintenance

- Annaghmakeown Road Castlecaufield Storm Sewer Extension
- Dungannon Business Park, Eskragh Road, Dungannon, Foul Pumping Main Extension
- Dernagh WWPS Upgrade
- Castle Archdale WWPS Upgrade

2013/14

- Clabby village - culvert scheme
- Greenan Road, Trillick - culvert scheme
- Drumscool, Irvinestown - culverting and grille upgrade
- Carrigan, Enniskillen - grille
- Garrison, Barr of Slattinagh - MW5404 Roogagh accommodation bridge upgrade
- Abohill, Letterbreen - accommodation bridge upgrade
- Meadowbrooke, Tempo - culvert upgrade
- Magherveely - inlet grille upgrade
- Calkill Drain – accommodation bridge upgrade
- Ballygawley Water Flood Alleviation Scheme –The scheme involved the construction of a sheet piled flood wall and earth embankment at St Ciaran's High School, construction of a reinforced concrete flood wall at Tullybryan Road and construction of a reinforced concrete flood wall and concrete core earth embankment at Ballygawley Village
- Create sensory at Loughside community garden at Ballanaleck
- Enniskillen bus station yard resurfacing
- Killyhevlin WTW Improvements to sludge settlement system
- Garrison WWTWs
- Rossory WWPS Upgrade
- Killyhevlin WTW - GAC
- Cabragh WWTW Feasibility Study
- Aughnacloy WWTW Feasibility Study
- Newtownbutler WWTW's Appraisal
- South / South East Zonal Study South East Phase 1 Work Packages
- South / South East Zonal Study South Phase 1 Work Packages
- Carland to Cookstown Strategic Trunk Main
- Castle Archdale WWTW
- Castor Bay to Dungannon Strategic Trunk Mains
- Belleek WTW - Upgrade of plant roof
- MIMP West (Major Incident Mitigation Project West Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Monea WWTWs Appraisal
- MIMP North (Major Incident Mitigation Project North Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Western Area Telemetry Needs
- Dannys Mill Road Enniskillen Sewer Rehabilitation
- Water Supply West - Turbidity Monitor Upgrade
- Grange Park, Dungannon WWPS Upgrade
- Pumping Station Maintenance - R McCrea
- Lisnarrick WWTW
- Tempo WWTW
- Dernagh WWPS Upgrade
- Castle Archdale WWPS Upgrade

2014/15

- Cullion, Newtownbutler - accommodation bridge upgrade
- Curragh Lough, Lisnaskea - accommodation bridge upgrade
- Ashwoods, Enniskillen – new inlet structure and grille upgrade
- Glen River – accommodation footbridge upgrade
- Trillick - grille upgrade on cavanmmarra drain
- Crummer - accommodation bridge
- Castle Irvine - new accommodation bridge
- Killypaddy Drain, Lisnaskea - new inlet structure & grille upgrade

- Attybaron Drain, Lisnaskea - new inlet structure & grille upgrade
- Blaney Mill - grille upgrade
- Drumhaw - urban drain emergency works
- Ederny - urban drain culvert upgrade
- River Blackwater (South Tyrone side) – channel refurbishment works
- Powerwasher for Ulsterbus Enniskillen
- Killyhevlin WTW Improvements to sludge settlement system
- Garrison WWTWs
- Rossory WWPS Upgrade
- Sustainable Catchment Area Management Project (SCAMP Ireland)
- Killyhevlin WTW – GAC
- Hallcraig road, Enniskillen WM Ext
- South / South East Zonal Study South East Phase 1 Work Packages
- South / South East Zonal Study South Phase 1 Work Packages
- Old Omagh Road Phase 1, Ballygawley Storm Sewer
- Carland to Cookstown Strategic Trunk Main
- Castle Archdale WWTW
- Castor Bay to Dungannon Strategic Trunk Mains
- Main street Belcoo Storm sewer ext
- MIMP West (Major Incident Mitigation Project West Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Woodlawn Park, Dungannon Storm & Foul sewer
- MIMP North (Major Incident Mitigation Project North Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Western Area Telemetry Needs
- Drumkeeran SR Rehabilitation
- Killyhevlin WTW Hypo Storage Tank Replacement
- Doochrock West SR Rehabilitation
- Dungannon WWTW Health & Safety Issues
- Dannys Mill Road Enniskillen Sewer Rehabilitation
- Water Supply West - Turbidity Monitor Upgrade
- Grange Park, Dungannon WWPS Upgrade
- Lisnarrick WWTW
- Tempo WWTW
- Dernagh WWPS Upgrade

2015/16

- Lough Galliagh, Enniskillen - upgrade of inadequate inlet grille structure,
- Graffy, Kinawley - construction of outlet headwall and installation of flap valve
- Blaney Mill - grille upgrade
- Kesh - manhole refurbishment
- Lisbellaw, Tattygare Drain - replacement of inadequate inlet grille structure
- Lisnaskea, Killypaddy Drain - replacement of inadequate outlet grille structure
- Lisnaskea, Attybarron Drain - replacement of inadequate outlet grille structure
- Colebrook, Maguiresbridge - flood defence remedial works
- Favour Royal Road, Augher Foul Sewer
- Sustainable Catchment Area Management Project (SCAMP Ireland)
- Killyhevlin WTW - GAC
- Killyman Street Moy Storm Sewer Extension
- South / South East Zonal Study South Phase 1 Work Packages
- Carland to Cookstown Strategic Trunk Main
- Castle Archdale WWTW
- Old Caulfield Rd Storm Sewer Extension, Castlecaulfield, Dungannon
- Castor Bay to Dungannon Strategic Trunk Mains
- Rossory WWPS, Pumping Main Extension and Replacement.
- Rathmore SR Rehabilitation

- MIMP North (Major Incident Mitigation Project North Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements
- Brookeborough Sr Rehabilitation
- Western Area Telemetry Needs
- Crawfords Hill Mains Replacement
- Killyhevlin WTW Hypo Storage Tank Replacement
- Doochrock West SR Rehabilitation
- Dungannon WWTW Health & Safety Issues
- Colebrook Park Road Mains Replacement
- Ardglene Grove Area Dungannon Watermain Realignment
- Carmoney WTW - Old CWT Outlet Pipework
- Water Supply West - Turbidity Monitor Upgrade
- Toura Road Mains Replacement
- Clabby Road WWPS

(ii) Ongoing Capital Projects

2016/17

- Irvinestown - upgrade of inadequate inlet grille structure
- Donagh - urban grille upgrade
- Lisbellaw Brooke Street Drain - culvert repairs
- Acres Park/Drumhaw, Lisnaskea - culvert scheme and grille works
- Drumaine, Ballinamallard - installation of 265m of concrete pipe with grille upgrade
- River Blackwater (South Tyrone side) – channel refurbishment works
- Cycle shelters in Enniskillen
- Carland to Cookstown Strategic Trunk Main
- Castle Archdale WWTW
- Rossory WWPS, Pumping Main Extension and Replacement.
- Western Area Telemetry Needs
- Crawfords Hill Mains Replacement
- Killyhevlin WTW Hypo Storage Tank Replacement
- Colebrook Park Road Mains Replacement
- Ardglene Grove Area Dungannon Watermain Realignment
- Toura Road Mains Replacement
- Omagh IPS Foul & Storm
- Belleek Meenacloybane Strategic Main Replacement.
- Killynure Wood, Enniskillen Storm sewer
- Syonfin WPS to Dungoran SR 150mm DI Watermain Replacement
- Churchview, Armagh Rd, Moy WWPS Upgrade
- Barravey SR Rehabilitation
- Clabby Road WWPS

(iii) Future Capital Programmes

- Killyure Armco – A feasibility study is underway to assess the condition of a section of culvert on the designated Killyure Lough Drain, Wickham Place, Enniskillen. If viable works are identified the project will be prioritised for design and construction, subject to funding.
- Linen Green, Moygashal – A feasibility study with associated economic appraisal has just commenced to assess the recent flooding. If viable alleviation works are identified the project will be prioritised for design and construction, subject to funding.
- Enniskillen Translink yard resurfacing. This is currently at the design stage.
- Killyhevlin Clear Water Tank
- Killyhevlin WTW Improvements to sludge settlement system
- Garrison WWTWs
- Rossory WWPS Upgrade
- Sustainable Catchment Area Management Project (SCAMP Ireland)
- Drumgallon WWPS Upgrade.
- Clonmore Road, Clonmore Sewerage Scheme

- Colebrooke Road Fivemiletown Storm Sewer
- Killymaddy Hill, Dungannon Storm sewer

TransportNI operates to council boundaries rather than Constituency boundaries and therefore works in Fermanagh and South Tyrone area are included, up to 2014, within Fermanagh District Council and Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council reports and more recently within Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster District Council reports. Recent reports to councils outlining completed and proposed works are available on the DfI internet site and hyperlinks to relevant council reports since 2012 are provided below.

2012

Fermanagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-fermanagh-district-council-2012>

Dungannon - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-dungannon-and-south-tyrone-borough-council-2012>

2013

Fermanagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-fermanagh-district-council-2013>

Dungannon - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-dungannon-and-south-tyrone-borough-council-2013>

2014

Fermanagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-fermanagh-district-council-2014>

Dungannon - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-and-interim-reports-dungannon-and-south-tyrone-borough-council-2014>

2015

Fermanagh & Omagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-fermanagh-and-omagh-district-council-2015>

Mid Ulster - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-mid-ulster-district-council-2015>

2016

Fermanagh & Omagh - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-fermanagh-and-omagh-district-council-2016>

Mid Ulster – This report will be available from the Publications Section of the Department for Infrastructure website from the 1st July 2016 - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications>

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure what steps he will take to prevent open cast lignite mining in North Antrim.
(AQW 819/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As you will be aware local area planning is now the responsibility of the local councils.

With regards to North Antrim, Lignite Resource / Policy Areas are designated in the local area plans for both the Crumlin and Ballymoney areas.

Any changes to these designations will be the responsibility of those councils in bringing forward their local area plans.

The Department for Economy has responsibility for issuing licences in respect of lignite extraction.

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure to list the names of the 18 members of the Drainage Council and which body each member represents.
(AQW 828/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The names, position and interests represented on the Drainage Council are as follows:

Name	Position	Interest Represented
Mr Alan Strong	Chairperson	Drainage Specialist
Cllr Brian Hanvey	Vice Chairperson	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
Mr Shaun Donnelly	Secretary	Head of Business Support Branch, Rivers Agency
Alderman Samuel Cole	Member	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cllr Graham Craig	Member	Belfast City Council
Cllr Jim Fletcher	Member	Ards and North Down Borough Council
Cllr Beth Adger	Member	Mid and East Antrim District Council

Name	Position	Interest Represented
Cllr Bernice Swift	Member	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Cllr Billy Webb	Member	Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council
Cllr Cadogan Enright	Member	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Mr Andrew Wilson	Member	Agriculture
Mr Brendan Kerr	Member	Fisheries
Dr Bernie Lafferty	Member	Tourism
Mr David Porter	Member	DfI Rivers Agency official
Mr Angus Kerr	Member	DfI Planning, Water and DVA

Ms Armstrong asked the Minister for Infrastructure, of the 26km of sea defences designated by the Drainage Council since its establishment in 1947, (i) how many individual sea defences were created; (ii) what type of defences were installed; (iii) what date work was completed; (iv) what was the cost of each defence created as a result of the designation determined. (AQW 830/16-21)

Mr Hazzard:

(i) **How many individual sea defences were created;**

Rivers Agency is responsible for 26km of sea defences comprising of 41 individual structures (including two tidal barriers.) The defences are located at the Foyle estuary, Belfast, Strangford and Carlingford Loughs.

(ii) **What type of defences were installed;**

The majority of the sea defences maintained by the Rivers Agency are earth embankments with an armouring layer applied to the sea facing sloping surface. The function of the armouring layer is to reduce the erosive power of the waves. Some embankments can be cored with steel sheet piles and may be topped by a vertical or re-curved concrete wall to reduce wave overtopping.

The two tidal barriers are substantial concrete structures with control gates that curtail the passage of sea water into the Quoile estuary at time of high tides.

(iii) **What date work was completed;**

The construction of the early sea defences commenced in the early 18th century, primarily to reclaim land. Throughout the nineteenth and twenty century major construction works have continued to improve both the degree of protection and their structural resilience. Recent major works included the 2005 upgrading of the Newtownard's Sea defences at a cost of £3.7m and the refurbishment of the Quoile tidal barrier in 2005 at £725k. Currently the Department is exploring options to upgrade the Newry coastal defences at Greenbank.

(iv) **What was the cost of each defence created as a result of the designation determined.**

Given the time period that has elapsed since these defences were originally constructed it is not possible to estimate the actual cost of each defence created. However, the Modern (Gross) Replacement value for the sea defences that Rivers Agency maintains is some £46.4m.

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the current status of the proposals for the East Link Road, Armagh. (AQW 831/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following a Public Information event for the proposed Armagh East Link held in June 2014 the Preferred Corridor was reviewed.

The review included consideration of the preferred corridor emerging further out the A28 Markethill Road and has identified viable alternative options which are now subject to detailed assessment before a preferred option can be confirmed. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in autumn 2016.

Following identification of the Preferred Option, the next stage of development work, involves completing a 'specimen design' which will be subject to comprehensive environmental, economic and engineering assessments.

The formal statutory procedures will then follow with the publication of an Environmental Statement together with a notice of intention to make a Direction Order and a notice of intention to make a Vesting Order. It is likely a Public Inquiry will be required to determine if the proposal should go ahead as planned.

Delivery of the link remains subject to clearing the statutory procedures, having a satisfactory economic appraisal and funding made available to the Department.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the proposed introduction of residents' only parking schemes in the Holylands and Lower Malone Areas.

(AQW 843/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I will soon be meeting officials to discuss all issues associated with Residents' Parking in Belfast along with other towns and cities, before any decisions regarding the way forward are taken.

During this discussion I will of course consider the level of local support for and resistance against the implementation of these schemes.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what are the plans for the old Strangford and Rathlin ferrys when they are replaced.

(AQW 853/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The MV Strangford, which is currently used on the ferry service between Strangford and Portaferry, and the MV Rachlyn, a smaller passenger-only vessel used occasionally on the route, will be offered for sale on behalf of the Department by the Disposal Services Authority (DSA).

The ferries currently used to provide the service between Ballycastle and Rathlin Island are not owned by the Department but are provided through a service contract with an operator, Rathlin Island Ferry Ltd (RIFL).

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what is the cost to build the new replacement ferry for Rathlin Island.

(AQW 854/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following a procurement process, a contract for the new Rathlin Ferry was awarded to Arklow Marine Services, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, Ireland at a cost of £2.8m.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what is the cost to build the new replacement ferry for Strangford.

(AQW 855/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following a procurement process, a contract to build the new Strangford Ferry was awarded to Cammell Laird, Birkenhead at a cost of £6.2m.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure how much funding would be needed to bring the road network up to date.

(AQW 856/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: It has been independently established that some £141 million per annum, based on 2016 prices, is needed to maintain the structural integrity of the entire road network in the North at good practice resurfacing frequencies. The structural maintenance budget for the current financial year (2016/17) is £46 million, leaving a shortfall of around £95 million.

You will be pleased to hear that additional funds for roads structural maintenance have been allocated as part of the June monitoring round. That said, I will continue to press for additional funds for this key area as opportunities arise.

Mr Lyons asked the Minister for Infrastructure if his Department has any plans to review the regulation of wedding and other specialist cars under the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

(AQW 864/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: During the development of the recent new legislation brought in on foot of the Taxis Act 2008, significant representations were made by the Wedding Car sector who felt they should either be taken out of the Act entirely (as is the case in Britain), or that the levels of regulation placed upon them should be markedly reduced. Although action has already been taken wherever possible to limit the legislative burden on this sector, there is limited scope in the current Act to reduce further the requirements being made of the Wedding Car sector.

It is good practice to keep legislation under review once it has been implemented in order to evaluate its effectiveness and to identify any areas where changes may be appropriate. I intend to engage with the industry and speak to officials in the coming weeks before making decisions regarding any review of the Act or determining the timescales and extent of such a review.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure, following the decision by Northern Ireland Water to redirect water from the vicinity of the Woodburn Forest drill site directly to Belfast Lough; to outline (i) what assessment has been made of the impact on water quality of Belfast Lough; and (ii) whether an appropriate assessment on the impact on habitats has been carried out.

(AQW 877/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am advised by NI Water that the diverting of the run-off from this catchment area is a normal 'business as usual' activity which redirects water down its natural water course, rather than into the reservoir. The process of allowing it to flow down its natural watercourse is used, on occasion, for operational reasons i.e. to carry out maintenance etc.

The operation of weir plates to divert the water either in or out of the Middle South Woodburn Reservoir is not an abnormal activity. No permissions are required as a result of this activity. Both NIEA and NIW are monitoring water quality in North Woodburn, below the drill site, for a number of relevant parameters.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether storm drainage in the Ashgrove Road area of Portadown has been surveyed to ensure it is structurally sound and fit for purpose following flooding in December 2015.

(AQW 933/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following the extreme weather events in November 2015 and January 2016, Rivers Agency staff completed a walk over survey of their infrastructure and found no significant obstructions.

Rivers Agency intends to commission consultants to complete a feasibility study for the Ashgrove Road this financial year. This feasibility study will appraise the flood risk in the Ashgrove Road area and investigate options to alleviate any potential flooding emanating from rivers. This study will be subject to prioritisation, finance and resource availability.

NI Water has advised that prior to the flooding incidents in this area, it carried out mechanical improvement works at the Ashgrove Wastewater Pumping station to increase its efficiency. NI Water has confirmed that the public sewerage system in the Ashgrove sub drainage area operated as designed throughout the extreme weather events in November 2015 and January 2016.

In addition, following the flooding incident, NI Water commissioned consultants to undertake a drainage network study of the Ashgrove sub-drainage catchment area to examine and report on system, structural, hydraulic condition and capacity.

When the outcome of the study is known, NI Water will consult with Rivers Agency and Transport NI to look at any development solutions deemed necessary. NI Water aims to have initial study findings by late Autumn 2016.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he has considered utilising people serving community service sentences to carry out grass cutting, particularly in South Antrim.

(AQW 952/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department takes its social responsibilities very seriously and TransportNI has had discussions with Probation Board NI (PBNI) to identify road maintenance work that could be safely carried out by people with community service sentences.

PBNI and TransportNI agree that it would not be appropriate for people with community service orders to work as part of a TNI maintenance squad on live roads given the significant health and safety training that is required. However, it has been agreed that both parties would have further discussions around the possible use of PBNI work squads in the maintenance of park and ride facilities. This work could include litter picking and grass cutting and pilot schemes are being considered in Antrim and Mid Ulster.

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Infrastructure what consultation, and with what outcome, was conducted with churches on the route of the Gran Fondo Giro d'Italia.

(AQW 955/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Department for Infrastructure was not responsible for the road closures associated with this event.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the expenditure on grass cutting and weed spraying in each of the last five years.

(AQW 996/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not analyse its expenditure on grass cutting and weed spraying in the format requested, however, I can provide you with expenditure on environmental maintenance in the last 5 years. Environmental maintenance includes Emergency Work/Other Environmental Maintenance, Grass Cutting, Weed Spraying and Tree Maintenance.

	2011-2012 £'k	2012-2013 £'k	2013-2014 £'k	2014-2015 £'k	2015-2016 £'k
Environmental Maintenance	6,714	6,569	6,607	6,451	5,768

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail all future capital projects funded by his Department based in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 1021/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Delivery of Capital Projects is entirely dependent on availability of budgets and at this time there is only budget certainty around the current financial year.

I would also take the opportunity to clarify that my Department operates on Council boundaries as opposed to electoral boundaries and therefore details of schemes within the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency are included within the Fermanagh/Omagh and Mid Ulster Council Reports.

Recent reports to Councils outlining completed and proposed works are on the DfI internet site. A hyperlink to the Fermanagh/Omagh Council report is provided below:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-fermanagh-and-omagh-district-council-2016>

The 2016 report for Mid Ulster Council area will be available from the Publications Section of the Department for Infrastructure website from the 1st July 2016 and again a hyperlink is provided below:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications>

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on his Department's long term plans for the Hollywood Hills Reservoirs.

(AQW 1048/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has no long term plans for Church Road Upper or Creighton's Green which are the Northern Ireland Water (NIW) reservoirs in the Hollywood Hills. This is an operational matter for NIW which has an obligation to dispose of property that is no longer of use. These impounding reservoirs have been identified as surplus to requirements.

NIW has informed my Department that the reservoirs were offered to the public sector in May 2014, and that an initial expression of interest from North Down Borough Council was withdrawn in January 2015. They have also advised that an expression of interest has been received from Forest Service in respect of Creighton's Green reservoir but this interest has not been followed up.

NI Water has further advised that it has no immediate plans to advertise these reservoirs on the open market.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on his Department's long term plans for the Conlig Reservoir.

(AQW 1049/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has no long term plans for Conlig Upper and Lower reservoirs. This is an operational matter for NI Water which has an obligation to dispose of property that is no longer of use. The impounding reservoirs at Conlig have both been identified as surplus to requirements.

NI Water has informed my Department that the reservoirs were offered to the public sector in May 2014, and that an expression of interest received from North Down Borough Council at that time was later withdrawn in January 2015. NI Water has further advised that it has no immediate plans to advertise the reservoirs on the open market.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on his Department's long term plans for Portavoe Reservoir.

(AQW 1051/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I refer the member to my response of 17 June 2016 to AQW 288/16-21.

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the number of occasions his Department contacted candidates or agents to request the removal of election posters from road signage during the recent Assembly election.

(AQW 1059/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has contacted candidates or agents 13 times to request the removal of election posters from road signage in relation to the recent Assembly election.

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the weed spraying operations his Department is undertaking in town centres and residential areas in North Down.

(AQW 1087/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I would refer the Member to my response to his recent question AQW 698/16-21 which explained my Department's position in respect of weed control in North Down this financial year.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the Dungiven bypass.

(AQW 1095/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The A6 Derry to Dungiven dualling scheme is one of the Executive's Flagship projects. As Minister for Infrastructure I am committed to maximising delivery of this project within the current mandate. I am currently engaging with my officials to determine how this could be achieved.

Priority will be given to commencing construction at Dungiven and progressing towards Drumahoe. The indicative funding allocations announced in the December 2015 Budget Statement will allow construction to commence with a bypass of Dungiven and progress towards Claudy.

I am pleased to advise that in May of this year my Department appointed consultants to assist with the procurement and delivery of this scheme.

Subject to making the statutory orders, approval of the final business case and successful procurement, it is possible that construction of the Derry to Dungiven scheme could commence in the latter part of 2018/19.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department has plans to upgrade the sewerage in Ballykelly.

(AQW 1112/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have been advised by NI Water that it is assessing the hydraulic capacity of the Ballykelly sewerage system and causes of flooding during heavy rainfall events. A network model for Ballykelly has been completed and a draft consultant report, including high level solutions, was received at the end of April 2016.

The draft report is currently under review by NI Water with some further detailed work required to verify flooding mechanisms. NI Water hopes to conclude this further detailed work by the end of July 2016. The implementation of a suitable solution to the flooding issue in Ballykelly will be subject to a viable engineering option and the necessary funding being available.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Infrastructure what discussions (i) his Department has had with the owner of Herdman's Mill in Sion Mills following the recent arson attack; and (ii) his Department has had with relevant preservation agencies to ensure that the Mill is repaired to the standard required.

(AQW 1125/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My officials have advised me that the Department has had no discussions with the owner of Herdman's Mill following the recent arson attack. With the transfer of planning powers on 1 April 2015, responsibility for planning matters in relation to the Mill transferred to Derry City and Strabane District Council.

I understand that the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities, who are responsible for providing advice to owners on how best to look after their listed buildings, are liaising with the Planning Enforcement Team of the Council in relation to issues on this site.

If you have any further queries in relation to the Mill you can contact the planning manager at Derry City and Strabane District Council at the address below:

Maura Fox, Head of Planning, Derry City and Strabane District Council, 98 Strand Road, Derry BT48 7NN.

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he plans to conduct a community consultation exercise in relation to legislation to regulate the flying of flags on lampposts.

(AQW 1134/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Under the terms of the Stormont House Agreement, the remit of the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition includes issues around flags and emblems. The Stormont House Agreement states that there will be a full public consultation on any agreed legislation.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department will take responsibility for any damage caused to a taxi during the fitting of a taxi meter.

(AQW 1161/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The fitment of taximeters is not the responsibility of the Department, these are undertaken for individual taxi drivers and operators by separate commercial entities. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for the Department to accept responsibility.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure when a taxi meter and printer for every taxi will become compulsory.

(AQW 1162/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: From 31 May 2016 all Class A and B taxis were required to install and use an approved taximeter and printer and adhere to a new maximum fare.

Following representations from the taxi industry my predecessor decided that the new requirements would not be fully enforced until 1 October 2016.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline his plans to review the tariffs available to taxi operators before meters become compulsory.

(AQW 1164/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: From 31 May 2016 all Class A and B taxis were required to install and use an approved taximeter and printer and to adhere to a new maximum fare. Drivers and operators may set any tariff that they wish, provided that it is below this fare.

The maximum fare was last reviewed in May 2015 and is broadly in-line with the previous regulated fare for Belfast Public Hire vehicles. The next review is due in 2017.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr Robinson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the benefits for (i) taxi operators; and (ii) taxi users under current legislation.

(AQW 1165/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The new taxi Regulations made under the Taxis Act 2008 commenced operation on 31 May 2016. These include a new Taxi Licensing regime that introduces new categories of Taxi Licence which increases the number of taxis that can be hailed in Belfast on Friday and Saturday nights and on public holidays. The Regulations also increase the variety of wedding cars that can be licensed, including the use of 2 door and convertible vehicles that previously could not be licensed.

They also include a new requirement for certain classes of taxi to use a taximeter and adhere to a new maximum fare, thereby providing more transparency of taxis fares and enhanced consumer protection. This provision also protects drivers from spurious allegations of overcharging.

The new Regulations will also help ensure that people with disabilities using taxis benefit from new and enhanced vehicle standards, including making it easier to board and alight and include improved internal safety requirements.

The Power of Seizure regulations permit the seizure of motor vehicles when suspected of operating as a taxi without a proper licence under section 42 of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. This will help address the problem of unlicensed taxis a serious issue that is of concern to the Department and the industry.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) whether he is aware of out of order electric car charging points in Portrush, Ballymena and Larne; and (ii) when he expects these points to be repaired.

(AQW 1194/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: On 30th July 2015, the then Minister for Regional Development Danny Kennedy and the former Environment Minister Mark H Durkan announced that responsibility for the operation, maintenance and development of the public charge point network for electric vehicles users in Northern Ireland had transferred to the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).

I have, therefore, arranged for your questions to be sent directly to the Head of Regulation and ecarNI in ESB and requested that a detailed response to the issues you have raised be sent to you directly.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail, in the last calendar year, (i) all enforcement action taken by his Department to ensure taxi operators who have been granted a licence by the Driver and Vehicle Agency are compliant with the departmentally approved booking procedures and all other regulations and requirements; and (ii) all instances in which action has been taken against (a) drivers; and (b) operators that were found in default, including the nature of the default.

(AQW 1211/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: In 2015 the Driver and Vehicle Agency carried out 70 inspections at licensed taxi operator premises to assess whether operators were compliant with approved booking procedures and all other regulations and requirements. In the case of 43 inspections the operator was deemed to fully comply with the requirements and in respect of the remaining 27 inspections the Agency issued Enforcement Notices to identify areas of non-compliance that had to be addressed by the operator.

During the same period the Agency stopped and inspected 2,040 taxis at the roadside resulting in the prohibition of 131 vehicles for mechanical defects and the suspension of 116 vehicle licences on grounds that the vehicle was deemed unfit for service. The Agency also issued Fixed Penalty Notices and instigated prosecution against a number of taxi operators and drivers as detailed in the table below.

Action Taken	Number of detections
<i>Prosecutions Initiated</i>	
Operator	58
Driver	67
Total Prosecutions	125
<i>Fixed Penalty Notices issued*</i>	
No Operator Licence	72
No PSV Vehicle Licence	116
No Taxi Drivers Licence	17
No Insurance	4
Licensed Operators using unlicensed vehicles/drivers	51
All other Fixed Penalties	523

Action Taken	Number of detections
Total Fixed Penalties Issued	783

Source: DOE and DfI National Statistics

* It has not been possible to distinguish between those FPNs issued to a taxi driver or taxi operator due to the nature of the information captured at the roadside.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the savings achieved by the current grass cutting practice of maintain essential sightlines on the Bangor ring road as opposed to cutting all of the grass on each visit.
(AQW 1215/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Member will be aware of the budgetary resource pressures faced by my Department this year. This has impacted on TransportNI's grass cutting operation to the point where only one cut was planned however I have since been successful in making funding available for a second cut.

Taking account of this and the rate of growth due to the weather conditions it was decided to cut sightlines at critical junctions, etc first and follow up with the other areas later.

Consequently, I can advise the Member that savings can be measured in road safety terms and potential lives saved rather than monetary values which I hope he will agree is more important.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure, following the £25 million allocation to his Department following the June Monitoring Round, to detail the footpaths that will be sprayed for weeds twice a year in North Down.
(AQW 1231/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that my Department's TransportNI intends to undertake a selective programme of weed control in North Down this financial year.

For clarification, due to budgetary resource pressures weed control will be directed at those areas most affected i.e. flagged footways within housing developments.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the allocation from the June Monitoring Round for road maintenance in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.
(AQW 1269/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £8m of Capital funding for structural maintenance activities such as resurfacing and £5m of Resource funding for essential road maintenance activities such as cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting and repair of potholes.

While this funding has not as yet been allocated, I should clarify that my Department does not allocate funding on a constituency basis but rather allocates funding to the four Transport NI Divisions using a range of weighted indicators tailored to each of the maintenance activities outlined above. The Divisions in turn distribute the funding across the various District Council areas using the same indicators and this ensures, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funding.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update, including the proposed timescale, for the resolution of the dead miles issue.
(AQW 1332/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: To address the issue of dead miles, the former Department of the Environment made the Taxis (Taximeters, Devices and Maximum Fares) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (S.R. 2016 No. 148) on 11 March 2016.

The Regulations amend the Taxis (Taximeters, Devices and Maximum Fares) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (S.R. 2015 No. 394) by adding a third exemption to regulation 10(2) which requires all Class A & B taxis to use a taximeter. This additional exemption exists when there is agreement between the passenger and the operator, in advance of the journey, that the distance to be travelled by the taxi will exceed the distance of the passenger's journey and the passenger waives the right to have the fare calculated by the taximeter and agrees the fare for the journey. When the conditions have been met, the driver must record a variety of information in writing (e.g. the fare agreed, the name of the person for whom the booking is made, date and time of the journey etc), keep these details in the taxi for the duration of the journey and offer a copy of the record to the passenger.

The Regulations became operational on 31 May 2016.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) for his assessment of the decision by Uber to use only Class C taxis; and (ii) whether he has any concerns that they must not display a roof sign or advertise as a taxi service.

(AQW 1333/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The new Taxi Licensing Regulations prescribe four classes of use for which a taxi licence may be granted. Taxi operators are at liberty to determine which taxi licence class or classes are most appropriate for their business model and will licence their vehicles accordingly.

Under the new regulations, Class C taxis are restricted to pre-booked journeys only and are not permitted to ply for hire or reward. They are prohibited from displaying a roof sign, or advertising as a taxi service, to reduce the likelihood of being approached by customers to hire the vehicle at the roadside without a pre-booking. Taxi regulations are strictly enforced by the Driver and Vehicle Agency.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline if his Department offers any financial assistance to taxis to adopt and become compliant with the new requirement under regulations stemming from the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

(AQW 1334/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: No financial assistance is available from my Department.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail (i) how much of the Rural Transport Fund Grant was allocated to each Rural Community Transport Partnerships; and (ii) how many Dial a Lift passenger trips were completed in each of the corresponding areas in the years 2014-15 and 2015-16.

(AQW 1356/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department and formerly the Department for Regional Development (DRD), provides grant funding to Rural Transport Providers.

Additional funding was also paid to the Rural Transport Providers via the Assisted Rural Travel Scheme (ARTS) which allows those individuals with a Smartpass to avail of concessionary travel when using Dial a Lift.

ARTS funding is provided by the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) now known as the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The amount is determined by the direct cost of trips. My Department facilitates this scheme by making all the grant payments. In 2015 – 2016, DRD supplemented the funding received from DARD to ensure all direct costs were met.

The tables below provide the following information for each of the Rural Transport Providers:

- the amount of Rural Transport Fund Grant allocated;
- the number of Dial a Lift passenger trips completed;
- the amount of grant paid via ARTS; and
- the number of passenger trips completed via ARTS.

The table also reflects an additional capital grant payment funded by DARD during 2015 – 2016 which was paid to each provider to cover the cost of replacement equipment/vehicles.

It is important to note that comparisons between years and partnerships can be complex and need to take account of the geographical size of each partnership area, the distance members live from the Partnership location and local services, and the administrative and operational costs.

It is also difficult to analyse cost per trip separately for ARTS and Dial a Lift as overheads and other administrative costs would be paid from the Rural Transport Fund grant.

2014 - 2015

Partnership	Rural Transport Fund Grant paid by DRD	Dial a Lift passengers trips completed	ARTS Funding	ARTS passenger trips completed
CDM Transport	£591,526	61,316	£129,683	52,405
Down Community Transport	£428,303	13,557	£29,833	11,536
Easilink Community Transport	£521,679	36,727	£85,685	33,665
Fermanagh Community Transport	£575,248	26,931	£62,965	22,182

Partnership	Rural Transport Fund Grant paid by DRD	Dial a Lift passengers trips completed	ARTS Funding	ARTS passenger trips completed
Lagan Valley Rural Transport	£195,639	7,314	£17,345	6,669
North Coast Community Transport	£660,717	49,398	£114,807	46,434
South Antrim Community Transport	£213,763	14,867	£34,194	14,276
Southern Area	£440,643	32,574	£72,799	29,714
Totals	£3,627,518	242,684	£547,311	216,881

2015 - 2016

Partnership	Rural Transport Fund Grant paid by DRD	Dial a Lift passengers trips completed	ARTS Funding	ARTS passenger trips completed	Capital Funding paid by DARD
CDM Transport	£493,085	61,816	£158,885	53,565	£113,829
Down Community Transport	£359,543	9,564	£21,335	8,210	£49,040
Easilink Community Transport	£397,000	30,073	£80,574	27,017	£148,716
Fermanagh Community Transport	£425,613	25,432	£70,824	20,594	£82,432
Lagan Valley Rural Transport	£148,587	7,143	£18,801	6,754	£54,084
North Coast Community Transport	£500,122	44,725	£118,462	41,364	£164,045
South Antrim Community Transport	£156,354	14,430	£35,339	13,761	£34,015
Southern Area	£354,630	23,609	£65,122	21,876	£137,312
Totals	£2,834,934	216,792	£569,342*	193,141	£783,473

* In 2015 – 2016 DRD supplemented the funding received from DARD to ensure all direct trip costs were met.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail how much was spent on road resurfacing in North Down in the last two financial years.

(AQW 1372/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that my Department's TransportNI invested a total of £2,325,202.00 on carriageway resurfacing schemes in North Down in the last two financial years.

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the expected start date of the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson dualling scheme.

(AQW 1425/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am pleased to advise that the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson scheme is now well advanced, with officials working, in coordination with the appointed contractor and designers to develop an agreed cost for the construction phase of the works.

Progression to the construction phase of the contract is predicated on the agreement of the construction costs, successful completion of the statutory processes and Business Case approval.

It is anticipated that works will commence on site in early Autumn 2016.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether Bailie Park, Bailie Terrace, and Bailie Gardens in the Cotton estate in Bangor will be resurfaced.

(AQW 1429/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am pleased to advise the Member that Bailie Park, Bailie Terrace and Bailie Gardens have been included in the resurfacing programme for 2016/17.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure when work will begin on resurfacing Bailie Park, Bailie Terrace, and Bailie Gardens.

(AQW 1430/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that the resurfacing scheme for Bailie Park, Bailie Terrace and Bailie Gardens has been ordered with TransportNI's contractor. However I am unable at this time to provide him with a definitive start date for the works as the contractor is currently completing other schemes and will allocate it to a suitable slot in his programme.

TransportNI is hopeful that work will commence in the next few months.

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Infrastructure how his Department will support and promote a cycling strategy.
(AQW 1455/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Bicycle Strategy, published in August 2015, provides a broad framework for a community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for everyday journeys. I want to continue to support that framework through building a comprehensive network for the bicycle, supporting people who choose to travel by bicycle and promoting the bicycle as a viable mode of transport.

The details for delivering the Strategy will be set out in a series of five year Delivery Plans. The first delivery plan, due to be published this autumn, will set out how I plan to deliver the three pillars set out in the strategy up to 2020. The Delivery Plan will focus on the main tasks or projects required to make early progress in delivering more journeys by bicycle.

Even before the publication of the first Delivery Plan, my Department has been developing a number of flagship bicycle infrastructure schemes in Belfast. It has also taken forward a range of projects including the Belfast Bicycle Network Plan, the Strategic Plan for Greenways and the 'small grants programme' for Councils which will provide small grants towards the development of feasibility studies and more detailed proposals for greenways.

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Infrastructure what are the processes in place to guarantee propriety and transparency when a council is both the planning adjudicator and applicant.
(AQW 1462/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There is a range of provisions within the two-tier planning system designed to deliver an open, transparent and impartial planning process.

Where a council seeks planning permission it must apply for it in a similar fashion to any other applicant and is also subject to the relevant policy and legislative requirements. In such cases, the Planning General Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 provide that proposals must be publicised in the same way as any other such application from any other applicant i.e. in a local newspaper, on a council website and to identified neighbours. The application cannot be decided by a council committee or officer responsible for the management of any land or buildings to which the application relates.

In addition, the Planning (Notification of Council's Own Applications) Direction 2015 requires a council to notify my Department of applications which would be significantly contrary to the local development plan for the district: in which a council has an interest i.e. where the district council is the applicant/developer; where it has a financial or other interest (e.g. partnership); or where development is on land wholly or partly in the district council's ownership or in which it has an interest. Once notified my Department then has 28 days from the date of receipt of the notification to decide whether to "call in" the application to be determined by the Department. During this period a council must not grant planning permission for the development.

My Department also has separate powers under Section 29 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to direct that certain applications be referred to it instead of being dealt with by a council and which would then be determined in the same way as regionally significant applications made directly to the Department.

Councillors are subject to a Code of Conduct for which the Department for Communities has responsibility. This Code sets out the principles and rules of conduct which councillors are required to observe. The Code covers such matters as decision-making, declaration of interests and lobbying, as well as a section related specifically to planning. Councils have been provided with guidance advising councillors on how to apply the Code when carrying out their planning functions. The NI Commissioner for Complaints has the responsibility for investigating any alleged breaches of the code.

The transfer of planning powers to councils in April 2015 was supported by an extensive capacity building programme for councillors and planning staff including the provisions of a protocol on the operation of planning committees and my Department continues to work closely with councils to support them in the delivery of an open, transparent and impartial planning process.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will support measures to reduce the speed of traffic outside St Patrick's College, Scarva Road, Banbridge following concerns being raised by residents and parents.
(AQW 1473/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise that the Scarva Road benefits from central hatching and there are red patches and 'SCHOOL' warning signs on the approach to St Patrick's College. I can also advise that there are pedestrian crossing facilities at the nearby signal controlled junction at Scarva Road/Reilly Street which also serves to improve safety for school pupils and the general public in this area.

The location is within the 30mph limit and any concerns regarding inappropriate speed should be referred to the PSNI who are responsible for enforcement.

Given the detail above there are no plans to introduce further measures at this location.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment of train times from Derry to Belfast.

(AQW 1486/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The current travel time from Great Victoria Street station to Derry remains at 2 hours and 15 minutes.

There are currently 10 train services in each direction on the Derry to Belfast corridor Monday through to Friday, eight on a Saturday and six in each direction on a Sunday. Phase 2 of the Coleraine to Derry track renewal programme is currently on schedule, with the new passing loop at Bellarena due for completion, including testing and commissioning by December 2016. This will make possible the introduction of an hourly service to and from Derry.

The project will result in increasing maximum line speed along the Coleraine – Derry section from 60mph to 70 generally with a further a section west of Bellarena increased from 70mph to 90mph. The increased line speed will add robustness to the timetable and facilitate the new timetable pattern. Reductions in journey time at this stage will be marginal.

The NI Railways network utilisation strategy identifies the factors that need addressed in the medium term to improve journey times on inter-urban services.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the bids by his Department in the June monitoring round.

(AQW 1487/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Finance Minister stated, in his Assembly address on the June Monitoring outcome, that the presence of an official opposition necessitated a change in approach. It afforded an opportunity to put in place a more streamlined allocation mechanism that would expedite the allocation of resources in a more efficient manner.

The new approach will see a different engagement process between departments and the Department of Finance at the commencement of the monitoring round. Rather than departments submitting a long list of departmental pressures, at the start of each monitoring round, the Departments will formally register with Supply Officers the key prioritised pressures within each department (for both Resource and Capital).

Therefore during June Monitoring I assessed my Department's needs, and in line with the Finance Minister and Executive Colleagues, the following allocations were agreed:

The following summarises the £5.3m additional Resource:

	DEL Other Resource	£m
1	Routine Roads Maintenance – meeting statutory requirement	5.0
2	Flood prevention (Combined bid - Resource & Capital)	0.3
	Total Resource	5.3

The additional Resource allocation relates to Routine Roads Maintenance and Flood Prevention.

The following summarises the additional £22.9m Capital allocated:

Capital	£m
Roads Structural Maintenance	8.0
York Street Interchange	4.0
Millennium Way, Lurgan	3.5
Translink – 18 Double Decker Metro Buses	2.8
Flood Prevention	1.5
Planning Portal	1.1
Waterways Ireland – Critical condition navigation infrastructure repairs	1.0
TransportNI Fleet items	1.0
Total Capital	22.9

The allocations will allow my Department to contribute to the maintenance of the existing roads network while progressing new roads projects at York Street Interchange and Millennium Way, Lurgan. Public transport is supported through the purchase of new buses enhancing the current stock. Flooding will also be addressed with the focus on those areas severely affected by the flooding incidents during autumn/winter 2015. Other funding will support the electronic planning system used by my Department and the 11 councils, provide funding to Waterways Ireland for critical repairs to the navigation repairs for the Erne system and Lower Bann and important replace of TransportNI operational fleet and ensure more efficient performance.

Mr Chambers asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans are in place to keep the new cycle and pedestrian footpath on East Circular Road between Gransha Road and Donaghadee Road roundabouts clear of debris thrown up by traffic.
(AQW 1489/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I have instructed officials to investigate and can advise that the debris is coming from the new stone drain recently constructed to the rear of the new cycle/footway scheme. Some stones are displaced by pedestrian movements at the entrance to the park and scattered across the path. I have instructed officials to undertake remedial works to resolve the problem.

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department will prioritise plans to develop the Ulster Canal.
(AQW 1490/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Under the Fresh Start Agreement, the Executive and the Irish government agreed to undertake a review with a view to identifying options for jointly developing future phases of the Ulster Canal restoration project. This work is well advanced and a report will be presented to the next NSMC Plenary meeting in July 2016.

I have previously set out my commitment to work with the Dublin government on progressing the Ulster Canal.

This will enable Ministers collectively to determine how best the further development of the Ulster Canal should be taken forward and I look forward to working my Executive colleagues and the Dublin government on progressing this important project.

Mr K Buchanan asked the Minister for Infrastructure how much has been spent on (i) grass cutting; (ii) road maintenance; (iii) gully cleaning and edging; and (iv) surface dressing in (a) Magherafelt; (b) Cookstown; and (c) Dungannon, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 1496/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not maintain an analysis of its expenditure in the format requested. Grass Cutting, Edging and Gully Emptying forms part of my Department's annual programme of environmental maintenance. Surface dressing would be included in my Department's expenditure on structural maintenance of the road network.

Environmental maintenance includes Grass Cutting, Weed Spraying, Tree Maintenance, Gully Cleaning and Emergency Work/Other Environmental Maintenance,

Table 1: TransportNI Expenditure on Environmental Maintenance by Council Area

Environmental Maintenance Expenditure £k			
District Council	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Magherafelt	266	218	1,232*
Cookstown	469	292	
Dungannon	697	606	
Total spend	1,432	1,116	1,232

Structural maintenance includes surface dressing, resurfacing, patching, refurbishment, structural drainage and structural stability.

Table 2: TransportNI Expenditure on Structural Maintenance by Council Area

Structural Maintenance Expenditure £k			
District Council	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Magherafelt	3,920	2,748	6,528 *
Cookstown	3,754	2,777	
Dungannon	6,557	5,518	
Total spend	14,231	11,043	6,528

* In 2015-2016 post Local Government Reform (LGR) the legacy Councils of Magherafelt, Cookstown & Dungannon were merged to create a new Mid Ulster District Council.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department will consider the relaxation of rural planning legislation so as to offer greater opportunities to people wishing to live in the countryside, subject to agreed criteria such as site integration, location and design.
(AQW 1498/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Whilst planning legislation does not make specific provision for residential development in the countryside, the Member will be aware of my Department's Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) which provides a strategic planning policy framework for the consideration of a wide range of development proposals in the countryside. The SPPS consolidates

and reflects the provisions of Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21): Sustainable Development in the Countryside which sets out a range of types of residential and non-residential development which in principle are considered to be acceptable. It is worth noting that under the transitional arrangements of the SPPS the provisions of PPS 21 are retained until such times that councils bring forward the Plan Strategy element of their Local Development Plans. As such, proposals for residential development in the countryside are considered on a case by case basis against the policy contained within the SPPS, PPS 21 and all other material considerations. The vast majority of planning applications for development in the countryside are now determined by councils.

Furthermore, the reformed planning system provides for a considerable degree of autonomy and flexibility for councils to bring forward detailed operational planning policies, which are more responsive to the priorities and needs of the people they serve, in their Local Development Plans. This includes policy for development in the countryside. As long as a council's planning policy takes account of the general thrust of regional strategic policy in respect of development in the countryside, then councils are free to develop their own approaches to deal with the local issues they face.

Finally, you may be aware that the former Environment Minister had committed to undertake a review of strategic policy for 'Development in the Countryside' (and 'Renewable Energy') following publication of the SPPS. Calls for Evidence issued in March and closed in May 2016. My officials are currently analysing all the responses received. When this work is concluded I will then consider the appropriate next steps I wish to take in relation to strategic planning policy for Development in the Countryside and Renewable Energy.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on his Department's proposals for the future use of the St Lucia site in Omagh.

(AQW 1499/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: St. Lucia is one of the four former military bases gifted to the NI Executive under the Hillsborough Castle Agreement, February 2010, with the expectation that the proceeds from disposal of the sites would be used to meet exceptional resource pressures.

Part of the site has transferred to my Department with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) currently retaining ownership of the Historic Core. This is to enable the MoD to resolve legal limitations prior to the transfer of the retained lands.

Officials are working with the Ministry of Defence to expedite the transfer of the retained lands. Officials are also liaising with other key stakeholders to identify options and develop a plan for the future of the St. Lucia site for implementation following the transfer of the retained lands.

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 187/16-21, whether his Department will share the content of the report with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

(AQW 1502/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I confirm that the Department has shared the report with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will release funds to Transport NI so the proposed expansion of the Manse Road, Carrmoney can be completed.

(AQW 1526/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department's TransportNI is currently developing a scheme to provide a cycle/footway on the northern side of the B90 Manse Road in Newtownabbey between the roundabouts at Prince Charles Way and Beverly Road, a length of approximately 875m.

The scheme will also include the widening of the carriageway and the provision of right turn facilities and pedestrian crossing islands at appropriate locations.

Unfortunately I am unable to confirm when funding might be available for minor works schemes of this nature. There is no funding available in the current financial year for this scheme and inclusion on a future works programme will very much depend on the capital budgets available.

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline (i) when Translink will be able to accept card payments for fares; and (ii) how Translink deal with passengers with only this method of payment at present.

(AQW 1528/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Translink currently accepts contact and contactless credit and debit card payments at all its bus and rail station ticket offices.

NI Railways have commenced a pilot on-train for contact and contactless credit and debit card payment acceptance using our Conductors' handheld ticket machines.

The pilot software is only deployed on a small number of such machines while the performance of the devices 'in the field' is monitored and assessed.

Assuming that no significant issues arise during the pilot, staff will be trained and EMV card acceptance rolled out to all handheld ticket machines over the coming months.

Currently, if customers only have this method of payment they can either:

- (a) pay using credit or debit card at any NI Railways ticket office; or
- (b) download Translink's mLink mobile ticketing app and pay for their NI Railways ticket using their credit/debit card or PayPal account; or
- (c) purchase their ticket online on the Translink website using their credit/debit card.

Credit and debit card payments cannot currently be accepted on Metro and Ulsterbus services due to the age of Translink's current ticketing equipment but it is Translink's intention to deploy contactless EMV acceptance functionality when the new on-bus ticketing system is implemented in the coming years.

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Infrastructure how many cuts of roadside grass will be undertaken by Transport NI in 2016 as a result of the budget reallocations in the June monitoring round.

(AQW 1560/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of the June monitoring round, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m which will be used to programme an additional grass cut, as well as to enhance other essential maintenance activities. This means that grass verges across all areas will be cut twice this year.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline how the new regulations regarding taxi meters are being enforced.[R]

(AQW 1565/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) is responsible for the mandatory approval, testing and sealing requirements for taximeters and printers required in all Class A and Class B taxis. This taximeter test is currently available at all 15 vehicle testing centres. Following the initial taximeter test, taximeters and printers will be inspected during the annual taxi licensing test to ensure continued compliance.

DVA enforcement officers will also conduct regular roadside inspections on taxis which include checking that taxi meters and printers have been installed properly and are operating in accordance with the regulations.

The current legal requirement for all Class A and B taxis to have an approved taximeter and printer fitted came into effect on 31 May 2016. However, following representations from the taxi industry concerned about the lead in time for the new requirements, a decision has been taken that until 1 October 2016 enforcement action taken against drivers at the roadside will be limited to education and advice. Similarly, presenting a Class A or Class B taxi for test without an approved taximeter and printer installed will not currently be a failure item until 1 October 2016.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will consider the preservation of the last remaining buildings of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, namely the railway station and watertower at Parkmore, Glenariff.

(AQW 1577/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: This property was sold by the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) in 1965 to a private individual. NITHC has no knowledge of who the current owner may be. The rail network in place currently is not connected to this location and there are no plans to connect it.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what areas of North Down are at potential risk of flooding.

(AQW 1586/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Information on Flood Risk for the whole of Northern Ireland and which therefore includes North Down, is publicly available on the 'Flood Maps (NI)' website. Flood Maps (NI) is an interactive map-viewer that enables users to access the latest flood hazard information available from government and it is accessible via the following link:-

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/what-flood-maps-ni>

In addition, Flood Risk Management Plans for Northern Ireland were published by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in December 2015 as required by the EU Floods Directive. The Plans focus on the 20 most Significant Flood Risk Areas (SFRAs) in Northern Ireland and provide information on flood risks and on objectives and measures to address the risks in those SFRAs.

North Down is encompassed within the area covered by the North Eastern River Basin District and the associated North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan which can be accessed via the following link:-

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/north-eastern-frmp.PDF>

There is one SFRA in North Down - the town of Bangor. Information about flood risk within Bangor SFRA is provided in Section 5.6 of the North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan. Also, within this Plan, the town of Holywood was identified as an Area for Further Study (AFS); see section 4.1.3 of the Plan for information about AFS.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure how many homes in North Down are at potential risk from flooding.
(AQW 1587/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, completed in December 2011, as required by the EU Floods Directive, indicated that on the basis of strategic flood mapping, approximately 46,000 properties, including homes, were at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea here.

Further analysis focusing on North Down in particular, indicates that a total of 1,414 dwellings in North Down are at potential risk from all sources of flooding.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans his Department has to increase sea defences in North Down.
(AQW 1588/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Flood Risk Management Plans, developed as a requirement of the EU Floods Directive, have not identified the need for further sea defences in North Down. However, a significant coastal flood risk in Belfast has been identified and a scheme is being developed to improve sea defences in this area.

There are sea defences along a section of the Esplanade in Holywood. Rivers Agency has maintenance responsibility for this section of sea defence and will continue to inspect and maintain these sea defences as necessary.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline the flood risk management plans for North Down.
(AQW 1589/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Flood Risk Management Plans for Northern Ireland were published by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in December 2015 as required by the EU Floods Directive. The Plans focus on the 20 most Significant Flood Risk Areas (SFRAs) in Northern Ireland and provide information on flood risks and on objectives and measures to address the risks in those SFRAs.

Flood Risk Management Plans are publicly accessible on the Department for Infrastructure's website via the following link:-

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/flood-risk-management-plans>

North Down is encompassed within the area covered by the North Eastern River Basin District and the associated North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan which can be accessed via the following link:-

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/north-eastern-frmp.PDF>

There is one SFRA in North Down - the town of Bangor. Information about Bangor SFRA is provided in Section 5.6 of the North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan. Within that Plan, subject to viability, Rivers Agency proposes undertaking a river flood alleviation scheme on the Ballyholme Stream in the vicinity of Gransha Road to reduce flood risk to approximately 140 properties but the feasibility stage is not likely to be progressed before 2019. Cost is estimated at around £840k.

Although not specifically included within the Flood Risk Management Plan, NI Water's work to address out of sewer flooding includes investment of approximately £200k to construct a tank sewer within the grounds of Clandeboye Primary School in Bangor. This scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to homes within the Clandeboye / Rosemary Crescent area. NI Water also has plans to construct an innovative Soft Suds (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) solution within the grounds of Clandeboye Primary School to manage storm water from the School premises and to construct a new pumping station within the School grounds. These plans are currently with the Education Authority for acceptance.

Also, within the North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan, the town of Holywood was identified as an Area for Further Study (AFS); see section 4.1.3 of the Plan for information about AFS.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to list the reservoirs that are in public ownership, including their locations.
(AQW 1590/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My department considers that there are 120 controlled reservoirs in public ownership. A list of the reservoirs and their locations is listed below.

Reservoir Name	Location
Broad Water	Aghalee
Mill Pond (Annesborough)	Annesborough
Crosskennan Antrim	Antrim
Upper Potterswall Reservoir	Antrim

Reservoir Name	Location
Seagahan Dam	Armagh
Crebilly Ballymena North	Ballymena
Crebilly Ballymena South	Ballymena
Corbet Lough	Banbridge
Ballysallagh Lower Reservoir	Bangor
Ballysallagh Upper Reservoir	Bangor
Conlig Lower	Bangor
Conlig Upper	Bangor
Conlig New	Bangor
Alexandra Park Pond	Belfast
Antrim Road Waterworks Lower	Belfast
Antrim Road Waterworks Upper	Belfast
Ballygomartin Ballymurphy	Belfast
Ballyhanwood Tullycarnet	Belfast
Poleglass	Belfast
Springfield (Mackies)	Belfast
Westland East	Belfast
Westland West	Belfast
Boodles	Belfast
Breda	Belfast
Knockbracken	Belfast
Purdysburn	Belfast
Quoile Reservoir Lower	Broughshane
Quoile Reservoir Upper	Broughshane
Altmore	Cappagh
Dungonnell	Cargan
Beltoy	Carrickfergus
Copeland Reservoir	Carrickfergus
Dorisland Reservoir	Carrickfergus
Lough Mourne	Carrickfergus
Carrickfergus West	Carrickfergus
North Woodburn Reservoir	Carrickfergus
South Woodburn Reservoir Lower	Carrickfergus
South Woodburn Reservoir Middle	Carrickfergus
South Woodburn Reservoir Upper	Carrickfergus
Sullatober	Carrickfergus
Lisnabreeny Road 1	Carryduff
Lisnabreeny Road 2	Carryduff
Lough Bradan	Castledearg
Altikeeragh	Castlerock
Downhill Forest Lake	Castlerock

Reservoir Name	Location
Lough Island Reavy Reservoir	Castlewellan
Ballinrees Gortycavan	Coleraine
Ballinrees Reservoir	Coleraine
Ballyversall Reservoir	Coleraine
Dunalis	Coleraine
Maddybenny	Coleraine
Drum Manor Fish Ponds Lower	Cookstown
Drum Manor Fish Ponds Upper	Cookstown
Lough Fea	Cookstown
Ballydoughan Command 2A	Craigavon
Ballydoughan Command 3A	Craigavon
Ballydoughan Command	Craigavon
Craigavon Lake	Craigavon
Dunminning	Cullybackey
Lough Money	Downpatrick
Begny Lake	Dromara
Black / Ballysaggart Lough	Dungannon
Cappagh	Dungannon
Mullaghanagh	Dungannon
The Park Lake (Dungannon)	Dungannon
Altnaheglish / Banagher Reservoir	Dungiven
Caugh Hill	Dungiven
Carmony 1	Eglington
Carmony 2	Eglington
Carmony 3	Eglington
Carmony 4	Eglington
Ballydoolagh	Enniskillen
Derrykeeghan Breagho East	Enniskillen
Killyfole	Enniskillen
Portavoe	Groomsport
Park Lake (Hillsborough)	Hillsborough
Spelga Dam	Hilltown
Church Road	Holywood
Creightons Green	Holywood
Clay Lake	Keady
Ben Crom Reservoir	Kilkeel
Silent Valley Reservoir	Kilkeel
Shannagh Lough	Kilkeel
Ballymullock	Larne
Killylane	Larne
Binevenagh Lake	Limavady

Reservoir Name	Location
Boomers Reservoir	Lisburn
Danescroft	Lisburn
Duncans Dam	Lisburn
Leathemstown Reservoir	Lisburn
Magheraliskmisk	Lisburn
Stoneyford Reservoir	Lisburn
Corrody South	Londonderry
Creggan Blighs 1	Londonderry
Creggan Blighs 2	Londonderry
Creggan Foot Bridge	Londonderry
Croppy Hill	Londonderry
Killea Reservoir / Crevagh Hill Lake	Londonderry
Altnahinch Reservoir	Loughguile
Castor Bay	Lurgan
The Park Lake (Lurgan)	Lurgan
Mullaghboy Magherafelt	Magherafelt
Ballintemple	Meigh
Fofanny Dam	Newcastle
Bessbrook Pond	Newry
Camlough	Newry
Donaghaguy Reservoir (Fishing stands)	Newry
Ballywonard	Newtownabbey
Dunanney West	Newtownabbey
Hydepark North	Newtownabbey
Mossley Mill	Newtownabbey
Valley Leisure Centre	Newtownabbey
Kiltonga Nature Reserve	Newtownards
Ballycullen High	Newtownards
Glenhordial	Omagh
Lough Fingrean	Omagh
Lough Cowey	Portaferry
Craigahulliar	Portrush
Tullywhisker East	Sionmills
Whiteabbey Lower	Whiteabbey

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Infrastructure what current legislation covers the speed of traffic on roads adjacent to schools; and whether an assessment of the dangers posed by road traffic to schoolchildren has been conducted for each school.

(AQW 1595/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has the legislative powers to set speed limits on all roads throughout the North, including those adjacent to schools.

All speed limits, other than those on restricted roads, should be made by order under Article 38 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. Part VI of this Order deals specifically with speed limits. Article 37 defines a restricted road as a road which is provided with “a system of street lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than 185m apart”

or there is an order in force making a road a restricted road. Article 36 specifically makes it an offence for a person to drive a motor vehicle at a speed of more than 30 mph on a restricted road.

My Department's speed management policy, which can be accessed at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/setting-local-speed-limits-in-Northern-Ireland-RSPPG-E051.pdf, gives clear guidance on setting of appropriate speed limits for use by TransportNI traffic engineers in consultation with PSNI road policing officers.

All schools in rural areas have been assessed in line with my Department's road safety at schools policy which is available at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/road-safety-at-schools-RSPPG-E070.pdf. Due to the large numbers of schools in Belfast, an assessment has yet to be completed for all of them, although they lie within existing 30 mph and 20 mph speed limits. When assessed against the policy, which considers risks such as collision history and vehicle speed, individual schools are given a score and then prioritised on a list within each TransportNI Division. This data identifies those schools that will have Safer Routes to Schools measures implemented each year, subject to available funding.

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the forthcoming review of the management of Lough Neagh following flooding at the beginning of 2016.

(AQW 1596/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Alan Strong, Chair of the Drainage Council is presently undertaking a review into the winter 2015/16 flooding events. While the scope of the review includes consideration of the current management regime to control water levels for Lough Neagh, it is too early to know if the final report will contain a recommendation to undertake a review of the management of these water levels.

In the meantime the Department's Rivers Agency is about to commission a hydraulic study to investigate the water level control regime of Lough Neagh and this will help inform the Department's response to any comments or recommendations that Alan Strong might make in his report.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure why the original site agreed by Transport NI for speed warning signage in Clogher, County Tyrone is now no longer considered as an appropriate site for the signage.

(AQW 1605/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: At a site meeting with Councillor Clement Cuthbertson and a representative of the PSNI regarding concerns about vehicle speeds at Ballagh Road, Clogher, a TransportNI official indicated that he would consider a request for the erection of a vehicle activated "Reduce Speed" sign at this location. No commitment was however given to erect such a sign and therefore there has been no change in position by Departmental officials.

A small number of vehicle activated signs have been erected within TransportNI Western Division over the last 10 years but only where special circumstances applied. Criteria included evidence of a significant collision history; the likely effectiveness of such signage; and importantly no other measures either being practical or appropriate to implement.

In relation to the Ballagh Road, Clogher TransportNI does not consider such a sign appropriate at this location as there are no special circumstances that would justify its provision. To provide such a sign at this location is likely to lead to requests for similar signage at other locations and as well as there being cost implications, a proliferation of such signs would reduce their effectiveness.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline how he will ensure that the needs of cyclists are taken into account when developing major road projects.

(AQW 1611/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department's Bicycle Strategy, published in August 2015, sets out a clear commitment that "where opportunities arise when road maintenance or upgrade schemes are being undertaken, we will aim to use these opportunities to improve bicycle provision locally".

In addition to this, the strategy includes the 'road user hierarchy' which has been developed for use in the planning and design process for new developments and proposed traffic management schemes. The objective of this hierarchy "is to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable road users are fully considered and adequately provided for in all highway schemes".

In fulfillment of this commitment, the Department includes consideration of appropriate cycling facilities in the development of all road schemes and engages with stakeholders such as Sustrans in drawing up scheme designs.

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline (i) the plans to provide cycle parking spaces over the next three years; and (ii) the location of each.

(AQW 1613/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Bicycle Strategy indicates that further plans for public cycle parking and cycle parking at public transport hubs will be developed during the first five years of the strategy. Work on this will be undertaken in due course.

However, my Department has been adding to the current provision of cycle parking for the past number of years and indeed since December 2013, has provided over 440 new cycle parking spaces. In addition, cycle parking is generally addressed as

part of any environmental improvement scheme in town and city centres. The Belfast Bike Life report, published by Sustrans in October 2015, indicates that in Belfast there are over 700 bike parking spaces in the city centre.

Ms Palmer asked the Minister for Infrastructure what Government agency has overall responsibility for protecting land from coastal erosion.

(AQW 1633/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There is no single government department or agency with overall responsibility for protecting land from coastal erosion. My Department has responsibility for protecting the roads and railway networks and certain sea defenses (which are designed to protect against flooding rather than erosion). This only accounts for some 20% of our coastline. In relation to new development the Department's Strategic Planning Policy Statement provides that development will not be permitted in areas of the coast known to be at risk from flooding, coastal erosion, or land instability and advises that such areas should be identified in Local Development Plans. This policy is implemented at the local level by councils who have responsibility for planning along much of the coastline. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has a specific role as the marine licensing authority and in nature conservation protection. It is also worth pointing out that a large portion of the coastline is in private ownership and thus under the individual landowners responsibility.

I recognize the need for a more strategic approach to address the issues of coastal management and coastal erosion, and I have welcomed the establishment of the Coastal Management Forum by the former Minister for Regional development towards the end of the last mandate. I will be discussing the future of the Forum and the overall approach to coastal management with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in the near future.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 258/16-21, whether the granting of permitted development rights for exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons at Woodburn Forest constitutes a development consent as defined by Article 1(c) of the Environmental Impact Assessment directive 2011/92/EU.

(AQW 1640/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Whilst I am aware of this case it would not be appropriate for me to comment or to offer opinions on matters of legal interpretation.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW258/16-21, whether either the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 or the Planning (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2010 were breached by the manner in which the case of exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons at Woodburn Forest was processed.

(AQW 1641/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Whilst I am aware of this case it would not be appropriate for me to comment or to offer opinions on matters of legal interpretation.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will institute a survey of the coastline to measure the extent of erosion and to identify those sections most vulnerable to erosion in the future.

(AQW 1679/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not currently have the resource to carry out a comprehensive survey of the entire coastline, and indeed the current responsibility of my Department only extends to the protection of the roads and railway network, as well as designated sea defences, all of which only accounts for approximately 20% of the coastline. However TransportNI has recently carried out some limited survey work in areas of the coastline where roads are deemed to be potentially threatened. The outcome of this survey work will help to prioritize financial allocations for maintenance works.

I am aware that several local councils are making bids for research and survey work in relation to coastal erosion, and this will help to inform decision making.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will take steps to ensure that there is a single organisation responsible for the care and maintenance of the coastline.

(AQW 1680/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There are a number of statutory responsibilities vested in different government departments, local councils and non departmental public bodies, and as such it is not currently feasible to place the care and maintenance of the coastline within a single organization. There have been suggestions that a single government department could be charged with the responsibility of leading on the strategic policy relating to coastline management. This would be a matter for the Executive to decide upon and to resource.

I recognize the need for a more strategic approach to address the issues of coastal management and coastal erosion, and I have welcomed the establishment of the Coastal Management Forum by the former Minister for Regional Development towards the end of the last mandate. I will be discussing the future of the Forum and the overall approach to coastal management with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in the near future.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will write to the councils not represented on the Drainage Council and invite them to nominate a member to represent the interests of their council area.

(AQW 1681/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Following the last competition to fill vacancies on the Drainage Council in 2015, there remains a number of vacancies, including some from local Councils. It is my intention to run a competition to make appointments in the autumn. As part of this appointment process, Councils will be encouraged to nominate a representative.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will write to the Drainage Council inviting it to consider instituting a new method of appointment of members which would ensure representation from each district council area.

(AQW 1682/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Drainage Council is a non-Departmental Body, whose members are appointed by the Minister under Schedule 1 of the Drainage Order. The Drainage Council has no role in the appointments process.

Mr E McCann asked the Minister for Infrastructure what the term hub means when applied to the Waterside Train Station; and whether he will honour the pledge of the former Minister for Regional Development to restore the station to a working rail terminus.

(AQW 1683/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The term 'hub' relates to transport centres that can facilitate development in surrounding areas because of the footfall they generate and normally incorporate facilities for different modes of transport to and from urban centres recognising the need for integrating these forms of transport.

My Department is developing the Business Case for the overall North-West Multi-Modal Transport Hub programme currently.

The Derry Hub project should create a centre through which a range of transport modes and services will operate. In bringing rail, road and active travel based services together, travelling between destinations using a combination of modes, both North and South will become more efficient.

Translink is continuing to negotiate with the owners of the old site in relation to its purchase. In the meantime it has appointed Integrated Design Team Leaders to take forward a Feasibility Study, to look at two options:

- A new station on the current site; and
- Redevelopment of the old original Waterside Train Station.

Translink has created initial conceptual designs but more work is needed on both options. It is hoped that an Economic Appraisal will be submitted to my Department towards the end of 2016.

My Department's initial application for funding towards the development of a new multi-modal transport hub in the North West under the Sustainable Transport Objective of the INTERREG VA programme was approved on 8 March.

Following approval of this initial application my Department is now engaged in the process of developing a second, more detailed application which will be brought forward for urgent consideration by the Managing Authority with the aim of securing co-financing for the project. I will consider all available funding options going forward.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW258/16-21, whether his Department was aware of the requirement of Regulation 4 of the Planning (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010; and if so, why it granted permitted development rights.

(AQW 1703/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Woodburn Permitted Development notification to drill an exploratory well under Permitted Development Rights was submitted in accordance with Part 16 of the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1993 (as amended).

At the time of assessment, the Department of Environment officials were satisfied that the notification complied with the Part 16 requirements and did not consider that the drilling operations fell within the scope of the Planning (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

This position was revised in July 2014 and the Department of Environment officials wrote to the planning agents RPS and advised that the development fell within the scope of the above regulations and a Waste Management Plan was required to be submitted for assessment prior to the scheme proceeding.

This information was submitted to the Department of Environment in March 2015 and following the transfer of planning powers in April 2015, Mid and East Antrim Council assessed and approved the Waste Management plan in March 2016 prior to InfraStrata availing of their permitted development rights.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future, that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department for Infrastructure.

(AQW 1709/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department has two ongoing projects in receipt of EU funding from the Connecting Europe Facility; the Coleraine to Derry rail track improvement project and the Knockmore to Lurgan rail track refurbishment project. These are scheduled for completion in April 2017 and May 2018 respectively and I anticipate that these will be fully co-financed as originally offered.

While no other projects are, as yet, formally scheduled to receive EU funding, it is my intention to ensure the progression and success of a number of those by continuing to advance bids for non-competitive funds (i.e. Structural Funds). This will include bids for the Derry Transport Hub, a Greenways development programme and other water quality improvement projects.

In project financing terms, the immediate and longer term impacts of the referendum result will, of course, be kept under review by the Executive.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure since the transfer of the Driver and Vehicle Agency services to Swansea, to detail the average turnaround time from receipt of application for Northern Ireland drivers to (i) have a current driving licence amended; (ii) have an initial application for a provisional driving licence processed; and (iii) have a full driving licence renewed.

(AQW 1721/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The administration of driver licensing is a devolved matter which is the responsibility of my Department and is delivered by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) through its offices in Coleraine.

Only the vehicle registration and licensing function, which is a UK matter falling under the responsibility of the Department for Transport, was centralised in Swansea by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in July 2014.

In the 2015/16 financial year, the DVA issued 295,281 driving licences. The DVA aims to dispatch 95% of driving licences within 10 working days. In the 2015/16 financial year, the target achieved was 96.4%. This target relates to the dispatch of Group 1 (car and motorcycle) licences and includes licence amendment, application for a first provisional licence and renewal of a licence, where a medical condition has not been declared.

Applications for Group 2 (lorry and bus) licences and those where the driver has declared a medical condition to the DVA may take longer to determine as medical investigations and other checks (such as conduct checks), can take some time to be concluded.

The DVA is currently processing Group 1 applications within the 10 day target.

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether his Department will consider introducing a 20 mph speed limit around schools.

(AQW 1732/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I consider the safety of vulnerable road users to be of the highest priority. This applies especially to children on their school journeys. In the years since 2005, a number of measures have been implemented on roads around schools to improve the safety of children. These have included enhanced warning signing with flashing amber lights, lay-bys, additional road markings and the creation of Safer Routes to School zones.

Although many schools are located in urban areas within a traffic calmed zone or 30 mph speed limit, it is accepted that schools on roads where the national speed limit applies may need additional measures such as reduced speed limits.

Research reports in various countries have noted that, unless aggressively backed up with police enforcement, these reduced speed limits at schools quickly lose the respect of drivers, especially when they see no activity outside schools, and traffic speeds revert to what drivers consider as a safe speed. Scotland, Australia and New Zealand deploy part time enforceable speed limits and claim that they were successful as they cover a short distance and drivers can clearly see that there are children present.

Part time 20 mph speed limits were piloted at three primary schools in Causeway Coast & Glens and Antrim & Newtownabbey council areas and, although expensive to implement and maintain, they were considered successful at reducing traffic speeds, especially on roads where the national speed limit applies. I am pleased to advise that it is intended that a further three schools will have part time 20mph restrictions implemented before the start of the next school term.

As part time 20 mph speed limits currently cost between £30,000 and £40,000 per site treated, and given the current constraints in public service budgets that we all have to work within, I don't expect to be in a position to proceed with a comprehensive programme of installations for some time unless additional funding is made available.

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for Infrastructure, pursuant to AQW 398/16-21, (i) to detail which areas of Lurgan and Banbridge are defined as flood risk areas; and (ii) to outline the purpose of the proposed feasibility study by the Rivers Agency of the Ashgrove and Park Road areas of Portadown.

(AQW 1761/16-21)

Mr Hazzard:

- (i) Detail which areas of Lurgan and Banbridge are flood risk areas

The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment carried out in 2011, as a requirement of the EU Floods Directive, identified 20 "Significant Flood Risk Areas" (SFRAs) in the North. These SFRAs include Lurgan, Banbridge and Portadown. In accordance with the EU Floods Directive, detailed flood hazard and flood risk maps were developed for all SFRAs by December 2013.

Based on this analysis, the areas within Lurgan and Banbridge that are at flood risk, and which might be considered in any future feasibility study, include:

- The Westwood Development, Lurgan
- Knockramer Meadows, Lurgan
- Bowen Meadows, Lurgan
- Burnview Terrace / Willowgrove, Banbridge
- Ravenswood, Banbridge

- (ii) Outline the purpose of the proposed feasibility study by the Rivers Agency of the Ashgrove and Park Road areas of Portadown.

The proposed feasibility study will take a holistic view of the potential flooding within Portadown, including the Ashgrove and Park Road areas.

As with other feasibility studies, the purpose will be to appraise the flood risk and investigate options to alleviate any potential flooding emanating from rivers. The study will also provide an economic appraisal as to the viability of any proposed interventions.

If the feasibility study identifies a viable scheme, then subject to financial approvals, project prioritisation, funding and resource availability, the project would progress to detailed design and finally construction.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future in East Derry that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for his assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department for Infrastructure.

(AQW 1769/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Trans European Transport Network/Connecting Europe Facility programme is currently funding the Coleraine to Derry rail track improvement project with some £12m having been awarded in 2015. This project is scheduled for completion in April 2017 and I anticipate that this will be fully co-financed as originally offered.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he has plans to increase rail services to and from Newry train station.

(AQW 1796/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There are currently no plans to increase the number of rail services to/from Newry.

However, as per the response to AQO 144/16-21, NI Railways have introduced a promotional "Day Tripper" service to/from Dublin serving Newry which operates Thursday through to Saturday during July and August, providing an additional rail service in each direction.

Translink also operates Goldline bus services between Newry and Belfast, with some 29 departures Monday-Friday, 18 on Saturday and 9 on Sunday.

In the medium term and subject to agreement with Southern authorities and Irish Rail it is hoped to introduce hourly Enterprise trains stopping in Newry.

Ms Seeley asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline any plans he has to impose a 20mph speed zone around schools.

(AQW 1809/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I consider the safety of vulnerable road users to be of the highest priority. This applies especially to children on their school journeys. In the years since 2005, a number of measures have been implemented on roads around schools to improve the safety of children. These have included enhanced warning signing with flashing amber lights, lay-bys, additional road markings and the creation of Safer Routes to School zones.

Although many schools are located in urban areas within a traffic calmed zone or 30 mph speed limit, it is accepted that schools on roads where the national speed limit applies may need additional measures such as reduced speed limits.

Research reports in various countries have noted that, unless aggressively backed up with police enforcement, these reduced speed limits at schools quickly lose the respect of drivers, especially when they see no activity outside schools, and traffic speeds revert to what drivers consider as a safe speed. Scotland, Australia and New Zealand deploy part time enforceable speed limits and claim that they are successful as they cover a short distance and drivers can clearly see that there are children present.

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As part time 20 mph speed limits currently cost between £30,000 and £40,000 per site treated, and given the current constraints in public service budgets that we all have to work within, I don't expect to be in a position to proceed with a comprehensive programme of installations for some time unless additional funding is made available.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail where the £5 million for road maintenance, allocated in the June monitoring round, will be spent.

(AQW 1830/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As part of June monitoring, my Department has been allocated an additional £5m of Resource for essential road maintenance activities, including the repair of potholes, cleaning of gullies, renewal of road markings, grass cutting and street lighting.

The additional £5m for road maintenance activities is to be targeted as follows:

Patching £k	Grass cutting £k	Gully Cleaning £k	Road Marking £k	Street Lighting £k	Total £k
3100	300	600	500	500	5000

My Department's TransportNI does not allocate funding on a constituency basis.

TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity i.e. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the full cost of re-opening the Antrim to Bleach Green railway line in 2001.

(AQW 1860/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The project to re-open the Antrim to Bleach Green railway line cost £18.2 million.

This covers the track and signalling contract which included the cost of the level crossings along that 14.5 mile route.

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will amend the concessionary fare scheme to entitle all people who are blind or partially sighted a full fare concession.

(AQW 1864/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: There is currently no provision within the concessionary fares budget to support any further extension of the NI Concessionary Fares Scheme. Whilst I am sympathetic to this call for a change to provide free travel for those who are partially sighted there are no plans to further extend the Scheme at present.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure how many taxi meter tests have failed because the meter was not fixed or attached to the vehicle.

(AQW 1881/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Driver and Vehicle Agency's records show that from 31 May 2016 to 28 June 2016, one vehicle failed the taximeter test because the meter was not attached to the vehicle.

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Infrastructure why he has not answered AQW 1429/16-21.

(AQW 1895/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I can advise the Member that my Department's TransportNI is dealing with a significant number of Minister's queries for the North Down area which has created a minor backlog.

A response has now been issued to the Member relating to AQW 1429/16-21.

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Infrastructure (i) whether he is aware that parking attendant staff have been put under pressure to issue greater numbers of parking tickets; and (ii) whether his Department will investigate and bring this practice to a stop.

(AQW 1897/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Department contracts NSL Services to provide enforcement of on-street parking restrictions. NSL Services also carry out enforcement, as part of an Agency Agreement, overseen by the Department, on behalf of the councils for their off-street car parks.

The contract with NSL Services is based on the British Parking Association's (BPA) Model Contract. The contract is designed to encourage best practice by ensuring that performance is measured on the quality of service provided.

The Contract between the Department and NSL clearly states that neither the Department nor NSL will impose any targets based on numbers of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued and that no incentives are to be offered to traffic attendants to issue more PCNs. The contract sets no ticket targets for the enforcement contractor.

NSL in conjunction with Department continuously review the effectiveness of the deployment of traffic attendants to keep bus lanes, clearways and other arterial and main routes free from congestion. Deployment is managed to ensure enforcement at those locations where the greatest impact on the safe and free movement of traffic can be delivered while at the same time ensuring that normal enforcement duties on street and in off street car parks is maintained. The Department expects traffic attendants to issue PCNs to any vehicles found to be parked in contravention of the restrictions, in accordance with the requirements of the Parking Enforcement Protocol.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the number of (i) reported; (ii) filled; and (iii) unfilled potholes in Newry and Armagh in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1901/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: During the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2016, some 101060 carriageway, hard shoulder and lay-by potholes were instructed for repair in the Maintenance Section Offices covering Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (West), (formerly Armagh Section) and Newry Mourne and Down (West) (formerly Newry and Mourne Section). The majority of these defects were recorded by officials during routine maintenance inspections but the figures provided below also includes those defects reported by the public which were deemed as needing action.

	Total	Completed	Not Completed
2011-2012	25224	23729	1495
2012-2013	21644	20229	1415
2013-2014	20974	19638	1336
2014-2015	16783	12965	3818
2015-2016	16435	7092	9343
Grand Total	101060	83653	17407

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Infrastructure why community requests to introduce measures to reduce the speed of traffic through Lawrencetown have not been acted upon.

(AQW 1953/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: You will be aware from correspondence on this issue, most recently my reply of 27 June 2016 (DFI/COR/1084/2016), that my Department's TransportNI has considered the issues raised. I am satisfied that this has been done appropriately.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to the fixing of taxi meters to vehicles as per regulations, to outline (i) who is legally responsible for damage caused to the vehicle in this process; (ii) whether the fitting agents are being required to cause this damage in order to have the taxi owner regulation compliant; and (iii) given this is regulation, whether his Department cover the costs of the damage caused.

(AQW 1966/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The fitment of taximeters is not the responsibility of my Department, these are undertaken for individual taxi drivers and operators by separate commercial entities. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for my Department to accept responsibility or cover the costs of any damage.

Regulation 6 of The Taxis (Taximeters, Devices and Maximum Fares) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 states that "A taximeter shall be capable of being sealed to the taxi" and "shall be attached securely to the taxi so that it cannot, by the vibration of the engine or by the motion of the taxi, become detached or be caused to become inaccurate".

The regulations require the taximeter to be fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, sealed to the taxi, and secured where it is unlikely to cause a danger, be visible to a passenger, and be capable of being readily operated by the driver.

My Department does not insist on the taximeter being fixed to the dash, or any particular location, provided it is easily viewed by the passenger.

I recognise that there is no consensus on the appropriate way to best regulate the taxi industry to protect consumers. This is an issue that I will be considering in depth in the coming weeks.

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Infrastructure for his assessment of the standard of grass cutting, weed control and gully cleaning work for the Derry City and Strabane District Council area undertaken by a contractor on behalf of the Department. (AQW 2012/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: As I am sure you are aware the Department's routine maintenance budget which includes activities such as patching, grass cutting, gully emptying and weed spraying, was some £15 million below the level required to allow the level of service people have come to expect in recent years. As a result TransportNI had to reduce its routine road maintenance regime to a limited service.

However, as part of June monitoring an additional £5m has been allocated to the Department for routine maintenance activities which will allow TransportNI to enhance the level of service which it can provide. This additional funding will allow grass to be cut twice as required during 2016/17 compared to the originally planned single cut. The extra funding will also allow for a second gully clean to be undertaken in urban areas. Sufficient funding for weed control was available prior to June monitoring.

Routine maintenance operations which includes grass cutting, weed control and gully emptying, are undertaken across all council areas by both the Department's internal workforce and external contractors.

Because it was envisaged that only a single cut will be possible in rural areas, the timing of the single cut required careful consideration. Grass cutting commenced in Derry & Strabane towards the end of May, a delay of approximately one month compared to normal years. This delay was designed to reduce the impact of any growth later in the season.

Approximately 70% of the first cut has been completed to date with work completed to date being of a high standard.

Gully cleaning operations have been ongoing throughout the year. The additional funding received from June monitoring will allow a second gully clean to be undertaken in urban areas during 2016/17. I am unaware of any issues in respect of gully emptying.

Weed spraying requires some weed growth and dry weather for the chemical to be effective. Spraying of weeds commenced in the Derry City centre on 4 June 2016 and in Strabane town centre on 18 June 2016 but unfortunately this was well after the weeds had become established. Progress has been hampered by the unsettled weather during the late part of June and the fact that no weed spraying was completed last year has exacerbated the problem. It is hoped that weed spraying within the council area will be completed by 9 July and the Department's internal workforce will be used to scuffle dead weeds as resource permit.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to list each of the Troubles related memorials currently erected on road verges in Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and which of these received permission from his Department. (AQW 2018/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: My Department does not maintain a register of 'troubles related' memorials on public roads in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. However the following is a list of such memorials known to my staff working in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone area. The list cannot be taken to include all such memorials on public road in this area.

- A32 Swanlinbar Road (at Mullan)
- B53 Rossinver Road, Garrison
- C401 Meenatully Road (at junction of Tullyvoge Road)
- C425 Eshnadarragh Road (Rosslea Village) – may be NIHE ground.
- C425 Eshnadarragh Road, near Altawalk Cross (may be Forest Service ground)
- U8054 Clonliff Road, Enniskillen (near Macken)
- U8491 Cashel Road, Enniskillen (near Garrison)

The Department's current policy, which was approved by previous Ministers for the Department of Regional Development, does not endorse or support the unauthorised use of Departmental property for any purpose. Under the Roads Order (Northern Ireland) 1993, the Department has no general power to consent to the erection of memorial type structures on a road.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what progress has been made in the upgrading and re-alignment of the Fermanagh section of the A32; and how much funding will spent in this financial year. (AQW 2019/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: Significant progress has been made in the delivery of the A32 improvement schemes as included in my Department's A32 Improvement Strategy. A series of on and off-line improvements are being delivered on a rolling basis and I am pleased to confirm that carriageway widening and realignments has been completed at both Drumskinny (2012) and Shannaragh (2013) at a cost of almost £10 million.

Work to progress the design development on two further off-line schemes at Cornamuck and Kilgortnaleague is progressing and the Statutory Direction Order was made in respect of the Cornamuck scheme in March of this year. This confirms and fixes the line of the scheme which is anticipated to cost in the region of £6 million. This has placed this scheme in good position for delivery in the event that funding becomes available.

Design work has also progressed on the realignment at Kilgortnaleague and the preferred route is emerging, again with an off-line alignment. Given the uncertainty with regards to availability of funding, it is not intended to progress this scheme through the statutory consultation process at present given that the Cornamuck scheme is in position to take forward to delivery.

With regards to this year's funding allocation, there is no provision for delivering the Cornamuck scheme, although there is a limited funding allocation of £30K available to enable some detailed design and preparation of contract documents to continue during year 2016/17.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister for Infrastructure what plans he has to repair the bomb damage to Roscor Viaduct on the River Erne, return it to its original structure and remove the temporary weight limits and diversions.

(AQW 2020/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: I am aware of the poor overall condition of Roscor Viaduct and the need to replace the missing northernmost span which has been serviced by a Bailey Bridge since 1972. Whilst the bridge carries a low volume of traffic (approximately 600 vehicles per day) I recognise the importance of this local link across the Erne river and the need to seek to improve and preserve it.

My officials are seeking to develop a scheme whereby defective areas of concrete can be repaired and the Bailey Bridge can be removed by either replacing the northern span or extending the abutments to the first support. To assist this exercise, consultants have undertaken a detailed bridge inspection to help confirm that an effective and economic repair can be undertaken. It is also planned to undertake a geotechnical ground investigation at the northern shore to help determine the most economic means of permanently reinstating the missing span.

An assessment of the load carrying capacity of the 90 metre long structure determined that it should be restricted to a 7.5 tonne weight restriction. Permanent closure of the bridge, whilst an option is not preferred even in light of knowledge that the bridge when refurbished cannot be brought to current full 40 tonne loading capacity. Full replacement of the structure would cost several million pounds and it is therefore my Department's intention to undertake repairs and reinstate the missing span when funding can be made available. Preliminary estimates put the cost of repair work in the region of £1 million.

Assessment work to establish the preferred engineering solution and associated costs should be complete in 2017 after which the securing of funds to effect repair work will depend on competing priorities on other similar bridge strengthening works.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister for Infrastructure to detail the amount of money that will be allocated to work in West Tyrone as part of his £10 million Rural Roads Scheme.

(AQW 2091/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: TransportNI allocates additional funding to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

The electoral area of West Tyrone straddles two TransportNI Section Office areas, namely Londonderry and Strabane Section Office and Fermanagh and Omagh East Section Office. As allocations within TransportNI are made at Divisional and Section Office level I'm afraid the information you have requested isn't available.

That said, £4m million of additional Capital funding has been allocated to TransportNI's Western Division following June monitoring and is to be used to deliver a range of resurfacing type schemes on the 'minor' rural road network as part of the Rural Roads Initiative.

The Rural Roads Initiative will target sections of the rural network in greatest need of repair right across the four TransportNI Divisions providing the scope to undertake a programme of small scale resurfacing schemes on parts of the rural road network that are in particularly poor condition.

Rural roads have been defined as B, C and U class roads outside local speed limits.

Programmes of work are currently being developed and initial allocations have already been made to each TransportNI section office within Western Division which will allow work to commence on site as soon as possible. The remainder of the available funding will be allocated to Section Offices on the basis of need.

In addition to the resurfacing activities being taken forward under the rural roads initiative, it is important to note that potholes that are identified as part of the Department's routine safety inspections continue to be fixed in all rural areas.

The additional resource funding also allocated to the Department as part of the June Monitoring now allows for the majority of potholes to be repaired (greater than 50mm on rural roads low trafficked roads and greater than 20mm elsewhere).

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline, if a taxi is failed because the meter that has not been fixed with a screw, rivet or onetime use shear bolts; who is responsible for paying the £35 retest.

(AQW 2108/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) conducts taximeter tests in compliance with The Taxis (Taximeters, Devices and Maximum Fares) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. These Regulations provide for the payment of a £35 test fee, and

the issuing of a notice of refusal where the taximeter fails to meet the fitting requirements. Regulation 4(1) states that 'any person' may apply for a test.

Mrs Barton asked the Minister for Infrastructure to outline how the reduction in manpower will be addressed within Transport NI serving (i) Mid Ulster Council; and (ii) Fermanagh and Omagh District Council areas following the Voluntary Exit Scheme. (AQW 2178/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: TransportNI lost 278 Professional and Technical, Administrative and Industrial staff across its four Divisions over the last nine months as a result of the Voluntary Exit Scheme.

Within Western Division, which covers the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster Council areas, 44 members of staff availed of the Voluntary Exit Scheme.

TransportNI has developed a new staff structure across all areas to enable it to maximise the services that it can provide with significantly reduced staff numbers. The work to populate this new structure in Western Division is now substantially complete.

The reduction in staff numbers has had some impact on the wide range of services TransportNI provides. However, my officials are continuing to seek to prioritise the various functions and work activities to ensure that this impact is minimised.

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Infrastructure whether he will prioritise the upgrade of the Strathroy Road, Omagh to deal with the increase in traffic when the Strathroy Link Road is completed in 2018. (AQW 2225/16-21)

Mr Hazzard: The provision of the link road over the river Strule between the A5 Derry Road and the B48 Gortin Road will inevitably increase the traffic volumes on the Strathroy Road and place added pressure on the Strathroy Road/Gortin Road junction. The new road is scheduled to be available to traffic in mid 2018 and it is anticipated that the Strule Shared Education Campus will open in September 2020.

The contract to deliver Strathroy Link Road includes for the widening of approximately 250 meters of the existing road between mini-roundabout at Meelmore Drive and Strathroy Dairy.

Whilst not included within the link road contract, the works to provide the new Shared Education Campus will provide for the upgrade of the current roundabout at the Strathroy/Gortin roads junction to a signal controlled junction.

Department of Justice

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether she will order a Serious Further Offence review in to the case of Cathal Francis Hughes at Dungannon Magistrates Court. (AQW 1396/16-21)

Ms Sugden (The Minister of Justice): A Serious Further Offence review is the mechanism by which Probation Board for Northern Ireland commissions a review of its risk management of an individual who is charged with a serious violent or sexual offence whilst subject to statutory probation supervision. The Serious Further Offence Review procedures do not apply in this case as the Probation Board was not responsible for Mr Hughes risk management in the community. He was being risk managed, under the public protection arrangements, on a single agency basis, by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much funding her Department has allocated to the Prison Service Trust, in each of the last five financial years. (AQW 1478/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Table A below shows the contribution provided by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) to the Prison Service Trust (PST) in each of the last five financial years:

Table A

Grant funding by NIPS to the Prison Service Trust	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015/16
	£302k	£294k	£289k	£265k	£245k

The PST provides healthcare, life planning and support services. These services are offered to their client base which includes: serving members who donate to the Trust, family members of murdered officers, and officers who died in service or retired on ill-health grounds.

This does not preclude the Trust from the provision of other services, or to persons other than those within the client group from monies other than those received by government grant, i.e., member subscriptions.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how the funding provided by her Department to the Prison Service Trust will be spent, broken down by percentage of the total funding awarded.

(AQW 1492/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Northern Ireland Prison Service has agreed to provide funding of £257,616 to the Prison Service Trust (PST) for the financial year 2016-17. Based upon indicative information from previous PST accounts the breakdown of spend as a percentage of total funding is contained in the table below.

	Spend as % of total funding award
Administration	6%
Salary Costs	14%
Programme Costs	80%

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many staff (i) currently; and (ii) in the last two years have been seconded from the English and Welsh Prison Services; broken down by Northern Ireland Prison Service facility,

(AQW 1666/16-21)

Ms Sugden: We have one member of staff currently on secondment from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The member of staff is based in Prison Service Headquarters.

In the last two years, three other members of staff were seconded from NOMS. Two were based at Prison Service Headquarters. The other was based at Prison Service Headquarters, Hydebank Wood and Maghaberry during the period of their secondment.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether annual audited accounts are supplied to her Department from the Prison Service Trust.

(AQW 1667/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Prison Service Trust (PST) publishes and forwards to NIPS within two months of the end of its financial year, a copy of its Annual Report of activities and Accounts prepared and audited in accordance with its obligations under the Companies Act and other legal requirements. The financial records of the PST are open to inspection by officials of NIPS, and/or staff of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether she will order a Serious Case Review or a Serious Further Offence Review on the case of Trevor McCandless to establish (i) who was responsible for community monitoring; (ii) was there full compliance with same; and (iii) what was the risk threshold for community management and whether this was an inaccurate assessment.

(AQW 1668/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Prisoners on pre-release schemes are supervised jointly by the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. A multi-disciplinary team regularly review each case.

To release the specific information requested would be in breach of the first Data Protection Principle under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of people convicted of child sex offences who are (i) living in West Tyrone; and (ii) have been re-housed in West Tyrone in each of the the last five years.

(AQW 1707/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Sex offences involving children may be prosecuted under various legislation, including the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 and the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Convictions datasets held by the Department of Justice do not currently hold address or re-housing information on offenders who may have been convicted of such offences, so the Department is not able to provide the information requested.

Those convicted of sexual crimes against children may be monitored under the public protection arrangements in Northern Ireland (PPANI), jointly operated by the police, probation, prisons, social services and other government and voluntary organisations.

Sexual and violent crimes have a serious and long term impact on the victims and their families. They also create great public concern and fear about the ongoing risk to others, particularly to children.

The public protection arrangements aim to provide a multi-agency, co-ordinated system of risk assessment and risk management that will be effective in reducing the immediate and long term risk of sexual or violent re-offending.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future, that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for her assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department of Justice.

(AQW 1712/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The table below sets out details of those known justice European funded projects which are ongoing and scheduled for commencement.

Although grant agreements have been signed for all projects listed, it is not possible to indicate the level of risk to the funding at this time, due to the impending negotiations on the United Kingdom exiting the European Union. Nor at this stage is it possible to give any guarantees about future sources of funding.

Projects Ongoing

Project Name	Funding Programme	Organisation Name	Drawdown (€)
DESTRIERO	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	102,579.20*
HOMER	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	706,960*
SLÁNDÁIL	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	42,000*
SECTOR	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	138,776*
EMORE	Rights, Equality and Citizenship	Institute of Conflict Research	37,000*

Projects Scheduled for Commencement

Project Name	Funding Programme	Organisation Name	Drawdown (€)
TENSOR	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	726,125*
MEDIA4SEC	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	81,250*
GAP	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	47,000*
GAP	Horizon 2020	Upskill Enterprise Ltd	115,000*
CONTEXT	Horizon 2020	Probation Board for Northern Ireland	172,800*
Peace Training	Horizon 2020	Institute of Conflict Research	101,250*

* The figures represent the amount of drawdown agreed by the Commission, but may differ from the actual drawdown totals due to changes that may arise during the project lifespan.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) for a breakdown of (i) the costs to date; and (ii) estimated final costs, including all legal aid, Public Prosecution Service costs, jury costs, expert reports and witnesses in the case of Hugh McGoldrick.

(AQW 1723/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The costs to date are estimated to be:

Cost Type	Identifiable & Estimated Cost
a) Prosecution ¹	£8,077
b) Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	£6,099
c) PSNI costs ²	n/a
d) Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£615
e) Jury costs ³	£539
Total	£15,330

The estimated final costs are expected to be:

Cost Type	Identifiable & Estimated Cost
f) Prosecution ¹	£34,787
g) Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	£6,099
h) PSNI costs ²	n/a

Cost Type	Identifiable & Estimated Cost
i) Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£615
j) Jury costs ³	£539
Total	£42,040

The defendant did not apply for Legal Aid.

- 1 In respect of actual prosecution costs it is not possible to produce precise costs for a particular case or even average costs for a particular type of case. This is because the amount of time required to take individual decisions as to prosecution will vary depending upon a range of factors including the complexity of the case, the extent of the case papers and any other work in hand. As the PPS does not charge clients for work done there is no business need for such detailed records to be maintained.

Some costs are identifiable however, for example witness expenses and fees paid to prosecuting counsel.

I can advise that to date £8,034.75 (plus vat) has been paid to counsel. It is estimated that there will be a further £26,710 (plus vat) costs. To date £41.98 has been paid in witness expenses. It is not possible to provide a further estimation of costs for expenses at this time.

- 2 Costs for individual investigations and subsequent court appearances for PSNI Officers/Staff are not recorded separately.
- 3 Costs submitted to date.

Mr McPhillips asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail the projects (a) in progress; and (b) scheduled for the future in Fermanagh and South Tyrone by her Department, that have received EU funding or are scheduled to receive EU funding; (ii) for her assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Executive Office.

(AQW 1746/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The table below sets out details of those known justice European funded projects which are ongoing and scheduled for commencement. Due to the nature of these projects, it is impossible to provide a geographical breakdown of spend.

Although grant agreements have been signed for all projects listed, it is not possible to indicate the level of risk to the funding at this time, due to the impending negotiations on the United Kingdom exiting the European Union. Nor at this stage is it possible to give any guarantees about future sources of funding.

Projects Ongoing

Project Name	Funding Programme	Organisation Name	Drawdown (€)
DESTRIERO	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	102,579.20*
HOMER	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	706,960*
SLÁNDÁIL	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	42,000*
SECTOR	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	138,776*
EMORE	Rights, Equality and Citizenship	Institute of Conflict Research	37,000*

Projects Scheduled for Commencement

Project Name	Funding Programme	Organisation Name	Drawdown (€)
TENSOR	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	726,125*
MEDIA4SEC	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	81,250*
GAP	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	47,000*
GAP	Horizon 2020	Upskill Enterprise	115,000*
CONTEXT	Horizon 2020	Probation Board for Northern Ireland	172,800*
Peace Training	Horizon 2020	Institute of Conflict Research	101,250*

* The figures represent the amount of drawdown agreed by the Commission, but may differ from the actual drawdown totals due to changes that may arise during the project lifespan.

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice to outline what work is being done with the Minister for the Economy and the Minister of Education to ensure that education provision is sufficiently flexible to ensure that those leaving prison can access provision on their release rather than having to wait until the beginning of term.

(AQW 1747/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Since August 2015 the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), in conjunction with colleagues from the Department for the Economy, has been working in partnership with Belfast Metropolitan College and North West Regional College in the provision of Learning and Skills across the three prisons. The partnership with the two Colleges increases the potential for prisoner learners to continue with their education upon release as they are already known to the Colleges and advice can be offered pre-release by College staff on how to enrol and continue their education in any of the Further Education Colleges across Northern Ireland, or elsewhere.

At present there is no mechanism to offer prisoner learners the opportunity to continue their education outside of term time upon their release. It is NIPS' understanding that this is also the case for the general community, as access and enrolment is a matter for the Colleges and their governing procedures as agreed with the Department for the Economy, their sponsoring government department.

Learning and skills in the prison setting falls within further education in the Department for the Economy. Department of Justice officials are engaged in ongoing discussions with the Department of Education in respect of young people in the criminal justice system.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail, since 2011 (i) how many cases have been prosecuted in which human trafficking was an original element, but was later dropped or amended; and (ii) in each instance to outline the nature of the accompanying and/or charges or other offences which were successfully prosecuted.

(AQW 1751/16-21)

Ms Sugden: During the period 2011 – 2015, the Public Prosecution Service received three files in which human trafficking was an original element, but which was later dropped or amended. This figure is in relation to cases which were disposed at court by the end of 2015.

In each of the cases, other charges were disposed at court, with various disposals received. These are listed in the following table.

Case	Offence	Disposal
1	Controlling prostitution for gain (offence after 1 Feb 2009)	Fine
1	Brothel keeping	Fine
1	Possessing criminal property	Conditional discharge
2	Brothel keeping	Suspended imprisonment
3	Assisting illegal entry into UK	Imprisonment

It should be noted that, during the period concerned, there were a number of prosecutions in which human trafficking was an original element which had not, by the end of 2015, been resolved at court.

Mr Beattie asked the Minister of Justice to outline what provisions she will consider to replace the European Arrest Warrant given the ability for criminals to cross directly from Northern Ireland, unchecked, into a European Union Country to avoid arrest now the United Kingdom have decided to leave the European Union.

(AQW 1752/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The European Arrest Warrant is a reserved matter. Any negotiations on provisions to replace it would, therefore, be led by the UK Government as is the case for all exit arrangements.

I recognise that there will be some issues for justice in Northern Ireland, and for co-operation with Ireland, to be worked through. However, co-operation is already very good and I will ensure that is maintained, albeit through some different technical means.

Mr Mullan asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail all projects (a) being completed and (b) scheduled for the future in East Derry that have received European Union funding or are scheduled to receive European Union funding; (ii) for her assessment of whether this funding is now at risk following the decision to vote to leave the European Union; and (iii) whether this funding, if at risk, will be provided through the Northern Ireland Executive or the Department of Justice.

(AQW 1770/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The table below sets out details of those known justice European funded projects which are ongoing and scheduled for commencement. Due to the nature of these projects, it is impossible to provide a geographical breakdown of spend.

Although grant agreements have been signed for all projects listed, it is not possible to indicate the level of risk to the funding at this time, due to the impending negotiations on the United Kingdom exiting the European Union. Nor at this stage is it possible to give any guarantees about future sources of funding.

Projects Ongoing

Project Name	Funding Programme	Organisation Name	Drawdown (€)
DESTRIERO	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	102,579.20*
HOMER	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	706,960*
SLÁNDÁIL	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	42,000*
SECTOR	Framework Programme 7	Police Service of Northern Ireland	138,776*
EMORE	Rights, Equality and Citizenship	Institute of Conflict Research	37,000*

Projects Scheduled for Commencement

Project Name	Funding Programme	Organisation Name	Drawdown (€)
TENSOR	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	726,125*
MEDIA4SEC	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	81,250*
GAP	Horizon 2020	Police Service of Northern Ireland	47,000*
GAP	Horizon 2020	Upskill Enterprise Ltd	115,000*
CONTEXT	Horizon 2020	Probation Board for Northern Ireland	172,800*
Peace Training	Horizon 2020	Institute of Conflict Research	101,250*

* The figures represent the amount of drawdown agreed by the Commission, but may differ from the actual drawdown totals due to changes that may arise during the project lifespan.

Mr McGrath asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) all groups including volunteer, community, sporting or otherwise that received funding from her Department; and (ii) the amount allocated, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1785/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Funding by my Department including its Agencies but not its arm's-length bodies, for groups including volunteer, community, sporting or otherwise, in each of the last three financial years is listed in the table below. A full list of the bodies that received the funding is also listed below. Some funding to groups included in the table is by way of procurement for services provided.

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£6.9m	£6.4m	£5.6m

My Department also provides funding to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships who work with a wide range of bodies including voluntary and community organisations.

The Department's Assets Recovery Community Scheme also allocates money to community groups through Policing and Community Safety Partnerships or Department of Justice Agencies. Details of allocations made in the last three years can be found on the Department of Justice website at:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/asset-recovery-community-schemes>

Name of Organisation

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Abbey Amateur Boxing Club | ■ Ardstraw & District Community Development Association |
| ■ Add NI | ■ Artillery Youth Centre |
| ■ ADDNI Addiction Counselling | ■ Ashton Community trust |
| ■ Age Sector Platform | ■ Autism NI |
| ■ Angling First Limited | ■ Ballysillan Amateur Boxing Club |
| ■ Antrim Youth Information & Counselling Centre | ■ Ballysillan Youth for Christ |
| ■ Ardoyne Holy Cross Amateur Boxing Club | ■ Bangor Abbey Boxing Club |
| ■ Ardoyne Youth Club | ■ Barnardo's |
| ■ Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum | |

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basement Youth Club ■ Belfast + Lisburn Women's Aid ■ Better Care Keys ■ Bovalley Community Association ■ Boxing strategy ■ Breezemount Community Assoc ■ Bushmills Residential & environmental forum ■ Bytes Project ■ Cabbage Patchers The ■ Cairn Lodge Amateur Boxing Club ■ Canal Boxing Club ■ Carlton Drive/Greeves Park Cross Community Association ■ Carniny Amateur & Youth Football Club ■ Carrick Amateur Boxing Club ■ Cathedral Youth Club ■ CBS JuJitsu ■ Central Benevolent Fund ■ Challenge for Youth ■ Chaplains ■ Childrens Law centre ■ Choices Family Support (ACTION FOR Children) ■ Cloughmills Community Action ■ Colin Project ■ Comber Youth For Christ ■ Community Restorative Justice Ireland ■ Connect ■ Conservation Volunteers ■ Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary ■ CRUSE Bereavement ■ Culmore & Okane Residents Association ■ Deanby Youth centre ■ Devenish partnership Forum - Positive Peers Youth ■ Divert Project ■ Dreamscheme NI ■ Drumgor Detached Youth Group ■ East Antrim Council - Leave the Lights On ■ East Belfast Alternatives ■ East End Residents Association ■ Education Authority Belfast Region ■ Enagh Youth Forum ■ Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) ■ Express Youth ■ Extern ■ First Housing Aid & Support Services (FHASS) ■ Forum for Action on Substance Abuse (FASA) ■ Foyle Search and Rescue ■ Fuse Youth ■ Genesis(Youth Concern Whitehead) ■ Glen Development Initiative ■ Glens Community Association ■ Greater Ballyclare Youth For Christ ■ Greater Shantallow Commuity Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Headway & Colin Glen ■ Headway (includes Brain Injury) ■ Housing Rights Association ■ Include Youth ■ Inner East Youth Project ■ Irish Cave Rescue Organisation ■ Keys 16 Plus Independent Living ■ Kingdom Youth Club ■ Larne Community Care Centre ■ Law Centre ■ Leonard Cheshire Disability ■ Linking Generations NI ■ Londonderry YMCA ■ Lough Neagh Rescue ■ Lower Shankill Community Association ■ Mad Event Foyle ■ Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership ■ Mid Ulster + South Tyrone Association (Must) Hostel ■ Millisle Youth Forum ■ Monkstown Village Initatives ■ Mourne Mountain Rescue Team ■ New Mossley Presbyterian Youth Club ■ New Start ■ Newlodge Youth Centre(Ashton Community Trust) ■ Newstart Education Centre ■ NEXUS ■ NI Council for Ethnic Minorities ■ NI Crimestoppers ■ NIACRO ■ NIPS Sports Association ■ Norman Whiteside Sports Facility ■ North Belfast Interface Network ■ North West Mountain Rescue ■ Northern Area Early Intervention(action for children) ■ Northern Ireland (NI) Alternatives ■ Northern Ireland Social Care Council ■ NSPCC ■ O4O Cookstown Ltd ■ Oasis Antrim ■ Off the Streets Community Youth Initiative ■ Omagh Youth Support(EXTERN) ■ Opportunity Youth ■ Parenting NI ■ Pitt park womens Group ■ Poleglass community Assoc ■ Prison Arts Foundation ■ Prison Fellowship ■ Prison Service Trust ■ Quakers ■ Rathbone North Belfast ■ Rathbone West Belfast/Lisburn ■ Rathgill Community Association ■ Redburn Loughview Community Forum |
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- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Relate NI Marriage Counselling | ■ Strabane Access Youth Engagement |
| ■ Respect | ■ Strabane Sigersons Ladies Club |
| ■ Roe Valley Residents Association | ■ Strathfoyle Youth Centre |
| ■ RUC GC Widows | ■ Streetbeat Youth project |
| ■ Samaritans | ■ Tar Isteach |
| ■ Seacourt Youth Club | ■ Terry Enright Foundation |
| ■ Search and Rescue Dog Association | ■ The Find Centre (F.U.E.L.) |
| ■ Seaview Enterprises | ■ The Playhouse - Driving Project |
| ■ Shantallow Community Residents Association | ■ The Playhouse - One Punch Project |
| ■ Simon Community | ■ The Y Zone |
| ■ Sion Mills Community Forum | ■ Thingy |
| ■ Skills for Justice | ■ Victim Support NI |
| ■ Skywatch | ■ VOYPIC - Southern Area Team |
| ■ South & East Antrim Community Federation | ■ Walkway community Centre |
| ■ South Belfast Alternatives | ■ West Bann Athletic Football Club |
| ■ Spanner in the Works Theatre Company | ■ West Belfast parent Youth Support Group |
| ■ Spartans Boxing Club | ■ Whiterock Residents Association |
| ■ Springvale | ■ Womens Aid |
| ■ St Galls Gaelic Athletic Club | ■ Woodvale Football Club |
| ■ St John Vianney Youth Centre | ■ Youth Engagement Partnership |
| ■ St Johns Gaelic Athletic Club | ■ YMCA |
| ■ St Marys Youth Centre | ■ Youth Action |
| ■ St Patrick Youth Club Keady | ■ Youth First |
| ■ St Peters Immaculata Youth Centre | ■ Youth Initiatives |
| ■ St Peters Youth Centre | ■ Youth Safety Partnership |
| ■ Start 360 | ■ Youth Works |

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Justice whether her Department will encourage Courts Service to make Omagh Courthouse more accessible, more environmentally friendly and more user friendly, including the removal of wire meshing, grills and an observation post on the Georges Street side of the building as well as the repair of the town clock facing towards High Street.

(AQW 1788/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS) is committed to ensuring, within the finite resources they have available, that all courthouses are accessible, environmentally and user friendly.

Since 2014 the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) has completed the following works to improve Omagh courthouse:

- The installation of new automated door closures and push pads
- The installation of new door closures (non-automatic)
- The redesign of the public counter
- The installation of an induction loop; and
- Improvements to the ironmongery.

In addition, NICTS staff work with Properties Division of the Department of Finance to ensure the courthouse is as environmentally friendly as possible.

Regarding the removal of wire meshing, grills and the observation post, the NICTS has no plans at present to remove or change these features.

The situation regarding the Courthouse clock requires specialist services from a company in England. Given the financial constraints on the NICTS budget there are no plans to progress this work.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for a breakdown of the legal aid costs to date in the case against Eamon Foley for the current charges of failing to sign the sex-offender register and breaching of Sexual Offences Prevention Order within the Fermanagh and Tyrone Court Division.

(AQW 1814/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Legal Aid was granted for representation of Eamon Foley in the Magistrates' Court and Crown Court. The following fees have been paid to Solicitor and Counsel in respect of the Magistrate's Court proceedings to defend the charge of failing to sign the sex offenders register.

Legal Rep.	Profit Costs	VAT	Total
Solicitor	£976.12	£195.22	£1,171.34
Counsel	£1023.86	£204.77	£1,228.63
Total			£2,399.97

In respect of the Magistrates Court proceedings for the charge of breach of sexual offences prevention order, Legal Aid was granted for representation by Solicitor only. A bill has not been submitted in respect of this charge.

The Crown Court proceedings in respect of failing to sign the sex offenders register and breach of sexual offences prevention order are ongoing, therefore no bills have been submitted.

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Justice whether she would consider introducing an opt out system for members of the community who do not wish to undertake jury service or whether people could be asked to participate rather than be compelled.

(AQW 1834/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I have no plans to change the current jury service arrangements, the intention being that the jury pool remains as wide as possible.

For those people whose work, other commitments or personal circumstances make jury service difficult, the Juries (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 contains a list of persons who may be excused as of right as well as provision allowing the judge to defer a juror's service or excuse them where good reason can be demonstrated.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Justice what action her Department is taking, in conjunction with key agencies, to address cross-border criminal activity.

(AQW 1853/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Addressing cross-border criminality is principally an operational matter for the two police forces and other key law enforcement agencies.

Law enforcement in Northern Ireland has always co-operated with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland to tackle the threat posed by criminals. In addition the establishment of a new Joint Agency Task Force under the Fresh Start Agreement is enhancing the operational response to cross-border criminality. It has agreed initial priorities for law enforcement in both jurisdictions and has undertaken a number of operations.

There are, of course, other initiatives against criminality near the border but the Task Force marks a significant development.

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Justice for her assessment of the recent Audit Office report on legal aid fees.

(AQW 1862/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I welcome the recognition by the Comptroller and Auditor General that progress has been made on reforms to legal aid but I acknowledge that further work needs to be done. The Public Accounts Committee took evidence from my officials last week and I will consider any recommendations coming forward from the PAC in due course.

Legal aid is demand led and any increase in the volume of cases coming before the courts will inevitably lead to an increase in legal aid costs. Significant reforms have already been made to the fees paid to legal representatives in the criminal courts and, without these reforms, with the increase in disposals in the Crown Court, the expenditure on legal aid would have been considerably higher. Reforms to fees paid in the civil courts are at an advanced stage and will be progressed in the coming months.

I am committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable in our society continue to be afforded proportionate representation paid for by the public purse, but I am equally resolute that those who can afford to pay for their own representation should do so.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many hostels in each court division are registered with Probation Board NI as bail hostels; and how many of these are registered to house convicted sex offenders on release from either a custodial sentence or bail remand.

(AQW 1879/16-21)

Ms Sugden: There are seven approved premises that accommodate individuals with criminal convictions in Northern Ireland. These are broken down by court division as follows:

- Belfast City – 4
- Derry City – 1
- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon – 1

■ Mid Ulster – 1

Six of the seven hostels accommodate individuals convicted off all types of offences, including sexual offences. One does not accommodate individuals with convictions for sexual offences. Approved premises will also accommodate individuals subject to bail conditions, if there are places available.

Mr McNulty asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of convictions for fuel laundering in each of the last five years. (AQW 1903/16-21)

Ms Sugden: There are no criminal offences that relate specifically to fuel laundering. Rather, such activity may be prosecuted under more general charges relating to tax evasion, which may be prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 and/or the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983. However, a manual trawl of court records has established the following numbers of convictions prosecuted under this legislation, where the substance in question was hydrocarbon fuel. The latest 5 year period for which information is available is 2010 – 2014.

Convictions at courts for tax evasion offences, where the subject matter involved was hydrocarbon fuel, 2010 – 2014

Year	Convictions
2010	2
2011	4
2012	6
2013	11
2014	8

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to convictions which included at least one count of the offence specified.
- 2 The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.
- 3 Figures relate to initial disposals at court: disposals as a result of appeals are not included.
- 4 Figures include cases brought by Public Prosecution Service on behalf of police and other organisations.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Justice what consultation has taken place between her Department and the PSNI on the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy. (AQW 1907/16-21)

Ms Sugden: My Department has engaged with the PSNI throughout the entire consultation and development process of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy.

As members of the Regional Strategy Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and the associated Protection and Justice sub-group, the PSNI made a significant contribution to shaping the new Strategy. As part of that engagement the PSNI attended pre-consultation events hosted by officials from my Department and the then Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2012, and responded to the public consultation on the Strategy.

My Department continues to consult with the PSNI on taking forward the Protection and Justice priorities that have emerged from the Strategy and associated action plan. I anticipate this will continue given the vital role PSNI have in supporting and delivering the range of initiatives within the Strategy.

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Justice whether stalking will be included in the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse strategy. (AQW 1915/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse' Strategy, published in March 2016, includes new Government definitions for both domestic and sexual violence and abuse. It is noted under each definition that this type of violence and abuse can include physical and digital (cyber) stalking.

The Strategy acknowledges that there are links between domestic and sexual violence and abuse and specific acts such as stalking. However, while these acts are mentioned in the document, they are specific to the context of intimate relationships as defined in the Strategy. As stalking can happen outside of intimate relationships, work to address it in these circumstances sits outside the remit of the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse' Strategy.

I welcomed our recent meeting at which we had the opportunity to discuss stalking and I remain committed to exploring the issue further.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice how many applications have been received to the Child Protection Disclosure Scheme. (AQW 1940/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Since disclosure arrangements were introduced on 14 March this year, 11 applications have been received.

The agencies involved plan to assess and review the operation of the arrangements after six months from the date of commencement.

These new arrangements sit within the wider public protection arrangements which involve all agencies with a role to play in safeguarding children. The additional disclosure provision offered by the new arrangements is not a stand-alone measure and the agencies will respond to every application with a holistic approach and the safety of any child at the forefront of their actions, in accordance with existing agreed protocols.

To ensure a holistic approach with regard to measures designed to protect those at risk of harm a domestic violence disclosure scheme would likely sit with the key agencies involved in the public protection arrangements. The feedback from the recent public consultation on a domestic violence disclosure scheme is currently being analysed and the Justice Committee will be apprised of developments.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice what plans there are to review the Child Protection Disclosure Scheme.
(AQW 1941/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Since disclosure arrangements were introduced on 14 March this year, 11 applications have been received.

The agencies involved plan to assess and review the operation of the arrangements after six months from the date of commencement.

These new arrangements sit within the wider public protection arrangements which involve all agencies with a role to play in safeguarding children. The additional disclosure provision offered by the new arrangements is not a stand-alone measure and the agencies will respond to every application with a holistic approach and the safety of any child at the forefront of their actions, in accordance with existing agreed protocols.

To ensure a holistic approach with regard to measures designed to protect those at risk of harm a domestic violence disclosure scheme would likely sit with the key agencies involved in the public protection arrangements. The feedback from the recent public consultation on a domestic violence disclosure scheme is currently being analysed and the Justice Committee will be apprised of developments.

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice how she will assure a public health approach to the Child Protection Disclosure Scheme.
(AQW 1942/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Since disclosure arrangements were introduced on 14 March this year, 11 applications have been received.

The agencies involved plan to assess and review the operation of the arrangements after six months from the date of commencement.

These new arrangements sit within the wider public protection arrangements which involve all agencies with a role to play in safeguarding children. The additional disclosure provision offered by the new arrangements is not a stand-alone measure and the agencies will respond to every application with a holistic approach and the safety of any child at the forefront of their actions, in accordance with existing agreed protocols.

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Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice how the Child Protection Disclosure Scheme will work in line with the proposed scheme on domestic violence; and what assurances she can give on a seamless scheme and service.
(AQW 1943/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Since disclosure arrangements were introduced on 14 March this year, 11 applications have been received.

The agencies involved plan to assess and review the operation of the arrangements after six months from the date of commencement.

These new arrangements sit within the wider public protection arrangements which involve all agencies with a role to play in safeguarding children. The additional disclosure provision offered by the new arrangements is not a stand-alone measure and the agencies will respond to every application with a holistic approach and the safety of any child at the forefront of their actions, in accordance with existing agreed protocols.

To ensure a holistic approach with regard to measures designed to protect those at risk of harm a domestic violence disclosure scheme would likely sit with the key agencies involved in the public protection arrangements. The feedback from the recent public consultation on a domestic violence disclosure scheme is currently being analysed and the Justice Committee will be apprised of developments.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) prosecutions and (ii) convictions were secured for driving under the influence of (a) alcohol; and (b) drugs in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1988/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Offences related to driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs may be prosecuted under the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Driving under the influence offence descriptions do not always distinguish between the involvement of alcohol or drugs and, to establish the nature of the substance concerned would require a manual trawl of court records, an exercise that would incur a disproportionate cost. Additionally, Departmental databases do not contain information on the location of an offence. Therefore, it is not possible to provide information at a constituency level. Information in relation to prosecutions and convictions relating to all drink driving offences, by court Division, has been provided. The latest 5 year period for which information is available is 2010 – 2014.

Prosecutions and Convictions for drink and drugs driving offences by Court Division, 2010

Court Division	Prosecutions	Convictions
Antrim	375	360
Ards	344	326
Armagh & South Down	325	318
Belfast	608	596
Craigavon	298	281
Fermanagh & Tyrone	428	411
Londonderry	190	181
Total	2,568	2,473

Prosecutions and Convictions for drink and drugs driving offences by Court Division, 2011

Court Division	Prosecutions	Convictions
Antrim	275	266
Ards	381	363
Armagh & South Down	296	290
Belfast	560	533
Craigavon	284	279
Fermanagh & Tyrone	417	401
Londonderry	231	218
Total	2,444	2,350

Prosecutions and Convictions for drink and drugs driving offences by Court Division, 2012

Court Division	Prosecutions	Convictions
Antrim	358	345
Ards	278	274
Armagh & South Down	317	306
Belfast	525	496
Craigavon	262	257
Fermanagh & Tyrone	353	340
Londonderry	203	196
Total	2,296	2,214

Prosecutions and Convictions for drink and drugs driving offences by Court Division, 2013

Court Division	Prosecutions	Convictions
Antrim	285	267
Ards	277	273

Court Division	Prosecutions	Convictions
Armagh & South Down	273	262
Belfast	456	441
Craigavon	222	215
Fermanagh & Tyrone	315	305
Londonderry	197	187
Total	2,025	1,950

Prosecutions and Convictions for drink and drugs driving offences by Court Division, 2014

Court Division	Prosecutions	Convictions
Antrim	255	248
Ards	262	253
Armagh & South Down	295	285
Belfast	402	386
Craigavon	224	214
Fermanagh & Tyrone	288	278
Londonderry	213	206
Total	1,939	1,870

Note:

- 1 Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.
- 2 The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offences specified and to disposals at Magistrates' courts and Crown Court.
- 3 Figures relate to initial disposals at court: disposals as a result of appeals are not included.

Ms Lockhart asked the Minister of Justice how many times the Legal Aid Strategy Group has met in the last 12 months.
(AQW 2031/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Legal Aid Strategy Group met 8 times in the last 12 months.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many prison officers are currently off work citing stress, mental health or wellbeing issues.
(AQW 2039/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The number of NIPS Prison Grade staff currently absent due to stress, mental health or wellbeing issues at May 2016 are set out in the table below.

You may wish to note that NISRA produce an annual report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. I have provided a link to the NISRA website page where the most recent report can be downloaded.

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/Sickness_in_the_nics.html

Breakdown of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illness at May 2016

Business Area	Staff No.	Staff %	Working Days Lost No.	Working Days Lost %
NIPS Prison Grade Staff	48	55.2	866.2	59.6

Breakdown of Stress – Work Related Absences at May 2016

Business Area	Staff No.	Staff %	Working Days Lost No.	Working Days Lost %
NIPS Prison Grade Staff	31	70.5	588.1	75.0

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the mental health and wellbeing support services available to prison officers.

(AQW 2040/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The Department of Justice takes seriously the health and wellbeing of all staff, including Prison Officers, employed in what is a demanding and challenging environment. Available support mechanisms include a dedicated Staff Welfare Service, access to the Occupational Health Service and a confidential counselling service provided by Carecall. They are provided to staff to supplement the support and treatment available through the National Health Service.

In addition, my Department utilises, where appropriate, the services of the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) particularly where staff have been subject to assaults or have been witnesses of distressing scenes. This arrangement is over and above the facilities which exist for the majority of other staff employed across the NICS.

My officials will continue to seek to improve the working environment and support services which are available for staff within available resourcing constraints.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice (i) for her assessment of the implications of the result of the European Union referendum for (a) cooperation with relevant European Union partners and stakeholders; (b) all other aspects of her Departmental portfolio; and (ii) to detail what relevant contingencies are in place as a consequence.

(AQW 2041/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I have held initial discussions on the implications of the result of the European Union referendum with Executive colleagues and other key partners. Negotiations on all exit arrangements will be led by the UK Government. The First Minister, in her address to the Assembly on 26 June, made it clear that the Executive will ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and new opportunities developed as part of any new arrangements with the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland as well as with other European neighbours. In the meantime, business continues as usual.

There are a number of justice-specific issues to be worked through and this will be achieved via the process outlined by the First Minister in the Assembly debate on 26 June.

At an Intergovernmental Agreement meeting with An Tánaiste, Frances Fitzgerald, T.D. on 4 July, we held initial discussions on the justice-specific implications of Brexit and reaffirmed our commitment to work together on cross border criminal justice issues. It is a priority for me to ensure that the excellent levels of co-operation continue.

My Department has established a Brexit working group comprised of senior officials to assess the impact on the Department of Justice portfolio and develop plans for the future. That group will report regularly to me on progress and key issues.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice to provide a timeframe for her review into maximum sentences.

(AQW 2088/16-21)

Ms Sugden: On 9 June I announced a Review of Sentencing Policy. As this is a major, comprehensive review covering a wide range of issues it will run for some considerable time over the course of the current mandate. No date has yet been set for public consultation on eventual policy proposals.

I have asked officials to carry out a process of widespread engagement during the policy development stages and this will begin in autumn 2016.

Mr Kelly asked the Minister of Justice to outline the (i) mental health and resilience support; and (ii) counselling and emotional support, available to young people in Hydebank Wood.

(AQW 2136/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The table below shows the support available to young people in Hydebank Wood:

Organisation/Programme	Support Offered
NIPS Student Development Co-ordinators	Provide general support and advice to students during their time in custody and can arrange referrals to other services as necessary.
Start 360	provides a range of services and interventions in the areas of health, justice and employability
Adept & Adept 2	Provided by Start 360 – drug and alcohol use interventions.
ADJUST	Provided by Start 360 delivers pre/post custody interventions improving rehabilitation
Mentoring and Advocacy Service	Provided by Start 360 and offers emotional and behavioural support
The Landing Project	Provided by Start 360 Supports educational achievement for those who find it difficult to engage

Organisation/Programme	Support Offered
Prison Fellowship	Offers Befriending visits can provide a spiritual programme and a programme on the impact of crime on victims.
Chaplaincy Team	Available on the landings each day to One to One Support and are contactable via Class Officers where support is required outside the core day
CRUSE	Bereavement Care
Nexus	Counselling and support following Sexual Abuse and/or Rape
Women's Aid	Support following Domestic Violence
Barnardos	Family Support
Relate	Relationship Counselling
Alcoholics Anonymous	Support re Alcohol Issues
Gamblers Anonymous	Support re Gambling Issues
South Eastern Healthcare Trust	Occupational Therapy Team Mental Health Team
Action Mental Health	Support re Mental Health issues
NIPS/Belfast Metropolitan College	Pastoral Care
Samaritans	Crisis Support

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Justice whether representation has been made by her Department in supporting the claims of Army widows whose pensions were removed at the point of advising the Ministry of Defence that they had re-married.

(AQW 2173/16-21)

Ms Sugden: This policy area is a reserved matter and the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence. My Department has not, therefore, made any such representations.

Mr Poots asked the Minister of Justice to provide a copy of the incident report record for HMP Maghaberry for each year since 2009.

(AQW 2177/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The report is a protected document for internal use by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. It is therefore not considered appropriate for release.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice for her assessment of the impact of the EU referendum on her departmental portfolio.

(AQW 2190/16-21)

Ms Sugden: I have held initial discussions on the implications of the result of the European Union referendum with Executive colleagues and other key partners. Negotiations on all exit arrangements will be led by the UK Government. The First Minister, in her address to the Assembly on 26 June, made it clear that the Executive will ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and new opportunities developed as part of any new arrangements with the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland as well as with other European neighbours. In the meantime, business continues as usual.

There are a number of justice-specific issues to be worked through and this will be achieved via the process outlined by the First Minister in the Assembly debate on 26 June.

At an Intergovernmental Agreement meeting with An Tánaiste, Frances Fitzgerald, T.D. on 4 July, we held initial discussions on the justice-specific implications of Brexit and reaffirmed our commitment to work together on cross border criminal justice issues. It is a priority for me to ensure that the excellent levels of co-operation continue.

My Department has established a Brexit working group comprised of senior officials to assess the impact on the Department of Justice portfolio and develop plans for the future. That group will report regularly to me on progress and key issues.

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice how many arrests have taken place in Northern Ireland using the European Arrest Warrant in each year since its introduction.

(AQW 2191/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The number of European Arrest Warrants issued by the PSNI is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice why, in the case of R v David Lee Stewart & William Ross Casement, Mr Ross's case was not referred to the Court of Appeal.

(AQW 2233/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) provisions all indictable only offences can be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for consideration for referral to the Court of Appeal on the grounds of undue leniency. A hybrid offence (one which can be heard in the Crown or magistrates' courts) that has been specified in law to make it amenable to the ULS provisions and has been tried in the Crown Court can be referred. The hybrid offences for which Mr Casement was sentenced are not included in the list of offences that can be referred. The decision to appeal a sentence under ULS provisions is made by the Director of Public Prosecutions who is independent of government.

On 9 June I announced a comprehensive Review of Sentencing Policy, which will include consideration of the underlying policy and scope of the ULS provisions.

The case of R v David Lee Stewart is listed before the Court of Appeal on 9 September 2016.

Mr McCrossan asked the Minister of Justice to outline the date the Court of Appeal will consider the case of R v David Lee Stewart and William Ross Casement.

(AQW 2234/16-21)

Ms Sugden: Under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) provisions all indictable only offences can be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for consideration for referral to the Court of Appeal on the grounds of undue leniency. A hybrid offence (one which can be heard in the Crown or magistrates' courts) that has been specified in law to make it amenable to the ULS provisions and has been tried in the Crown Court can be referred. The hybrid offences for which Mr Casement was sentenced are not included in the list of offences that can be referred. The decision to appeal a sentence under ULS provisions is made by the Director of Public Prosecutions who is independent of government.

On 9 June I announced a comprehensive Review of Sentencing Policy, which will include consideration of the underlying policy and scope of the ULS provisions.

The case of R v David Lee Stewart is listed before the Court of Appeal on 9 September 2016.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1815/16-21, whether these actions were carried out and applied in the case of Cathal Francis Hughes and his release to a Simon Community Hostel; and how these premises were regarded as suitable given their location close to child-centred facilities.

(AQW 2264/16-21)

Ms Sugden: The response to AQW/1815/16-21 set out the steps taken by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) to approve accommodation for convicted sex offenders subject to statutory supervision by PBNI.

Mr Hughes was not subject to statutory supervision by PBNI and was being risk managed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The court ordered that he reside at accommodation approved by PSNI and it is therefore an operational policing matter. I am committed to respecting the independence of PSNI and you may wish to direct your question to the Chief Constable.

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1491/16-21, to detail (i) what offences were the individuals specified convicted of; and (ii) what sentences they received.

(AQW 2267/16-21)

Ms Sugden: During the period 2010 – 2014, sixteen cases resulted in convictions at court for offences recorded under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985. The offences under this legislation for which convictions were handed down as part of these cases, as well as the subsequent penalties imposed, are listed in the following table:

Offences under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 for which convictions were handed down and penalties imposed, 2010 – 2014

Case	Offence	Penalty
1	Charging a player of a gaming machine an amount in excess of that permitted (2 counts)	Monetary penalty (for each count)
1	Permit player of gaming machine to receive excess winnings	Monetary penalty

Case	Offence	Penalty
2	Unlawful use of gaming machine (2 counts)	Monetary penalty (for each count)
3	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Monetary penalty
4	Advertising gaming	Monetary penalty
4	Organising or managing prohibited gaming	Monetary penalty
5	Using premises for unlawful betting transactions	Monetary penalty
6	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Monetary penalty
7	Advertising gaming	Conditional discharge
7	Organising or managing gaming at entertainment (2 counts)	Conditional discharge (for each count)
7	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Conditional discharge
8	Advertising gaming	Conditional discharge
8	Organising or managing gaming at entertainment (2 counts)	Conditional discharge (for each count)
8	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Conditional discharge
9	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Suspended imprisonment
10	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Suspended imprisonment
11	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Suspended imprisonment
12	Maintaining a gaming machine without a gaming machine certificate or permit	Suspended imprisonment
12	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Suspended imprisonment
13	Unlawful use of gaming machine (3 counts)	Monetary penalty (for each count)
14	Organising or managing prohibited gaming	Monetary penalty
14	Permitting gaming machine on premises without supplier name and address (2 counts)	Absolute discharge (for each count)
15	Unlawful use of gaming machine	Monetary penalty
16	Unlawful use of gaming machine (5 counts)	Monetary penalty (for each count)

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to convictions which included at least one count of the offences specified.
- 2 Figures relate to initial disposals at court: disposals as a result of appeals are not included.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Assembly Commission when the decision was taken to stop sending answers to written Assembly Questions by email to Members' accounts.

(AQW 1437/16-21)

Mr Hussey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Members receive the answer to their written questions directly from the Minister to whom the question has been tabled. Following this, the Business Office receives an electronic, text-only, version of each answer for publication on the Assembly Information Management System (AIMS).

Members may elect, on request, to receive electronic copies of the answers to their written questions via AIMS. To do this, Members should contact the Business Office or Information Systems Office, to request this service, providing their preferred email address for this purpose.

During the 2011-16 mandate there were a number of Members who, having requested this service, received electronic copies of the answers to their written questions via AIMS. However, on dissolution of the Assembly at the end of mandate,

all Members ceased to be Members, and information and preferences held on AIMS for Members, were deleted. This was in line with good practice and the eight principles of data protection as reflected in the Assembly's Data Protection policy.

The service of providing Members with electronic answers to their written questions has not therefore been withdrawn. However, any Member wishing to receive this service needs to contact the Business or Information Systems offices to request it, even where it had been provided during the last mandate.

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission, in light of the recent IFRP determination, whether it plans to provide advice to Members in how to promote relevant telephone numbers on the exterior of constituency offices.

(AQW 1529/16-21)

Mr Attwood (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Paragraph 14 of the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 is highly prescriptive as to the items that must and must not be included within signage for a constituency office. In particular, signage must contain the following items to enable a Member to recover the cost of rent and rates for a constituency office (paragraph 14 (2)):

- the name of the Member;
- the words "Member of the Legislative Assembly" or "MLA";
- the words "constituency office" and
- the Assembly logo.

In addition, the sign may contain the following items ((paragraph 14 (4)):

- the address of the office;
- the name or logo of a political party;
- where the office is shared with a person as described in paragraph 15 [of the Determination], and that person is not a Member, the name of that person.

Paragraph 14 (4) is also explicit in its provision that "no expense may be recovered if the sign includes anything else." That provision precludes the inclusion of any other items on the signage including telephone numbers, email address, etc.

Paragraph 14 of the Determination also sets conditions for the general exterior of a constituency office including restrictions on the display of party political posters and the logo or name of a party (other than on the signage). It may be helpful to note that these conditions do not preclude the display of the telephone number of the office on the window or other such part of the frontage of the property that does not fall within the signage.

Mrs Barton asked the Assembly Commission whether it has considered the creation of an online petition page on the Assembly website to allow the public to petition the Assembly.

(AQW 1842/16-21)

Mr Dickson (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): During the last mandate, the Committee on Procedures agreed a report on the Review of Public Petitions Procedures (NIA 305/11-16) which recommended, amongst other things, that the existing public petitions process should be enhanced by the inclusion of an e-petitions facility to permit submission of petitions without requiring sponsorship of a political party. On 1 March 2016 the Assembly approved both this and the other recommendations in the report.

The current Committee on Procedures is giving consideration to these recommendations with a view to introducing an e-petitions facility in due course. The Assembly Commission will provide the necessary resources to facilitate whatever e-petition facility is agreed and introduced.

Mrs Dobson asked the Assembly Commission whether it has considered the creation of an online petition page on the Assembly website to allow the public to petition the Assembly, similar to systems in Scotland, Wales and Westminster.

(AQW 1952/16-21)

Mr Maskey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): During the last mandate, the Committee on Procedures agreed a report on the Review of Public Petitions Procedures (NIA 305/11-16) which recommended, amongst other things, that the existing public petitions process should be enhanced by the inclusion of an e-petitions facility to permit submission of petitions without requiring sponsorship of a political party. On 1 March 2016 the Assembly approved both this and the other recommendations in the report.

The current Committee on Procedures is giving consideration to these recommendations with a view to introducing an e-petitions facility in due course. The Assembly Commission will provide the necessary resources to facilitate whatever e-petition facility is agreed and introduced.

Lord Morrow asked the Assembly Commission whether it will invite the Independent Financial Review Panel to appear before the Assembly Commission to answer questions to clarify the legal positions within, and to explain the rationale for, their recent determination including matters relating to members' staff contracts, terms of employment, absence of consultation prior to implementation of changes and potential issues with employment law.

(AQW 2106/16-21)

Mr Hussey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Independent Financial Review Panel was established under section 1 of the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the "2011 Act").

Section 3 (1) of the 2011 Act provides that the Panel shall not be subject to the direction or control of the Commission or the Assembly when carrying out its functions. Therefore, the Panel is not answerable to the Commission (or the Assembly).

The tenure of the current Panel ended on 1 July 2016 and the Commission is considering possible changes to the size and composition of the Panel in advance of the recruitment of a new Panel.

Section 3 (3) (a) of the 2011 Act also provides that the Panel shall "act in such a manner that its decisions and its reasons for those decisions are readily ascertainable." In this regard, the Member may wish to refer to the Report issued by the Panel which accompanied its recent Determination.

Revised Written Answers

This section contains the revised written answers to questions tabled by Members.

The content of the responses is as received at the time from the relevant Minister or representative of the Assembly Commission, and it has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process or changed.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 1 July 2016

Revised Written Answer

Department for Communities

In this Bound Volume, page WA 51, replace the answer given for AQW 1221/16-21 with:

Mrs Bunting asked the Minister for Communities how many Employment Support Allowance cases have resulted in appeal but were conceded by the Social Security Agency (i) prior to hearing; and (ii) at hearing; broken down per appeal district, in last twelve months.

(AQW 1221/16-21)

Mr Givan (The Minister for Communities): The requested information is not available in the format requested. There is no provision for the Department, as a party to the proceedings, to concede appeals. The Department can, on the basis of further evidence received and providing there has been no final determination by the Tribunal, revise the original decision which in turn will cause an appeal to lapse.

In the 2015/16 financial year, Employment and Support Allowance Branch, based on further evidence provided by claimants following the initial decision revised the decision in the claimant's favour in 1,668 cases. This information is not available broken down per appeal district.

Journal of Proceedings

Minutes of Proceedings

Northern Ireland Assembly

Monday 27 June 2016

The Assembly met at noon, the Speaker in the Chair.

1. Prayers

Members observed two minutes' silence.

2. Assembly Business

- 2.1 The Speaker welcomed the new Clerk/Chief Executive of the Assembly Mrs Lesley Hogg. The Speaker also put on record the sympathies of the House to the family of Lord Mayhew.**

3. Private Members' Business

- 3.1 Motion – United Kingdom Withdrawal from the European Union**

Proposed:

That this Assembly notes the result of the referendum on European Union membership; and calls on the Executive to set out, in the immediate future, their response to the consequences of a withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European union.

*Mr M Nesbitt
Mr C Eastwood
Mr D Ford
Ms C Ní Chuilín*

Debate ensued.

The Principal Deputy Speaker (Ms Ruane) took the Chair.

The debate was suspended for Question Time.

The Speaker took the Chair.

4. Question Time

- 4.1 The Executive Office**

Questions were put to, and answered by, the First Minister, Mrs Arlene Foster. The junior Minister, Mr Alastair Ross, also answered a number of questions.

- 4.2 Infrastructure**

Questions were put to, and answered by, the Minister for Infrastructure, Mr Chris Hazzard.

5. Private Members' Business (cont'd)

- 5.1 Motion – United Kingdom Withdrawal from the European Union (cont'd)**

Debate resumed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy) took the Chair.

The Question being put, the Motion was **carried** without division.

6. Assembly Business

6.1 Motion – Membership of the Committee of the Regions

Proposed:

That this Assembly nominates Mr Declan McAleer as a full member, and Mr Colin McGrath as an alternate member, on the UK delegation to the Committee of the Regions.

*Mr T Clarke
Ms C Ní Chuilín
Mr R Swann
Mr A Attwood
Mr S Dickon*

The Question being put, the Motion was **carried** without division.

7. Executive Committee Business

7.1 Motion – Suspension of Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4)

Proposed:

That Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4) be suspended for 27 June 2016.

Minister of Finance

The Question being put, the Motion was **carried** with cross-community support (No dissenting voices).

7.2 Final Stage – Budget (No.2) Bill (NIA Bill 1/16-21)

The Minister of Finance, Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, moved that the Final Stage of the Budget (No.2) Bill (NIA Bill 1/16-21) do now pass.

Debate ensued.

The Budget (No.2) Bill (NIA Bill 1/16-21) passed Final Stage with cross-community support (Division 1).

The Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone) took the Chair.

7.3 Motion – The Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Proposed:

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

7.4 Motion – The Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability- Related Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Proposed:

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability- Related Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

7.5 Motion – The Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**Proposed:**

That the draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

The Motions were moved by the Minister of Education, Mr Peter Weir, on behalf of the Minister for Communities, Mr Paul Givan.

A single debate ensued on all three Motions.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** (Division 2).

The Question being put, the Motion on the Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

7.6 Motion – The Draft Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**Proposed:**

That the draft Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

The Motion was moved by the Minister of Education, Mr Peter Weir, on behalf of the Minister for Communities, Mr Paul Givan.

Debate ensued.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Draft Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

7.7 Motion – The Draft Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**Proposed:**

That the draft Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

The Motion was moved by the Minister of Education, Mr Peter Weir, on behalf of the Minister for Communities, Mr Paul Givan.

Debate ensued.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Draft Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

7.8 Motion – The Draft Renewables Obligation Closure (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**Proposed:**

That the draft Renewables Obligation Closure (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for the Economy

Debate ensued.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Draft Renewables Obligation Closure (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

8. Adjournment

Proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr McGlone)

The Assembly adjourned at 8.04pm.

Mr Robin Newton

The Speaker

27 June 2016

Northern Ireland Assembly

27 June 2016

Division 1

Final Stage – Budget (No.2) Bill (NIA Bill 1/16-21)

The Question was put and the Assembly divided.

Ayes: 54

Noes: 29

AYES

Nationalist

Ms Archibald, Mr Boylan, Ms Boyle, Ms Dillon, Ms Fearon, Mr Hazzard, Mr Kearney, Mr Lynch, Mr McAleer, Mr F McCann, Ms J McCann, Mr McCartney, Mr McElduff, Mr McMullan, Mr Maskey, Mr Milne, Mr Murphy, Mr Ó Muilleoir, Mr O'Dowd, Mrs O'Neill, Ms Seeley, Mr Sheehan.

Unionist

Mr Anderson, Mr Bell, Ms P Bradley, Mr K Buchanan, Mr T Buchanan, Mrs Bunting, Mrs Cameron, Mr Clarke, Mr Douglas, Mr Dunne, Mr Easton, Mr Frew, Mr Girvan, Mrs Hale, Mr Hamilton, Mr Humphrey, Mr Irwin, Mrs Little Pengelly, Ms Lockhart, Mr Logan, Mr Lyons, Mr McCausland, Miss McIlveen, Mr Middleton, Lord Morrow, Mr Poots, Mr Robinson, Mr Ross, Mr Stalford, Mr Storey, Mr Weir, Mr Wells.

Tellers for the Ayes: Mr Boylan, Mr Robinson.

NOES

Nationalist

Ms S Bradley, Mr Durkan, Mr Eastwood, Ms Hanna, Mr McCrossan, Mr McGlone, Mr McGrath, Mr McNulty, Mr McPhillips, Mr Mullan.

Unionist

Mr Aiken, Mr Allen, Mr Allister, Mrs Barton, Mr Beattie, Mr Beggs, Mr Butler, Mr Chambers, Mrs Dobson, Mr Nesbitt, Ms Palmer, Mr Smith, Mr Swann.

Other

Mr Agnew, Ms Armstrong, Mr Dickson, Dr Farry, Mr Ford, Mr Lunn.

Tellers for the Noes: Mr Aiken, Mr McGrath.

Total Votes	83	Total Ayes	54	[65.1%]
Nationalist Votes	32	Nationalist Ayes	22	[68.8%]
Unionist Votes	45	Unionist Ayes	32	[71.1%]
Other Votes	6	Other Ayes	0	[100.0%]

The Motion was **carried** on a cross-community vote.

Northern Ireland Assembly

27 June 2016
Division 2

The Draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016)

The Question was put and the Assembly divided.

Ayes: 54

Noes: 13

AYES

Mr Agnew, Ms Archibald, Mr Bell, Mr Boylan, Ms Boyle, Ms P Bradley, Ms S Bradley, Mr K Buchanan, Mr T Buchanan, Mrs Bunting, Mrs Cameron, Mr Clarke, Ms Dillon, Mr Douglas, Mr Dunne, Mr Easton, Mr Eastwood, Ms Fearon, Mr Frew, Mr Girvan, Mrs Hale, Mr Hamilton, Mr Hazzard, Mr Irwin, Mr Kearney, Mrs Little Pengelly, Ms Lockhart, Mr Logan, Mr Lynch, Mr Lyons, Mr McAleer, Mr F McCann, Ms J McCann, Mr McCartney, Mr McCausland, Mr McElduff, Mr McGrath, Miss McIlveen, Mr McMullan, Mr Maskey, Mr Middleton, Mr Milne, Lord Morrow, Mr Murphy, Mr Ó Muilleoir, Mr O'Dowd, Mrs O'Neill, Mr Robinson, Mr Ross, Ms Seeley, Mr Sheehan, Mr Stalford, Mr Storey, Mr Weir.

Tellers for the Ayes: Mr F McCann, Mr Robinson.

NOES

Mr Aiken, Mr Allen, Mr Allister, Mrs Barton, Mr Beggs, Mr Butler, Mr Chambers, Mrs Dobson, Mr Kennedy, Mr Nesbitt, Ms Palmer, Mr Smith, Mr Swann.

Tellers for the Noes: Mr Aiken, Mr Allen.

The Question being put, the Motion was **carried**.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Papers Presented to the Assembly on 22 - 27 June 2016

1. Acts of the Northern Ireland Assembly
2. Bills of the Northern Ireland Assembly
3. Orders in Council
4. Publications Laid in the Northern Ireland Assembly

North South Language Body 2014 Report and Accounts (DfC).

Annual Report About Special Advisers Employed for the Financial Year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 (DoF).

Code Governing the Appointment of Special Advisers (DoF).

Spring Supplementary Estimates 2015-16 - Accruing Resources Table (DoF).

The National Fraud Initiative: Northern Ireland (NIAO).

5. Assembly Reports

6. Statutory Rules

S.R. 2016/000 (Draft) The Renewables Obligation Closure (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 (DfE).

S.R. 2016/000 (Draft) The Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 – Relaid following Corrections (DfC)

S.R. 2016/243 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 (DfE).

S.R. 2016/244 The Seed Marketing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (DAERA).

For Information Only

S.R. 2016/247 (C. 19) The Justice (2015 Act) (Commencement No. 6) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 (DoJ).

7. Written Ministerial Statements

8. Consultation Documents

NISRA - Output Geography for the Updated Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2017) (DFP).

9. Departmental Publications

10. Agency Publications

11. Westminster Publications

12. Miscellaneous Publications

Northern Ireland Assembly

Tuesday 28 June 2016

The Assembly met at 10.30am, the Speaker in the Chair.

1. Prayers

Members observed two minutes' silence.

2. Public Petition

2.1 Public Petition – Killard House School

Ms Kellie Armstrong was granted leave, in accordance with Standing Order 22, to present a Public Petition regarding Killard House School.

3. Executive Committee Business

3.1 Statement – Rural Roads Initiative

The Minister for Infrastructure, Mr Chris Hazzard, made a statement regarding the Rural Roads Initiative, following which he replied to questions.

3.2 Statement – GCSE Qualification Market and Grading

The Minister of Education, Mr Peter Weir, made a statement regarding GCSE Qualification Market and Grading, following which he replied to questions.

The Principal Deputy Speaker (Ms Ruane) took the Chair.

3.3 Motion – The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Proposed:

That the Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

3.4 Motion – The State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Proposed:

That the State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

3.5 Motion – The State Pension (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Proposed:

That the State Pension (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

3.6 Motion – The Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Proposed:

That the Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Minister for Communities

A single debate ensued on all four motions.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

The Question being put, the Motion on the State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

The Question being put, the Motion on the State Pension (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

The Question being put, the Motion on the Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, was **carried** without division.

4. Committee Business

4.1 Motion – Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members

Proposed:

That this Assembly (a) affirms its commitment to high ethical standards and to the Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members agreed by the Assembly on Tuesday 23rd June 2015; (b) agrees that, pursuant to Standing Order 69, amended by the Assembly on 14 March 2016, Rules 4 and 5 of the Code of Conduct are amended to read as follows:

'4. You shall register in the Assembly's Register of Members' Interests details of all registrable interests. A registrable interest means any interest specified in Chapter 1 of the Guide to the Rules. [The categories of registrable interest are set out in Schedule 1.]'

'5. You shall declare, whether in Assembly proceedings or in any approach to a Minister, public representative, public body or public official, any relevant interest which might reasonably be thought to influence your approach to the matter under consideration. A relevant interest means an interest to which Chapter 2 of the Guide to the Rules applies, and may include a registrable interest.'

and; (c) notes that it will be necessary for the Committee on Standards and Privileges to update the Guide to the Rules to take account of these and other minor or consequential amendments.

Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges

Debate ensued.

The Question being put, the Motion was **carried** without division.

5. Opposition Business

5.1 Motion – Mental Health Champion

Proposed:

That this Assembly notes that more than one in four of the population are affected by poor mental health and wellbeing; further notes the significant social and economic implications that this is having on society; expresses deep concern that per capita we have one of the worst records of poor mental health and wellbeing in the world; accepts that our shocking rates have been impacted directly by 30 years of violence and that the issue is now inter-generational; and calls on the Minister of Health to appoint a Mental Health Champion, to be funded from charitable and philanthropic contributions, to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and wellbeing.

Mr R Butler

Mrs J Dobson

5.2 Motion – Mental Health Champion

Amendment:

Leave out all after “directly” and insert:

“ by decades of conflict, and more recently by austerity and the resulting increased levels of unemployment and homelessness and that the issue is now inter-generational; and calls on the Minister of Health to explore the role and remit of a Mental Health Champion to protect and promote the interests of those suffering poor mental health and wellbeing.”

*Ms C Seeley
Mr D McKay
Mr P Sheehan*

Debate ensued.

The Speaker took the Chair.

The Question being put, the Amendment was **made**.

The Question being put, the Motion, as amended, was **carried** without division

The sitting was suspended at 1.35pm.

The sitting resumed at 2.00pm, with the Deputy Speaker (Mr Kennedy) in the Chair.

6. Question Time

6.1 Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Questions were put to, and answered by, the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Miss Michelle McIlveen.

6.2 Communities

Questions were put to, and answered by, the Minister for Communities, Mr Paul Givan.

7. Adjournment

Mr Ross Hussey spoke to his topic regarding the £8m Underspend in Learning Disability Services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

Proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

The Speaker.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.29pm.

**Mr Robin Newton
The Speaker**

28 June 2016

Northern Ireland Assembly

Papers Presented to the Assembly on 28 June 2016

1. Acts of the Northern Ireland Assembly
2. Bills of the Northern Ireland Assembly
3. Orders in Council
4. Publications Laid in the Northern Ireland Assembly

Department for the Economy Response to Supplementary Consultation on Closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) to new Small Onshore Wind. (DfE).

Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 27 March 2016 (DfI).

Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR): Annual Report for 2015/16 (DfE).

5. Assembly Reports
6. Statutory Rules
7. Written Ministerial Statements
8. Consultation Documents
9. Departmental Publications
10. Agency Publications
11. Westminster Publications
12. Miscellaneous Publications