



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **AQW 34849/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 6/27/2014  
Answered On Date: 8/6/2014  
Priority Written: No

### Question:

To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the action they have taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to their Department.

### Answer:

Our Department has received one public petition from WAVE's Injured Support Group who, as part of their 'Campaign for Recognition of the Injured', presented a petition of 10,000 signatures to the Assembly on 17 May 2012 following the launch of WAVE's 'Injured Research Study' funded by OFMDFM.

WAVE's 'Injured Research Study' concluded that there was a shortfall in services for many people physically injured as a result of the conflict. Our officials had already met with the chief researcher, Professor Marie Breen-Smyth, and chief executive of WAVE to discuss the report and the implications for future services for Victims and Survivors. In addition, the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors commissioned an independent piece of research on the issue. This has recently been received and is under consideration.



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## AQW 34850/11-15

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 6/27/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/16/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister of Education to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

**Answer:**

I wish to inform the Member that I take very seriously all issues raised by any public petition which have been forwarded to the Department of Education (DE). I can confirm that DE responded to each petition and any issues raised were carefully considered. Details of the 12 petitions that have been forwarded to my Department and actions taken are contained in the table below.

Petition	Action
Future of Bangor Central Integrated Primary School	No further action required. I replied to Steven Agnew MLA outlined the position regarding any potential project and purchase of land
Save Drumcree College	No further action required. I replied to Dolores Kelly MLA advised that it is CCMS responsibility, in the first instance, to manage provision in the maintained schools estate and bring forward proposals to DE.
Development Proposal Woodlands Speech and Language Centre	Petition presented was considered alongside other submissions and informed my consideration of the Development Proposal (DP) relating to Woodlands which were published in January 2013.
Development Proposal Envagh/St Francis of Assissi/Newtownstewart Primary Schools	I replied to Pat Ramsay MLA explaining the DP process. Subsequent DP's for Envagh and St Francis of Assissi were published in May 2014. No DP has been submitted for Newtownstewart.
Support and Retention of The Dickson Plan	No further action required. I replied to Stephen Moutray MLA referencing the decision of SELB to support proposals for change to the Dickson Plan and explained the DP process
Closure of Immaculate Conception College, Derry	I replied to Pat Ramsay MLA explaining the Statutory two month objection period ended and the petition would form part of the submission advice to me.
Crumlin Supports Shared Education	No further action required by Department. I replied to Danny Kinahan MLA explained that it is the responsibility of the managing authorities to plan provision.
Opposition to Development Proposal for Collegiate Grammar School Enniskillen	I replied to Arlene Foster explaining the latest position regarding Collegiate Grammar School and that the petition will form part of the submission advice to me.
Proposed Closure of Artillery Youth Centre	No further action was taken by DE as my reply to Alban Maginness MLA explained that issues regarding Artillery Youth Resource Centre's premises are a matter for the Belfast Education and Library Board.
New Build for Parkhall Integrated College	No further action required. Parkhall was included in my announcement of new schools in January 2013.
Accommodation Issues between Hazelwood Integrated College and the Belfast Education and Library Board	No further action required as following meetings between both parties the matter has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.
Cross Border Area Planning Community Post-Primary Education in the North and West Fermanagh	DE and DES officials have been tasked by their respective Ministers to continue to engage at senior level regarding cross-border school provision.



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**AQW 34851/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 6/27/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/10/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

**Answer:**

Two public petitions have been presented and forwarded to my Department.

In April 2013 a public petition was presented by Pat Ramsey MLA expressing concern at the proposed closure of the crèche facilities at the University of Ulster. The petition referred to job losses, the inconvenience to parents and the adverse impact of the closure on widening participation in higher education.

My officials contacted the University and received assurances that the majority of students with childcare needs choose to avail of the direct financial support available in order to source childcare services closer to their homes and that this financial assistance would continue to be available at current levels.

They were also assured that staff members at the crèche were to be offered alternative employment within the University, with redundancy as a last resort.

Given the continuing levels of financial assistance to student parents there was no recognised detriment to my Department's widening participation agenda. However, in my response to the petition I advised that as part of the delivery of the Access to Success strategy my Department will require each higher education provider to produce a detailed Widening Access and Participation Plan annually which will clearly set out its activities and expenditure to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that my officials will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the closure does not impact adversely on my Department's objectives to widen participation in higher education.

In June 2013 a public petition entitled "Magee Expansion: Time to Make it Happen" was presented by Maeve McLaughlin MLA. This called for the expansion of the Magee campus along the lines of the vision set out in the regeneration plan, "One City, One Plan, One Voice". You will know that there is an interim target within the "One Plan" for an additional 1,000 undergraduate places by 2015. I have worked to increase the number of undergraduate places throughout the Northern Ireland higher education sector. By June 2013 I was able to secure an additional 572 places for the Magee campus. In the 2013-14 academic year I was able to increase this to 625 and in the coming year that number will increase to 652. I believe that this represents good progress towards the 2015 target. I remain fully committed to the expansion of higher education provision in Northern Ireland and continue to seek opportunities to secure the resources necessary to increase the numbers further. I believe that my approach to the expansion of the Northern Ireland higher education sector, together with the University of Ulster's commitment to deploy its additional places at the Magee campus will benefit all institutions, our economy, and best assist Magee in realising the interim target of 1,000 additional places by 2015.



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## AQW 34852/11-15

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 6/27/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/16/2014  
Priority Written: No

### Question:

To ask the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the action she has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to her Department.

### Answer:

Since May 2011 four public petition's have been presented to the Assembly and forwarded to my Department. I have listed at Annex A the key actions taken by my Department as a result of these public petitions.

#### Annex A

- (i) **Reduction in opening hours of Community Libraries** (presented to the Assembly on 28 November 2011 by Dominic Bradley MLA); and
- (ii) **Reduction in opening hours of the Bronte Library in Rathfriland** (presented to the Assembly on 29 November 2011 by John McCallister MLA):
- Both of the above petitions were laid in the Assembly in November 2011 as a result of Libraries NI public consultation on a proposed reduction in library opening hours. Following Libraries NI's public consultation into its review of Library Opening Hours, I shared the views of the many thousands of people who responded to the public consultation and as a result was pleased to be able to provide £2.39m of additional funding in order to minimise the impact of the reduction in library opening hours. As a consequence of this additional funding the opening hours for the Bronte Library in Rathfriland were reduced by 2 hours and not 9 hours as had been previously proposed.
- (iii) **The Exploitation of Indigenous Fish Species, including salmon, where stocks are no longer sustainable** (presented to the Assembly on 13 February 2012 by Robin Swann MLA):
- The public petition on the exploitation of indigenous fish species, including salmon, was laid at a time when my Department was developing a salmon consultation policy and the petition informed that process. Subsequently my Department prohibited the commercial netting of wild Atlantic salmon by means of regulation.
- (iv) **Development of a Strategic Plan for Athletics as a Priority Sport** (presented to the Assembly on 13 November 2012 by Stephen Agnew MLA):
- On 2 May 2013, a letter issued to Mr Stephen Agnew advising that DCAL officials, along with Sport NI, would arrange a meeting with the Chairman of Athletics NI, the Governing Body for athletics in the north of Ireland, to discuss the issues raised in the petition and a possible way forward.
- On 10 May 2013, officials from DCAL and Sport NI met with representatives of Athletics NI, the Governing Body for Athletics in the north of Ireland, to hear about its plans. Sport NI has been working with Athletics NI with regard to identifying future facility needs. On 23 April 2014, Sport NI met with Athletics NI to provide information in relation to a new capital investment programme which will be launched later this year. This programme will prioritise investments for strategically identified high performance capital projects. Athletics NI may be eligible to compete for this funding.



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## **AQW 34853/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 6/27/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/10/2014  
Priority Written: No

### Question:

To ask the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the action she has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to her Department.

### Answer:

In September 2012 I announced the intention to relocate staff from the Department's headquarters in Belfast to Ballykelly. In March 2013 I received notification from the Speaker of a petition relating to a campaign for Jobs in Strabane. The petition was not specifically in relation to my Department's relocation but reflected the petitioner's wider perception that the Strabane area was being "*bypassed by government*" with subsequent social and economic impacts. The petition did not require any specific action from my Department which is already committed to relocating jobs in rural areas.



**AQW 35061/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/2/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/10/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department

**Answer:**

No public petitions have been referred to my Department.



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## AQW 35062/11-15

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/2/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/9/2014  
Priority Written: No

### Question:

To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

### Answer:

Twelve public petitions have been presented to the Assembly and forwarded to me within the current mandate, as detailed in the attached list.

My Department considers the detail of each public petition received when taking forward related policy matters.

### Tab A

#### Public Petitions presented to the Assembly and forwarded to DHSSPS

Received	Subject	Laid
5th December 2011	Impact on local residents of the reduction in funding for community pharmacies	29th November 2011 by Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
24th May 2012	Unison Causeway Branch Petition to Save Acute Services Including Accident and Emergency	22nd May 2012 by Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
22nd June 2012	Suicide Awareness and Prevention Project, Poleglass	18th June 2012 by Ms Jennifer McCann MLA
14th May 2013	Opposition to cuts to Health Service dental care	13th May 2013 by Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
29th May 2013	Cushendall Fire Station	28th May 2013 by Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
12th June 2013	Campaign for the Meningitis B vaccine to be made available in Northern Ireland	11th June 2013 by Mr Jim Wells MLA
2nd July 2013	Westland Home, Cookstown	1st July 2013 by Mrs Sandra Overend MLA
11th September 2013	Pinewood Residential Care Home	11th September 2013 by Mr Paul Frew MLA
10th March 2014	Ovarian Cancer Awareness Campaign	3rd March 2014 by Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
2nd July 2014	Detoxification Provisions: Foyle	30th June 2014 by Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
2nd July 2014	ME: Full Adoption of the Canadian Consensus Criteria	30th June 2014 by Mr Dominic Bradley MLA
2nd July 2014	Loane House, Dungannon	1st July by Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA



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**AQW 35063/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/2/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/17/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister of Justice to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

**Answer:**

Since Devolution, my Department has not been forwarded any public petitions from the Assembly.





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**AQW 35064/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/2/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/11/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister for Regional Development to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

**Answer:**

A public petition submitted by Mr Conall McDevitt, then MLA for South Belfast, relating to a car parking scheme in College Park Avenue, Belfast was tabled on 7 February 2012 and laid in the Assembly on 13 February 2012.

I met on site with Mr McDevitt and a number of local residents on 13 June 2012, when the issue was discussed. Local residents were seeking the establishment of a Residents' Parking Scheme in a portion of College Park Avenue and I instructed officials to engage with them in order to develop a scheme for their area.

A series of discussions and meetings between officials and the Residents' Association subsequently took place to establish the type and extent of the scheme to be considered, and its residential, commercial and social composition. An outline scheme design was completed and agreed with the Association, following which an informal consultation exercise was carried out in November 2013 along the streets directly affected, in order to gauge the overall level of local support for the proposals. The results of that consultation indicated there was a sufficient level of support to proceed to the legislative stage when the proposal would be brought to the attention of the wider public.

As there are presently no residents' parking schemes in Northern Ireland, Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) has only recently finalised the related draft legislation and I hope to place the notices for the Department's first tranche of residents' parking schemes, including the Rugby Road/College Park Avenue area, within the next few months.



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**AQW 35065/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/2/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/10/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister for Social Development to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

**Answer:**

Two public petitions have been presented to the Assembly and forwarded to my Department: a petition calling for the planned closure of the Crossmaglen Community Benefit Office to be stopped was presented on 9 April 2013, and a petition calling for the erection of the Factory Girls Sculpture in Londonderry was presented on 17 June 2013. Prior to the tabling of the petition on the closure of Crossmaglen Community Benefit Office, the Chief Executive of the Social Security Agency had met with local elected representatives to discuss the planned closure and the alternative arrangements that were to be implemented. During this meeting, the Chief Executive agreed to review this arrangement and as a result the closure of the office was postponed until 31 May 2013 to allow a new Freephone telephony service, which was being introduced for the Newry area on 8 April 2013, time to bed in. Following the successful introduction of the new telephony service from 8 April 2013, the Community Benefit Office closed on 31 May 2013 and face to face services relocated to the Jobs and Benefits Office in Newry. Following the petition on the Factory Girls sculpture in Londonderry, my Department continued to work with the artist and the City Council of Londonderry to move the project forward. My Department subsequently provided funding to allow the designs for the artwork and surrounding environmental works to be worked up and a planning application to be submitted.



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**AQW 34973/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/1/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/21/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the action she has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to her Department.

**Answer:**

On 6 December 2011, a public petition tabled by Stephen Agnew, MLA called "on the Northern Ireland Assembly to place an immediate and permanent ban on the process known as hydraulic fracturing and all related preparatory and exploratory work in Northern Ireland."

On 6 December 2011, a No Day Named Motion stated that "*a moratorium should be placed on the onshore and offshore exploration, development and production of shale gas by withdrawing licences for hydraulic fracturing.*"

In discharging my Executive authority, my decisions are informed both by the terms of Assembly resolutions on matters for which I am responsible and a range of other relevant policy and practical considerations.

As my Department had not issued any licences for hydraulic fracturing there were none to withdraw – this remains the position.

In 2012, in conjunction with the then Environment Minister, I established the Shale Gas Regulators Forum in recognition of the need for collaboration between Government Departments and bodies involved in the preparation for shale-gas exploration in Northern Ireland, and possibly in due course its regulation.

The Forum is continuing to work to coordinate the activities of a number of regulatory bodies and to ensure a joined-up approach to regulation and monitoring.

**AQW 34988/11-15**

Mr Jim Allister  
Traditional Unionist Voice  
North Antrim

Tabled Date: 7/1/2014  
Answered On Date: 7/24/2014  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister of the Environment to detail the action he has taken following each public petition presented to the Assembly and forwarded to his Department.

**Answer:**

A public petition on "Exploris" was laid in the Assembly on 5 November 2013 and was subsequently sent to me by the Speaker and copied to the Chair of the Environment Committee.

The petition contained over 11,000 signatures calling for the Assembly and the different departments to provide regional funding and work with Ards Borough Council to draw up a plan to save "Exploris".

Prior to the laying of the petition, in my paper to the Executive on 17 October 2013 I had already indicated my view that financial assistance should be provided from central government in recognition of the contribution a revitalised "Exploris" could make to the Executive's PfG priorities in terms of boosting the local economy, securing jobs and tackling disadvantage.

I continue to support funding for a revitalised "Exploris" and have committed to meeting the cost of the seal sanctuary up to a limit of £120k per annum. I have also asked the Executive to provide a once only capital grant to upgrade the facilities at "Exploris" but as yet no decision has been made.