

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 1 February 2013

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Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	WA 109
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	WA 109
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	WA 114
Department of Education	WA 118
Department for Employment and Learning.....	WA 141
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	WA 150
Department of the Environment.....	WA 157
Department of Finance and Personnel	WA 169
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.....	WA 189
Department of Justice	WA 199
Department for Regional Development.....	WA 210
Department for Social Development	WA 216
Northern Ireland Assembly Commission.....	WA 224

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 1 February 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Energy Efficiency Measures

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will bring forward proposals to retrofit energy efficiency measures into homes; and to explain how this will help the construction industry.

(AQW 18669/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Our recently announced Energy and Jobs Initiative aims to boost employment in the construction sector and accelerates delivery of £60 million of capital projects, many of which will support sustainable construction projects, including those linked to retrofitting and energy efficiency.

Over the next few weeks, officials from our Department will be working with colleagues from the Department for Social Development and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to specifically refine delivery and operational proposals with the purpose of facilitating this acceleration.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Areas of Special Scientific Interest Regulations

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has given consideration to compensating farmers and land owners whose lands do not meet the criteria in the Single Farm Payment regulations, as a consequence of Areas of Special Scientific Interest regulations.

(AQW 18351/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): In certain circumstances, Single Farm Payment (SFP) can be paid on land within an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). As set out in the 2012 Single Application guide, SFP can be paid on land that no longer meets the usual SFP eligibility requirements as a result of the implementation of EU legislation on the conservation of wild birds, natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. This includes land within an ASSI. Farmers should have been formally notified by the NI Environment Agency if their land is in an ASSI.

The land may be used to claim entitlements provided it met the SFP eligibility requirements and formed part of the area determined as eligible for payment in 2008.

Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many payments due in respect of the farm woodland premium scheme are outstanding for the year 2012; and (ii) to outline the reason why payments have been getting later over the last three years?

(AQW 18370/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service paid 96% of 2012 Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS) claims by the end of December 2012. There are currently 45 claims that have not been paid. These claims were received after the requested return date and could not be validated in time for the December payments. They are now being validated and payments will be made by the end of February.

In 2010, payments were generally made in October and November. A new annual claim process required by EC regulation was implemented in 2011 and as a consequence, payments in 2011 and 2012 were generally made in December each year.

Lough Neagh

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the costs incurred to date by Departments in relation to the working group which is undertaking a scoping exercise into the potential for public ownership of Lough Neagh.

(AQW 18406/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Lough Neagh Working Group comprises 6 core members (all senior civil servants) with a small secretariat providing administrative support. The scoping exercise has been taken forward as part of the normal duties of these individuals.

Forest Service Ash Dieback Emergency Hotline and Email

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for a breakdown of the costs incurred by her Department's Forest Service Ash Dieback emergency hotline and email.

(AQW 18444/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At Friday 18 January 2013, the Department's ash die-back helpline had received 27 enquiries by telephone and 15 by email. The estimated cost of staff time in responding to these enquiries is £1300.

Forest Service Ash Dieback Emergency Hotline and Email

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of calls and messages received by the Forest Service Ash Dieback emergency hotline and email.

(AQW 18445/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At Friday 18 January 2013, the Department's ash die-back helpline had received 27 enquiries by telephone and 15 by email.

Country of Origin Labelling on Food Products

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether she can assure the public that food produce that is sold through local supermarkets is correctly labelled in relation to its country of origin; and (ii) to clarify what powers her Department has in this regard.

(AQW 18516/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Responsibility for food labelling policy rests, (via the DHSSPS), with the Food Standards Agency who enforce the rules alongside local councils. These FSA regulations contain provisions regarding the origin labelling of food also, mainly in relation to the duty not to mislead the consumer.

My legislative responsibility in this area relates solely to the EU-wide Beef Labelling Regulations which were introduced in 2000 to provide consumers with clear reliable information about fresh and frozen beef offered for sale. These regulations do not cover beef in processed products, such as processed beef burgers, pies, sausages, ready meals or tinned meat, which are covered by FSA regulations.

All operators in the supply chain, down to retail level but excluding food service, must label their beef with the country or countries in which the animal was born, reared, slaughtered and cut, along with the licence number of the slaughter and cutting plant/s. A key requirement of this traceability system is that it should enable beef on sale to be traced back to where it originated. DARD inspectors carry out

extensive controls on the traceability of beef and beef products, both fresh and frozen in abattoirs and licenced cutting plants. Environmental Health Officers carry out checks at retail outlets. Operators who fail to comply with the rules must remove their beef from sale until it is relabelled correctly. Serious breaches could constitute a criminal offence which, on conviction, will lead to a fine.

My Department has long been a promoter of the use of local produce. We have a wealth of high quality, safe and wholesome foods available to the processing, food service and retail sectors and the key benefit of local produce is, of course, the provenance that comes with it, that we know where it has come from and the route it has taken to the consumer's plate.

Much of our local beef also carries the Farm Quality Assured Scheme label which provides customer assurance as the conditions of this voluntary industry scheme involve adherence to standards which are inspected regularly to ensure compliance.

In the north of Ireland we have a strong track record in our use of quality assurance systems and traceability of our foodstuffs and I am confident that these will continue to provide the assurances sought by consumers.

Board of the Forest Service

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18065/11-15, whether she will consider nominating or appointing individuals from the private sector to the Board of the Forest Service and to give a reason for her position on the matter.

(AQW 18543/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Forest Service Chief Executive is responsible to me for the Agency's performance and operations. As such, he is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the management and organisation of the Agency are kept under review and ensuring that they best suit its business needs. That includes the arrangements for governance including the composition of the Management Board.

Any recruitment is carried out in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

I do not normally become involved in the day to day operation of the Agency but expect to be consulted by the Chief Executive on the handling of operational matters which could give rise to significant public or parliamentary concern. Thus, the Chief Executive will consult me when he carries out his review of the Non-Executive Director Post later this year.

Horsemeat in Beef Products

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the action she has taken since becoming aware of horsemeat being found in beef products in supermarkets; and (ii) when did she first become aware of this issue.

(AQW 18544/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) In light of the findings in the South of horse DNA in beef products, investigations are underway, led by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and by the Food Standards Agency here. My officials are working closely with the Food Standards Agency here in the north to ensure that public confidence in beef born, raised and processed is maintained.
- (ii) I was made aware of this incident on the Tuesday evening, the 15th January at 6.43 pm via an e-mail from the Food Standards Agency to my private office.

Horsemeat Investigation

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the amount of horse meat imported in each of the last five years, including the country of origin.

(AQW 18579/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No routine checks are carried out of meat and meat products entering the north from the EU, including from Britain and the south of Ireland. Consequently, no records are available on these imports.

There have been no consignments of horsemeat from outside the EU entering the north through our Border Inspection Post during the last 5 years.

Horsemeat Investigation

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the final destination of horse meat imported in each of the last five years; and whether any of these destinations are licensed processors or producers of food products for human consumption.

(AQW 18580/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Please see response to AQW 18579/11-15.

Meat Plant Inspections

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how often inspectors visit meat plants to check on the provenance of the meat being processed; and how the frequency compares with five years ago.

(AQW 18589/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD officers have a role in ensuring that the legally required Official Controls are carried out in approved slaughterhouses and cutting establishments. This includes regular inspection of the traceability of beef under the Beef Labelling Regulations. The frequency of the visits is determined on the basis of risk.

During 2012, 114 inspections were conducted to check beef labelling information. This compares with 134 inspections conducted during 2008. The average number of visits to each business was 2.98 in 2008 and was 3.00 in 2012.

DARD inspections apply to both fresh and frozen beef, but do not extend to beef sold in processed form, for example pies or sausages, or sold to businesses selling beef to the final consumer, for example catering establishments.

Environmental Health Officers are responsible for the Beef Labelling controls at retail level and of processed beef products.

Meat Plants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what incidence of horse DNA, or other foreign material, has been found in any of Northern Ireland's meat plants in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18590/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There has been no incidence of horse DNA or other foreign material found in the very limited amount of speciation testing which has been performed by my Department, over recent years.

As part of its response to the unfortunate recent discovery of equine DNA in Irish product, the Food Standards Agency has initiated work on a food authenticity survey of processed meat products.

Meat Plants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the discovery of horse DNA in meat plants elsewhere in the British Isles, what assurance is there that the provenance of material processed in Northern Ireland's meat plants is beyond reproach.

(AQW 18591/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is only a very limited amount of horse slaughter undertaken in the north by one small slaughter plant in Co Armagh. All equine product from this plant is exported to England or the Continent, or disposed of locally as by-product.

Cross contamination of beef with horse meat is possible in the north's processing plants where beef which originates outside the north is used as a raw material for processing.

Beef labelled as having been born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the north is therefore very likely to be beyond reproach.

Beef Traceability and Labelling in the north was found to be satisfactory during the EC's Food and Veterinary Office audit of the UK in 2011.

Rural Development Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the religious breakdown of staff undertaking the administration of the Rural Development Programme, broken down by each of the Joint Council Committee areas.

(AQW 18657/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under the contract with my Department for delivery of Axis 3, Joint Council Committees must ensure that in all their dealings in relation to staff matters, they comply with all the relevant and applicable equality of opportunity and fair employment legislation. As Joint Council Committees do not employ staff directly but utilise a Service Level Agreement with Councils, (who also must adhere to the same legislation) I am unable to provide a religious breakdown of staff.

Single Farm Payment Applicants

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 14157/11-15, to detail (i) the number of 2012 Single Farm Payment applicants who received late payments after 30 June deadline; (ii) how many applicants were paid interest; and (iii) what was the total amount of interest paid.

(AQW 18665/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: This information will not be available until after the deadline, which is 30 June 2013.

Rural Development Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to address the issues of councils deciding to pull out of the delivery of the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 18671/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am interpreting your question to refer to lead councils with responsibility for Administration Units involved in Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme. I am not aware of any councils having made a decision to pull out of the delivery of the Axis 3 programme.

Agricultural Food Inspection Branch

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the financial cost of the enforcement training that is currently taking place in the Agricultural Food Inspection Branch.

(AQW 18788/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department's Agri-food Inspection Branch implements a range of local and EU legislation relating to food & feed safety, plant health, product certification and marketing standards. This is achieved through a number of specialist teams of professional staff with expertise in food technology, agriculture and horticulture. It is necessary where non-compliance with legislation is identified that the most appropriate action is taken. This can on occasion require formal enforcement action and it is considered essential that inspection staff within the Branch are appropriately trained.

The delivery costs associated with this training amount to approximately £3,000 per course. Each course can accommodate up to 16 people which on this basis would incur a cost of £190 per person.

The course is accredited to Level 4 through the Open College Network and lasts for 6.5 days.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

School Rugby

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions she or her officials have had with the Minister of Education in relation to increasing participation levels for playing rugby in schools.

(AQW 17880/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): As part of the implementation of my strategy for sport, Sport Matters, discussions between the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Department of Education (DE) take place regularly on how schools can contribute towards increasing participation rates in sport generally.

As part of this process, DE has agreed to make a number of contributions to the sports participation targets within Sport Matters. These contributions are set out in the published Sport Matters Action Plan 2011-2015.

I can confirm, however, that I propose to meet with the Minister of Education to discuss options around increasing participation levels in playing sport, including rugby, within schools.

Rugby Coaches in Schools

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions she or her officials have had with the Minister of Education to ensure there is a fair representation of rugby coaches in schools to improve participation levels.

(AQW 17881/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As part of the implementation of my strategy for sport, Sport Matters, discussions between the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Department of Education (DE) take place regularly on how schools can contribute towards increasing participation rates in sport generally.

As part of this process, DE has agreed to make a number of contributions to the sports participation and performance targets, including Physical Education (PE) and coaching, within Sport Matters. These contributions are set out in the published Sport Matters Action Plan 2011-2015.

I can confirm, however, that I propose to meet with the Minister of Education to discuss options around increasing participation levels in playing sport, including rugby, within schools.

North Atlantic Salmon

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has reached agreement with the six holders of commercial coastal net licences to continue their voluntary moratorium on catching North Atlantic Salmon into 2013.

(AQW 17902/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials have sought meetings with each of the coastal salmon net licence holders with a view to extending the 2012 arrangements into 2013.

Irish State Papers

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the communication her Department has had with the National Archives regarding online access to the Irish State Papers, which are currently only available to individuals who visit the archive offices in Kew, Surrey.

(AQW 18353/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I can confirm that there has been no communication between my Department or the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) with The National Archives (TNA) in relation to the State Papers of Ireland.

The State Papers are the functional responsibility of TNA and decisions with regard to digitisation lie solely with them. As Official Records for the 16th-18th centuries, they lie outside PRONI's statutory remit under the Public Records Act (NI) 1923.

Despite the records being based at Kew, TNA have advised that many of the papers are already available online to institutions for trial and purchase for the period, 1509-1714. These can be accessed at State Papers Online at: <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/state-papers-online-15091714.aspx>

PRONI officials will be engaging with TNA in order to explore the possibility of subscribing to State Papers Online over the coming year.

Irish State Papers

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if her Department has any plans to discuss with the National Archives the provision of online access to Irish State Papers for residents in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 18355/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has contacted the National Archives (TNA) to discuss the provision of online access to the Irish State Papers. TNA have responded indicating records for the period, 1509-1714 are already available to institutions through State Papers Online. TNA have also indicated that the digitisation of post-1714 State Papers with a commercial partner is currently in progress, and some of these records are expected to be released online later this year.

State Papers Online is available to institutions on a subscription basis. PRONI officials will be engaging with TNA in order to explore the possibility of subscribing to State Papers Online over the coming year.

Sport Development

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what her Department can do to assist with sport development in (i) the Kilcooley estate, Bangor; and (ii) North Down.

(AQW 18425/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Under the Recreation and Youth Service NI Order 1986 district councils, rather than me, are responsible for sporting and recreational development with local areas. Sporting development within the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor and in North Down is therefore a matter, in the first instance, for North Down Borough Council.

Nevertheless, over the last five financial years, Sport NI has provided a total of £9,427,322 to assist North Down Council in developing sport in its area. This includes just over £9 million funding towards the development of facilities, such as the 50m pool in Bangor, which are available for use by residents and sports clubs across North Down, including the Kilcooley estate. Furthermore, Sport NI funding provided through the Active Communities Programme supports the employment of the following sports coaches in the North Down area:

- Gaelic games
- Rugby Union
- Cricket

- Netball
- Basketball
- Physical Leader

Indoor Athletics Training Facility

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will investigate the potential of bidding for additional capital which has become available during this budget period, to develop a dedicated indoor athletics training facility.

(AQW 18438/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for investigating the potential for capital funding for athletics in the north of Ireland rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of athletics, Athletics NI. At present, I have no plans to bid for additional capital towards the development of a dedicated indoor athletics training facility. I would, however, consider a future bid should Athletics NI come forward with a suitable proposal that would contribute to the delivery of the targets in Sport Matters and my wider priorities of promoting social and economic equality and tackling social exclusion and poverty in areas of deprivation.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from her Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to unrest; and (ii) the associated financial cost to her departmental budget.

(AQW 18458/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Staff, as normal, are able to leave work within the normal NICS flexible working arrangements. There has been no disruption to our normal business and no financial cost.

Athletics Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total amount of money that has been provided for athletics, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18521/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided a total of £2,416,758 to athletics in the last 5 years, up to 31 March 2013. This amount consisted of Exchequer funding totalling £2,143,196 and Sports Lottery Funding totalling £273,562. This is broken down as follows: -

Financial Year	Exchequer Funding	Lottery Funding	Grand Total
2007/08	£ 67,650	£ 21,800	£ 89,450
2008/09	£ 79,000	£ 20,100	£ 99,100
2009/10	£ 287,279	£ 51,511	£ 338,790
2010/11	£ 1,503,631	£ 79,170	£ 1,582,801
2011/12	£ 205,636	£ 100,981	£ 306,617
Grand Total	£ 2,143,196	£ 273,562	£ 2,416,758

Bushmills Salmon Station: Annual Operating Costs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the annual operating costs of the salmon station at Bushmills.

(AQW 18533/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The annual operating costs for the River Bush Salmon Station for the financial year 2012/13 were approximately £115,000, made up of premises costs £43,000 and hatchery costs £71,000.

Fishing Rights: River Bush

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure who owns the fishing rights to the River Bush and at what cost to the public purse the Department obtains its interest.

(AQW 18534/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department leases the fishing rights to restricted and unrestricted stretches of the River Bush. Under Data Protection legislation, Section 40 (2), the Department cannot identify the owner. The Department does not have details of the ownership of the fishing rights to the River Bush outside those stretches which form part of the Public Angling Estate.

The total cost of leasing the fishing rights, which includes the hatchery buildings, is approximately £26,000 per annum

Waterways Ireland

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what is stored in the green sheds on Waterways Ireland property near the lakeshore at Portora Lough, County Fermanagh.

(AQW 18563/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Waterways Ireland site close to Portora Lock, Enniskillen is an operational base serving the Erne Warden and the Waterways Ireland Operations Team. The sheds on this site house essential resources to enable Waterways Ireland to carry out its statutory duties on the Erne System.

Boxing Club: Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on possible additional funding for boxing clubs in North Down.

(AQW 18582/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The consultation on the draft Boxing Investment Programme will close on the 8 February 2013. The Programme, and subsequent allocation of funding to boxing clubs, including clubs in North Down, will be finalised when all consultation responses have been considered.

Tranche 1 of the programme is the provision of boxing equipment. It is intended that, depending on delivery timescales, eligible clubs, will receive equipment from late February through to March 2013.

Tranches 2 and 3 will deal with minor and major repairs in boxing clubs. The procurement of technical consultants for these tranches will commence before the end of this financial year and calls for formal applications will commence in October 2013.

Sports Development in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action she is taking to encourage sports development in North Down.

(AQW 18585/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I refer the member to my response to AQW 18425/11-15.

2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Tickets

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games tickets her Department purchased; and at what cost.

(AQW 18667/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department did not purchase any 2012 Olympic or Paralympic tickets.

Re-Imaging Communities Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the timescale for applications to the Re-imaging Communities programme.

(AQW 18686/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The opening of applications for funding through the Building Peace through the Arts - Reimaging Communities programme will coincide with the launch of the programme which takes place on 28th February. This will be a rolling programme.

Belfast City Council's Boxing Strategy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given that Belfast City Council's Boxing Strategy states that 78 percent of Belfast boxing clubs are exclusively or predominantly Catholic in their composition and engagement of coaches, what plans her Department has to promote boxing within the Protestant community and address the imbalance in the sport.

(AQW 18838/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for the promotion of boxing across all sections of the community rests in the first instance with the governing body, the Irish Amateur Boxing Association.

One of the aims of the Boxing Investment Programme, however, is to help the sport promote inclusivity, so that anyone, regardless of their community background, has the opportunity to take part in boxing at participative and competitive levels. To that end, under the Boxing Investment Programme a Club Development Manager will be appointed within the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC). The Club Development Manager will be responsible for promoting and developing boxing in all areas and across all communities in the north, including areas where there is interest in the sport but limited opportunities to participate.

Department of Education

Improving Literacy and Numeracy Delivering Social Change Signature Project

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education on what grounds will schools be able to apply for funding from the £12m available under the Improving Literacy and Numeracy Delivering Social Change Signature Project.

(AQW 18232/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): I warmly welcome the announcement by the First and deputy First Ministers of investment in the employment of 230 graduate teachers not currently in employment, over two years, to provide support for the literacy and numeracy interventions in primary and post-primary schools. Not only does this provide employment opportunities for graduate teachers, it is intended to have a positive impact on my raising standards agenda by improving the educational outcomes for pupils who are most at risk of underachieving.

The arrangements to identify schools to participate in the scheme are ongoing. However, it is intended that the resources will be targeted towards those schools who are struggling to meet the current targets for Key Stage 2 assessment in primary schools and GCSE targets in post-primary schools. Consideration is also being given to targeting schools with high numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals and/or in areas of social disadvantage.

The employing authorities have agreed that Western Education Library Board will take the lead on the delivery of this project and they are working through the detail as to how schools will apply to the scheme and be selected for participation.

Early Years Education Support Clusters

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for an update on the plans to create pilot Early Years Education Support Clusters in nursery schools and playgroups.

(AQW 18483/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning which I launched on 4 December 2012 proposes the creation of pilot support clusters. The actions in the Framework are currently the subject of focused consultation to consider if any of them require further refinement.

The focused consultation concludes on the 31 January 2013 and I will consider the comments received during consultation and their impact on the current proposals before finalising the way forward. I would intend that further guidance on the pilot support clusters will be prepared in consultation with stakeholders.

Education and Library Boards: Goods and Services Procured

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the value of the goods and services procured in each of the Education and Library Boards in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18552/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The value of the goods and services procured in each of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in each of the last five years is as follows:

	2007-08 £'000	2008-09 £'000	2009-10 £'000	2010-11 £'000	2011-12 £'000
BELB	24,343	25,899	26,877	37,499	40,155
NEELB	30,938	33,526	30,822	29,765	29,555
SEELB	19,035	23,772	23,574	23,176	29,401
SELB	33,682	33,417	33,945	35,027	33,057
WELB	29,399	32,466	31,951	37,194	39,720
Totals	137,397	149,080	147,169	162,661	171,888

Notes: These figures relate to recurrent expenditure only, they do not include capital expenditure or schools delegated budgets.

Education and Library Boards: Savings

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what level of savings have been achieved on goods and services procured by Education and Library Boards, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18553/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Savings on goods and services by Education and Library Boards have only been monitored since the Savings Delivery Plan was established in 2011/12. The savings achieved by Education and Library Boards in 2011/12 are set out in the table below.

ELB	2011/12 £'000s
BELB	420
NEELB	732
SEELB	776
SELB	873

ELB	2011/12 £'000s
WELB	428
Total	3,229

Notes: These savings relate to Education and Library Board block grant recurrent expenditure only, and do not include capital expenditure or schools delegated budgets.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what consultation took place prior to his decision to transfer responsibility for the procurement of goods and services to the Central Procurement Directorate.

(AQW 18557/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has carried out a major project to consider and develop options for the future delivery of procurement services in the education sector. The two major areas of procurement, supplies and services and construction, were taken forward as separate work streams within the project to ensure that the most appropriate solution was developed for each type of procurement. The project included significant engagement with other government departments and agencies.

The Procurement Board has mandated the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to aggregate government demand for goods and services, to develop common procurement arrangements across the public sector and seek out collaborative opportunities. My decision to outsource supplies and services procurement to CPD will ensure that the education sector is at the heart of pan government collaboration. Consequently, the decision has been warmly welcomed by the Minister of Finance and Personnel.

In addition, CPD has indicated that it will deliver for the education sector, a minimum 3% savings on annual procurement spend.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what additional savings will be achieved by the transfer of the procurement of goods and services to the Central Procurement Directorate.

(AQW 18558/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has carried out a major project to consider and develop options for the future delivery of procurement services in the education sector. The two major areas of procurement, supplies and services and construction, were taken forward as separate work streams within the project to ensure that the most appropriate solution was developed for each type of procurement. The project included significant engagement with other government departments and agencies.

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In addition, CPD has indicated that it will deliver for the education sector, a minimum 3% savings on annual procurement spend.

Centre of Procurement Expertise

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education why he has abandoned his stated policy on the development of a single Centre of Procurement Expertise for the education sector.

(AQW 18559/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has carried out a major project to consider and develop options for the future delivery of procurement services in the education sector. The two major areas of procurement, supplies and services and construction, were taken forward as separate work streams within the project to ensure that the most appropriate solution was developed for each type of procurement. The project included significant engagement with other government departments and agencies.

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In addition, CPD has indicated that it will deliver for the education sector, a minimum 3% savings on annual procurement spend.

Education and Library Board: Expenditure

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works by each Education and Library Board in each of the last three years up to 31 December 2012. **(AQW 18560/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each of the education and library board areas in each of the last three years up to 31 December 2012 is as follows:

		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
2010/11 (£000s)	(i) Maintenance	9,689	7,075	8,046	7,628	6,477
	(ii) Minor Works	12,327	6,451	5,538	5,856	8,613
2011/12 (£000s)	(i) Maintenance	10,875	5,946	7,089	5,354	3,613
	(ii) Minor Works	20,529	6,067	8,275	11,113	10,138
1 April to 31 December 2012	(i) Maintenance	12,045	3,530	4,809	5,917	5,881
	(ii) Minor Works	9,027	6,907	4,837	7,961	4,461
Total	(i) Maintenance	32,609	16,551	19,944	18,899	15,971
	(ii) Minor Works	41,883	19,425	18,650	24,930	23,212

The estimate of anticipated expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each education and library board area in the 2012/13 financial year is as follows:

£000s	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
(i) Maintenance	14,160	8,188	8,516	6,882	7,778
(ii) Minor Works*	20,259	9,735	9,976	13,225	11,072

* Minor works figure does not include anticipated voluntary sector expenditure from 1 January to 31 March 2013. Funding will continue to be allocated as projects progress through planning stages up until 31 March 2013.

Education and Library Board: Anticipated Expenditure

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an estimate of the anticipated expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works by each Education and Library Board in the 2012/13 financial year. **(AQW 18561/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each of the education and library board areas in each of the last three years up to 31 December 2012 is as follows:

		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
2010/11 (£000s)	(i) Maintenance	9,689	7,075	8,046	7,628	6,477
	(ii) Minor Works	12,327	6,451	5,538	5,856	8,613
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Total	(i) Maintenance	32,609	16,551	19,944	18,899	15,971
	(ii) Minor Works	41,883	19,425	18,650	24,930	23,212

The estimate of anticipated expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each education and library board area in the 2012/13 financial year is as follows:

£000s	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
(i) Maintenance	14,160	8,188	8,516	6,882	7,778
(ii) Minor Works*	20,259	9,735	9,976	13,225	11,072

* Minor works figure does not include anticipated voluntary sector expenditure from 1 January to 31 March 2013. Funding will continue to be allocated as projects progress through planning stages up until 31 March 2013.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18605/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education (DE) has not issued any general advice or instruction to staff to leave early as a result of recent civil unrest. DE staff can seek approval from their line manager to leave work early within the rules of the Flexible Working Time - Code of Practice. There has been no associated cost to the departmental budget.

Cross Border Shared Education

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to outline the work his Department is undertaking to encourage, support and facilitate shared education across the border between west Fermanagh and south Donegal.

(AQW 18626/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department is involved in the North South Ministerial Council survey on cross-border education. Officials from the respective Departments are at present working towards a joint analysis of the responses received to the survey and the results will be announced over the coming months.

I am also awaiting the outcome of the Ministerial Advisory Group's report on advancing shared education which is due in February.

Programme for Government Commitments on Shared Education

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to detail the practical guidance and support that is available to schools that wish to pursue the Programme for Government commitments on shared education and advance models such as federations, confederations and joint-faith schools.

(AQW 18627/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not issued any guidance, provided support or incentives in relation to the Programme for Government commitments on shared education. It would be premature to do so in advance of the report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education which is due in early February. I expect that the report will be a catalyst for debate on advancing shared education.

Guidance issued by my Department in relation to Area Planning encouraged identification of realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling as well as maximising the use and sharing of the existing schools estate.

Schools interested in exploring shared education models can discuss options with the relevant Education and Library Board and/or CCMS in the first instance.

Programme for Government Commitments on Shared Education

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) incentives; and (ii) support that his Department provides to schools that wish to explore shared education models, including joint faith schools.

(AQW 18629/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not issued any guidance, provided support or incentives in relation to the Programme for Government commitments on shared education. It would be premature to do so in advance of the report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education which is due in early February. I expect that the report will be a catalyst for debate on advancing shared education.

Guidance issued by my Department in relation to Area Planning encouraged identification of realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling as well as maximising the use and sharing of the existing schools estate.

Schools interested in exploring shared education models can discuss options with the relevant Education and Library Board and/or CCMS in the first instance.

New School Buildings in the Holywood Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed new school build for Holywood.

(AQW 18676/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Priory Integrated College, Holywood Primary School and Holywood Nursery will be disappointed not to be included in my capital investment announcement of 22 January, however this in no way implies that they will not be considered at a later date.

I visited the Holywood Schools in November 2012 and am aware of the site issues around the new build proposals, and enrolment concerns that require further clarity for Priory Integrated College.

I have agreed to further engagement with the schools and local representatives on new build proposals.

Southern and Western Education and Library Board: Budget

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Education what percentage of his departmental budget is spent on (a) children; and (b) young adults with (i) learning disabilities; and (ii) severe learning disabilities in the Southern and Western Education and Library Board areas.

(AQW 18706/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The percentage of the Department of Education's budget spent on children and young people (3-19 years of age) in the 2011/12 financial year is as follows:

	SELB	WELB
Learning Disabilities (excluding Severe Learning Disabilities)	1.30%	1.02%
Severe Learning Disabilities	0.42%	0.63%

Joint Food in Schools Policy

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education for an update on discussions between his Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the development of a joint Food in Schools policy; and to outline the significance of such a policy for young people in the years ahead.

(AQW 18718/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Officials from my Department have been working with colleagues from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to finalise the Food in Schools policy. As this is a joint policy with DHSSPS the Executive's approval will be required before it can be published.

Research demonstrates that there is a strong link between poor health, nutrition and low school achievement and that diet often has a profound effect on children's social skills, behaviour and self-esteem. Consequently, the policy recognises the important contribution which a healthy, balanced diet makes to children's growth and development, to educational performance and attainment and, ultimately, to their long-term health and well-being.

The Food in Schools Policy is an overarching policy advocating a 'whole school approach' to all food provided and consumed in schools and developing knowledge and skills in relation to healthy eating and lifestyles. It aims to ensure that children and young people are only provided with healthy food while in school and that they develop the knowledge and skills to allow them to eat healthily and make healthy choices not just within school but outside as well.

The effective implementation of the Food in Schools policy will ensure that schools provide a supportive learning environment which facilitates enhanced health and educational outcomes for current and future generations.

I intend, along with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, to seek Executive agreement on the policy soon. Subject to that agreement, it is intended to publish the policy during this school year.

Pupils Enrolled in School

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail, for the current academic year, the number of (i) primary schools with enrolments of 50 pupils or fewer; (ii) post-primary schools with enrolments of 200 pupils or fewer.

(AQW 18734/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information collected through the 2012/13 school census exercise indicates that there are 89 primary schools with an enrolment of 50 pupils or fewer and 17 post-primary schools with an enrolment of 200 pupils or fewer. This information is provisional. Finalised figures from the 2012/13 school census exercise will be available at the end of February.

Note: These figures relate to total school enrolments. For primary schools, this includes children in nursery, reception and Year 1 – 7 classes and, for post-primary schools, children in Year 8 – 12, as well as in sixth form. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are also included.

Temporary Classrooms

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number and location of temporary classrooms in (a) primary schools; and (b) post-primary schools; and (ii) how many years these temporary classrooms have been in use at their current location.

(AQW 18735/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Computer-Based Assessments

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what is the legal requirement for primary schools to complete the computer-based assessments.

(AQW 18749/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education (Assessment Arrangements) (Foundation to Key Stage 3) Order (NI) 2007 (the 2007 Order) provides for the assessment of pupils in Years 4 to 7 during the autumn term, using a computer-based method specified by the Department.

Under that Order, the Department specified two Computer Based Assessment tools to be used by schools when carrying out those autumn term assessments in 2012:

- The literacy assessment developed by Tribal Education Ltd; and
- The numeracy assessment developed by Rising Stars UK Ltd.

The Order also requires the outcomes of these assessments to be recorded and notified to the pupil's parents by the end of that term.

Pre-school Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to increase the number of pre-school places for 2013/14.

(AQW 18751/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Programme for Government commits my Department to ensuring that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

I have increased the budget (4.13% higher than in 2012/13) available for the pre-school education programme and my Department has liaised with Education and Library Boards (ELBs) so they can secure the estimated number of funded places required.

Nearly 600 additional places (in statutory and non-statutory settings) have been secured for 2013/14 as a result of development proposals brought forward by Education and Library Boards, and decisions made by Pre-School Education Advisory Groups within Education and Library Boards.

As the admissions process progresses my officials will work closely with ELBs to respond to demand for funded places in each area as a result of the expressing of parental preference.

First Preference Nursery School Places

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education (i) how many children in the Derry City Council area did not receive their first preference nursery school place, in the first round of places awarded, for the 2012/13 academic year; and (ii) how many places are still available, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 18778/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Western Education and Library Board have advised that 309 children in the Derry City Council area did not receive their first preference nursery school, in the first round of places awarded (i.e. at the end of Stage 1 of the pre-school admissions processes), for the 2012/13 academic year. Of these, 198 were placed in second or further preference schools leaving 111 unplaced at the end of Stage 1. Further preferences were requested from parents and all but 16 children were subsequently

placed. The 16 children remain unplaced as their parents declined to nominate further preferences. There are no nursery places currently available, however, places could be made available to voluntary / community providers, if they have the capacity.

New Build Projects for Schools

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education (i) why Millburn Primary School, Coleraine was omitted from the list of new build projects; (ii) when the school will be included on the list; and (iii) why no new build projects for schools in East Londonderry were included on the list.

(AQW 18779/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The projects I announced on 22 January were determined as priorities by the relevant Managing Authority and as certain to perform part of area solutions for the future schools estate.

The criteria adopted to assess projects were, to effect rationalisation; to address serious accommodation inadequacies and schools operating on split sites; and to address undue reliance on temporary accommodation.

While the recent announcement I have made in no way implies that other schools, including Millburn Primary School and others within the East Derry area, will not be considered at a later stage, I will only announce capital projects which I believe can be delivered within a reasonable timeframe.

Moving forward I will work with the Managing Authorities to identify priority projects emerging from area plans.

Home to School Transport Policy

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Education whether the policy for home to school transport for children attending special education schools is the same as it is for those attending mainstream primary schools.

(AQW 18794/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The school transport policy for children attending grant-aided special education schools is the same as that for children attending other grant-aided schools, unless such children are in possession of a statement of special education needs which specifies a particular form of assistance with transport.

Somme Battlefields

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what support and encouragement his Department offers schools for visits to the Somme battlefields.

(AQW 18797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum provides a range of opportunities for schools to explore the Somme and related issues.

At Key Stage 2 there are opportunities for pupils to explore areas such as causes of conflict and appropriate responses. At Key Stage 3 all post-primary schools are required to provide pupils with the opportunities to investigate both Irish and British historical periods.

While such opportunities exist, the revised curriculum is less prescriptive, giving teachers the flexibility to decide how they deliver the curriculum and the resources they use. Educational visits are a matter for each school/teacher to determine.

In line with this the Department delegates as much funding and decision-making as possible to schools which are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils.

A and AS Level Changes

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what action he plans to take in view of Education Secretary's announcement that A levels will return to a two year course with an examination at the end, and that AS levels will not count towards the final A level grade.

(AQW 18812/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is disappointing that Mr Gove continues to make such announcements about A levels, a brand which is jointly owned and used by 3 jurisdictions, without consulting with me or Wales in advance.

I have commissioned two separate pieces of work, both of which are in progress. One is on these proposed short term changes to A levels and my officials have been discussing the details with school leaders. This consultation is due to end on 8 March 2013. The other is the fundamental review of GCSEs and A levels which I asked the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) to take forward and I am expecting a full report by the end of June this year.

Both reviews provide us with an opportunity to challenge the qualification landscape here and to potentially determine our own path, if we feel that is appropriate and is in the long term interests of learners and the economy.

It is by no means certain that I will want to follow Michael Gove's proposal to make the AS level a qualification in its own right. Indeed, I will make my decisions, following the consultation on short-term changes to A levels.

Portability and comparability of qualifications across the 3 jurisdictions is vitally important and I believe the qualifications system is robust enough to withstand small variations in policy, should that be necessary.

Russell Group of Universities

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what action he plans to take in light of the announcement by the Education Secretary regarding the role that the Russell Group of Universities will have in supervising the content of A Levels from 2015, especially since Queen's University Belfast is a member of the Russell Group.

(AQW 18813/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have commissioned two reviews of qualifications and both are currently in progress. My officials are working with schools leaders to determine their views on these potential short term changes to A Levels and I will be interested in hearing stakeholders' views on this particular aspect of change.

I will make my decisions on these proposals following my own consultation on short term changes to A levels which ends on 8 March. I am determined that whatever we produce going forward will be comparable to other equivalent qualifications offered not only across these islands but also internationally, now and for the foreseeable future.

A and AS Level Changes

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what contact he had with the Department for Education concerning, and prior to, the announcement on A Levels and AS Levels by the Education Secretary.

(AQW 18814/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My officials take part in quarterly meetings with officials in the Department for Education in England. The most recent meeting took place on 11 December. No details were shared by the Department for Education in terms of its likely direction of travel in this area and DfE officials did not make any contact with either me or my officials prior to the letter from Michael Gove to Glenys Stacey being issued.

A and AS Level Changes

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what contact he had with his counterpart in Wales concerning the announcement on A Levels and AS Levels by the Education Secretary.

(AQW 18815/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I liaise regularly with my counterpart Leighton Andrews and my officials have been in contact with their Welsh counterparts in relation to this announcement.

It is clear that the Welsh Minister is disappointed with both the policy direction and tactics chosen by Michael Gove including the on-going lack of communication with the devolved administrations.

Mr Andrews' department has conducted its own fundamental review of qualifications and he will be making his own decisions on the recommendations arising from that review.

A Level System

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what steps he plans to take to protect the interests of Northern Ireland students applying for places in English universities under the new A Level system which begins in 2015.

(AQW 18816/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have commissioned two reviews of qualifications and both are currently in progress. My officials are working with schools leaders to determine their views on potential short term changes to A Levels. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) is taking forward a fundamental review of GCSE and A level qualifications.

The options and recommendations which flow from those reviews will inform my thinking on what is appropriate and is in the long term interests of learners and the economy here. Portability and comparability of qualifications across the 3 jurisdictions are vitally important and I believe the qualifications system currently in place is robust enough to withstand small variations in policy, should that be necessary.

Roddensvale School, Larne

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how much funding his Department has allocated to Roddensvale School, Larne since 2000; and for what purposes the money was used.

(AQW 18818/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funding relating to recurrent expenditure is not allocated directly to Special Schools from my Department.

Special schools operate under a different funding regime to controlled and maintained mainstream schools. All staffing costs, (including sick and maternity absence) and school maintenance costs, are met directly by the Board from a non-delegated budget albeit a small budget is delegated to the Board of Governors under Article 60 of the 1998 Education (Northern Ireland) Order to meet other costs, eg heating, lighting, cleaning. The items to be covered by Article 60 budget are included in a scheme agreed on a 5 Board basis and approved by the Department of Education.

Table 1 shows the funding that has been allocated to Roddensvale School, Larne, by the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), the notes provided detail the purpose for which the funding is used.

TABLE 1 - RODDENVALE SPECIAL SCHOOL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

Financial Year	£'s					
	Carry Over	Delegated		Centrally Held		Total Budgets
		Earmarked Allocation	Block Grant Core Budget	Staffing Core Budget	Non Staffing Core Budget	
2006/07	1,461	20,878	50,919	895,632	2,660	971,550
2007/08	17,250	19,810	55,775	913,460	44,774	1,051,069
2008/09	2,112	19,568	81,767	994,915	3,834	1,102,196
2009/10	1,925	10,057	102,445	1,033,777	7,468	1,155,672
2010/11	493	6,220	89,207	1,067,773	9,233	1,172,926
2011/12	929	6,198	92,515	1,132,055	5,132	1,236,829
2012/13	-120	7,000	98,117	1,188,130	8,589	1,301,716

Notes:

- Information is only available from 2004-05 onwards as records prior to this period are not required to be held.
- Carry Over represents surplus/deficit balance on the delegated budget which provides the special school with a degree of budgetary flexibility from one year to the next.
- Earmarked funding relates to various initiatives supported by my Department e.g.: SENCO (SEN Co-ordinators), Extended Schools, Direct additional funding to Special Schools and EMAs(Educational Maintenance Allowances)
- Centrally held budgets are not allocated to schools; costs are a charge to the NEELB and include staffing and non-staff costs (landlord maintenance etc)
- Non-earmarked delegated budget relates to both premises running costs (e.g. utility costs/rates/minor maintenance etc) and pupil related costs (e.g.: small equipment purchases and general pupil costs applicable in all school).

Roddensvale School, Larne

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how much funding he has earmarked for Roddensvale School, Larne, over the next three years.

(AQW 18819/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funding is not allocated directly to Special Schools from my Department as outlined in my response to AQW18818/11-15. The planned funding for allocation to Roddensvale School, Larne over the next three years is set out in the table below.

The basis of this funding, in terms of amounts delegated to the school and amounts managed centrally by North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) were explained in my response to AQW18818/11-15.

Financial Year	Earmarked Allocation £	Delegated Block Grant Core Budget £	Centrally Held		Total Budgets £
			Staffing Core Budget £	Non Staffing Core Budget £	
2013/14	7,000	101,582	1,205,351	8,847	1,332,780
2014/15	7,000	105,178	1,217,403	9,112	1,338,693
2015/16	7,000	108,908	1,228,109	9,385	1,353,402

Notes:

- 1 Earmarked funding relates to additional support to special schools recognising the higher than average costs for supporting pupils with SEN.

Post-Primary Schools

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQWs 18051/11-15, 18052/11-15 and 18054/11-15, how many children in the BT29 area travel to each post-primary school listed.

(AQW 18891/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern and South Eastern Education and Library Boards (NEELB and SEELB) have informed me of the following numbers of pupils eligible for transport assistance in the BT29 area travelling to each post-primary school listed in the response to AQWs 18051/11-15, 18052/11-15, and 18054/11-15:

Schools	NEELB	SEELB
Antrim Grammar School	120	7
Aquinas Grammar School	14	20
Ashfield Boys School	1	0
Ballyclare High School	7	0
Ballyclare Secondary School	6	0
Ballymena Academy	5	0
Belfast Girls Model School	2	0
Belfast Royal Academy	20	0
Cambridge House Grammar	12	0
Christian Bro Sec. School	4	0
Colaiste Feirste	8	0
Crumlin Integrated College	38	5
De La Salle College	16	23
Dominican College	61	11
Edmund Rice College	1	0
Fort Hill Integrated College	3	13
Friends School	4	12
Hazelwood College	1	0

Schools	NEELB	SEELB
Hunterhouse College	4	7
Laurelhill Comm. College	2	7
Lismore Comp. College	0	1
Little Flower Girls School	2	0
Lurgan Junior High School	0	2
Methodist College	10	4
Parkhall Integrated College	32	2
Rathmore Grammar School	111	53
RBAI	7	3
Slemish Integrated College	2	0
St Benedict's College	1	0
St Colm's High School	1	1
St Dominic's High School	74	60
St Genevieve's High School	16	8
St Louis' Grammar School	14	1
St Louises Comp. College	70	32
St Malachy's College	81	24
St Mary's Cbs Grammar	46	22
St Marys High School	0	2
St Michael's Grammar	0	1
St Patrick's Academy	113	47
St Patrick's Academy Unit	2	1
St Patrick's College	4	0
St Paul's Junior Hs	0	0
St Roses High School	3	1
Victoria College	2	1
Wallace High School	4	22

The NEELB has also indicated that since providing a list in response to AQWs 18051/18052/18054 a further five pupils have been assisted to the following post-primary schools:

Belfast Boys' Model	1
Malone College	1
Newtownbreda HS	1
St Catherine' College	1
St Catherine's College Irish Medium Unit	1

DE: Advertising Campaigns

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the advertising campaigns carried out by his Department since 2011, including the costs involved.

(AQW 18892/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The 'Education Works' campaign, which began in September 2012, is projected to cost £224,151 this financial year. The Department of Education has carried out no other advertising campaigns since 2011.

Classroom Sizes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what cap on classroom sizes is in place within each Education and Library Board area, broken down by age group.

(AQW 18931/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is the Department of Education that sets policy, including policy relating to class sizes.

There has been considerable research carried out on the effect of class sizes on the teaching and learning of pupils. While evidence suggests that smaller class sizes in early years can have a positive impact on outcomes, it has also consistently highlighted that the quality of teaching and the flexibility to teach in different ways are important.

In view of the evidence surrounding the early years, it is the Department's policy to keep classes for our youngest pupils, (Years 1-4), to a maximum of 30 pupils. It is a school's Board of Governors that has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget and this would include taking decisions on class sizes, taking account of the parameters set for Years 1-4.

Approval for a class size in excess of 30 pupils must be approved by the relevant Education and Library Board (ELB) which administer this policy. Such exceptions can apply if a school has to comply with a direction of an admissions appeal tribunal, a school attendance order or a statement of special educational needs. ELBs can also take into account the need to avoid unreasonable public expenditure.

Ultimately, what is essential for good quality provision is high quality teaching, a curriculum that is matched to the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils and a relentless focus on improvement and raising standards.

In the north of Ireland the Revised Curriculum has been in place since 2009/10. This allows our teachers to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils and to adapt their teaching. Furthermore, the effective use of data to track pupil progress allows teachers to identify those pupils at risk of not achieving their full potential and enabling them to adapt the strategies they use in their delivery of the curriculum, customising it to best effect. The recent findings of the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMMS) studies of Year 6 pupils shows that our Key Stage 2 outcomes show high attainment at primary level education.

Classroom Sizes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education why there is no cap on classroom sizes for primary 5 to primary 7 pupils in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 18932/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The setting of policy in relation to class sizes is a matter for the Department of Education.

There has been considerable research carried out on the effect of class sizes on the teaching and learning of pupils. Evidence suggests that smaller class sizes in early years can have a positive impact on outcomes. There is no evidence to demonstrate that smaller class sizes positively affect outcomes for pupils in Years 5-7. The research consistently highlights the quality of teaching and the flexibility

to teach in different ways are the most important factors in determining educational outcomes, key factors which are reflected in core Departmental policies.

In view of the evidence surrounding the early years, it is the Department's policy to keep classes for our youngest pupils, (Years 1-4), to a maximum of 30 pupils.

In line with the Department's policy to give schools as much autonomy as possible it is a school's Board of Governors that has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget and this would include taking decisions on class sizes, taking account of the parameters set for Years 1-4.

Ultimately, what is essential for good quality provision is high quality teaching, a curriculum that is matched to the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils and a relentless focus on improvement and raising standards.

In the north of Ireland the Revised Curriculum has been in place since 2009/10. This allows our teachers to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils and to adapt their teaching. Furthermore, the effective use of data to track pupil progress allows teachers to identify those pupils at risk of not achieving their full potential and enabling them to adapt the strategies they use in their delivery of the curriculum, customising it to best effect. The recent findings of the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMMS) studies of Year 6 pupils shows that our Key Stage 2 outcomes show high attainment at primary level education.

Education and Skills Authority Chairperson

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what remuneration package will be applicable to the Chairperson of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 18940/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have agreed that the ESA Chairperson's remuneration will be £33,000 per annum for an associated time commitment of 3 days per week and subject to review after the first term of appointment. This was based on research undertaken with a number of comparator bodies and was considered to be on a par with that paid elsewhere and proportionate to the responsibilities and commitment required (e.g. the Chairs of the Regional Health bodies were remunerated at £33,000 p.a.). The agreed rate also took into consideration the high profile of ESA; the size of the new organisation; the budget that the ESA board will be required to manage; and the fact that the Chair is being asked to lead the board of a single Authority at a time when fundamental changes in processes are being undertaken, including welding together the many responsibilities of all of the outgoing organisations. The appointment is non-pensionable. Travel and incidental expenses will also payable to the Chairperson in respect of expenditure incurred in relation to ESA business.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18953/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There will not be any Departmental functions transferring to local government.

Education and Skills Authority: Education Bill

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education how the Education Bill, and subsequently the Education and Skills Authority, will deal with skills and further education.

(AQW 18962/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The clauses within the Education Bill that are relevant to Further Education are:

- Clause 2, which will give the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) the power to carry out administrative functions on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL);

- Clause 21, which will give ESA the function of paying superannuation benefits to retired Further Education lecturers;
- Clause 47, which sets out DEL's inspection powers;
- Clauses 49 to 54, which set out the functions of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), including functions relating to Further Education;
- Clause 60, which revises the general duty of DEL;
- Clause 61, which re-enacts a DEL grant-making power;
- Schedule 7, which amends Article 100 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, which deals with the resolution of disputes between ESA and Further Education Colleges; and
- Schedule 7, which inserts a new Article 101A into the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, giving DEL the power to direct Further Education Colleges.

ESA will have no direct role in relation to the provision of Further Education. In carrying out its functions in relation to grant-aided schools, ESA will take into account the role of schools in delivering skills-based courses as part of the curriculum.

Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of whether the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment should be held to account by an external regulator, as is the case in England and Wales.

(AQW 18987/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am currently content with the effectiveness and independence of the local Regulator. The CCEA Regulatory team works closely with the Regulators in England and Wales on a three jurisdiction basis, to ensure the integrity of the qualifications frameworks, and to protect the interests of learners. This role is completely separate from the functions of CCEA as an Awarding Organisation and advisory body.

Post-Primary Area Plan Review

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the post-primary area plan review.

(AQO 3240/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the end of December each of the Education and Library Boards submitted to the Department a report on the key findings of their public consultation and a revised draft area plan for post-primary provision. These are currently being considered by my officials.

I am keen to ensure that full consideration is given to the 47,000 responses that were received by the Boards. I will also be determining to what extent the revised plans meet the Terms of Reference for area planning.

It is vital that we learn the lessons and listen to the views of those who responded to the post-primary consultation and tailor the approach to ensure it is appropriate for the primary school sector.

It is my intention to address the House regarding area planning in the coming weeks and I also intend to outline how we will progress with the Primary Area Planning process.

Teacher Discipline

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether schools are required to have a policy in place for the discipline of teachers.

(AQW 19023/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A Disciplinary Procedure for Teachers was agreed by the Teachers' Negotiating Committee in 2007 (TNC Circular 2007/5) and issued to schools by Employing Authorities. This was followed in 2008 by agreed guidance for Governors and Principals on application of the procedure (TNC 2008/4).

Boards of Governors were advised to adopt the procedure as soon as practicable and ensure that all teaching staff received a copy.

Disruptive Pupils

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether schools are required to have a policy in place for the discipline of disruptive pupils.

(AQW 19024/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: By law, all grant-aided schools must have a discipline policy which outlines the behaviour it expects from registered pupils and the sanctions which it will impose for breaches in discipline. The day to day operation of the discipline policy is a matter for the school Principal and Board of Governors.

The relevant legislation is Article 3 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 as amended by Article 19 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003.

Dangers Associated with the Internet

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education what actions are being taken to create awareness among children and young people of the dangers associated with the Internet.

(AQW 19025/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Teaching children and young people of the dangers associated with the internet is a matter for each school. Parents also have a key role to play, if children are given access to the internet at home.

The revised curriculum which has been taught to all pupils of compulsory school age since 2009/10, provides teachers with greater flexibility to use their professional skills and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils. In addition to the statutory Areas of Learning, the curriculum also includes the cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT and Other Skills such as problem solving. These skills are an integral part of, and are developed through, the statutory Areas of Learning.

Many schools are already assessing ICT skills through the voluntary ICT Accreditation Scheme. 2012/13 is the last year of the voluntary scheme as from 2013/14, assessment of the Using ICT cross-curricular skill will become statutory with the introduction of the Using ICT Levels of Progression. At a level appropriate to their ability, pupils should be enabled to develop skills in Using ICT and be provided with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of e-safety and acceptable online behaviour.

The Department provides all grant-aided schools with a managed ICT service via the C2k system. C2k provides teachers with resources and support which will impact on pupil learning. These include a number of Safer Internet eSafety seminars in local C2k Centres to support and inform principals and Senior Leaders. The C2k Exchange forum has an eSafety Zone and has a range of suitable resources for teachers.

C2k directly reaches pupils through the C2k Newsdesk which provides appropriate articles, activities and resources for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 teachers and pupils for Safer Internet Day each year. Also throughout the year, the Newsdesk frequently raises issues of pupils' online safety, through writing of news articles, highlighting current issues and providing Online Safety fact files and appropriate web resources for school use.

On 5th Feb 2013, the Newsdesk will publish an article focusing on the Safer Internet Day 2013 theme – "Online Rights and Responsibilities" which encourages users to connect with respect.

Special Educational Needs Review

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the special educational needs review; and when he expects the process to be completed.

(AQW 19035/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The policy memorandum paper on a revised SEN and inclusion framework was agreed by the Executive on 5th July 2012.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel is currently considering draft instructions for the SEN Bill. Work has commenced on the development of supporting regulations and statutory code of practice to support the new framework. On current timescales, it is anticipated that a draft Bill will be introduced to the Assembly in September 2013. The operative date of the new SEN Bill is planned for September 2014. Implementation of the new framework will commence during the 2014/15 school year with arrangements in place for a 5 year transitional period.

Enrolment Capacity of Primary Schools in South Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of enrolments in (i) controlled; (ii) maintained; (iii) integrated; and (iv) Irish Language primary schools in South Belfast, in each of the last five years, and their current enrolment capacity.

(AQW 19047/11-15)

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

PRIMARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN THE SOUTH BELFAST CONSTITUENCY– ENROLMENTS AND CAPACITY FIGURES (RECEPTION – YEAR 7 ONLY) – 2008/09 – 2012/13

School name	Type	IM school	Enrolments					Capacity
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2012/13
Belvoir Park Primary School	Controlled	No	230	216	206	208	216	370
Blythefield Primary School	Controlled	No	94	93	85	83	82	513
Botanic Primary School	Controlled	No	189	178	180	176	176	210
Cairnshill Primary School	Controlled	No	439	458	429	429	429	583
Carryduff Primary School	Controlled	No	164	167	166	171	171	333
Donegall Road Primary School	Controlled	No	153	144	140	157	175	316
Fane Street Primary School	Controlled	No	137	135	152	167	187	495
Finaghy Primary School	Controlled	No	433	422	416	415	423	465
Harding Memorial Primary School	Controlled	No	227	203	195	185	195	210
Knockbreda Primary School	Controlled	No	136	168	162	156	160	225

School name	Type	IM school	Enrolments					Capacity
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2012/13
Nettlefield Primary School	Controlled	No	205	218	243	248	268	375
Newtownbreda PS	Controlled	No	78	-	-	-	-	0
Rosetta Primary School	Controlled	No	151	147	165	179	190	413
Stranmillis Primary School	Controlled	No	400	406	407	403	402	408
Taughmonagh Primary School	Controlled	No	153	177	171	166	170	160
Holy Rosary Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	276	260	273	255	312	508
St Anne's Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	800	768	794	804	811	860
St Bernard's Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	393	400	393	403	406	446
St Bride's Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	786	776	788	807	817	809
St Ita's Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	397	427	453	483	508	510
St Joseph's Primary School, Carryduff	Catholic Maintained	No	388	392	378	381	392	436
St Malachy's Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	211	202	230	248	263	350
St Michael's Primary School, Belfast	Catholic Maintained	No	417	413	415	416	416	409
Forge Integrated Primary School	Controlled Integrated	No	223	231	248	265	273	250
Cranmore Integrated Primary School	GMI	No	189	195	183	185	188	203
Loughview Integrated Primary School	GMI	No	393	395	401	406	412	406
Scoil An Droichid	Other Maintained	Yes	105	99	113	118	120	145

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Primary enrolments include pupils in reception - year 7 only.
- 2 For the purpose of this exercise the 2008 constituency boundaries have been applied to all years included.
- 3 Figures for 2012/13 are provisional at this time and may be subject to minor revision once the Education and Library Boards' auditing process is complete. Finalised figures will be available at the end of February.
- 4 Pupils admitted to Year 1 on appeal and pupils with a statement of special educational needs are included in primary enrolments but do not count towards the capacity figures.

Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the rebuilding of Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim.

(AQO 3245/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: On 22 January I made a statement to the Assembly indicating that I propose to Advance in Planning twenty two school building projects as part of a £220million investment.

The projects announced are aimed at either addressing serious or substandard accommodation inadequacies, or at effecting agreed rationalisation of the schools estate.

Parkhall Integrated College was included in that announcement.

Authorisation to proceed with construction on each project will be based on the level of capital funding availability at that time and all necessary approvals being obtained.

School Starting Age

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education whether he has considered allowing greater flexibility in the school starting age.

(AQO 3246/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans to introduce flexibility to the school starting age at this time. Whilst I am aware that we have one of the lowest school starting ages in Europe, the introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is already helping to address concerns about the very young age at which our children start school.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is designed to allow teachers the freedom to reassert what has always been regarded as best practice i.e. that very young children should be allowed to learn at their own pace. At Foundation Stage it is not recommended that a child begins formal learning until teachers believe the child is ready. This focus on matching learning to a child's readiness is designed to ensure that every child can indeed fulfil his or her full potential.

The foundation stage also provides teachers with greater flexibility to use their professional judgement and adapt their teaching to best meet the needs of their pupils and to provide for diagnostic assessment, which will provide greater opportunities for teachers to pick up earlier on pupils with particular difficulties.

I would also refer the member to the recently published Trends in International Maths and Science (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) Studies which show our pupils are performing significantly above the international averages in literacy, numeracy and science. I believe that the revised curriculum is having a positive effect on how our children are learning and that the Foundation Stage is a good basis for that learning.

Revised Early Years 0-6 Strategy

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Education to outline any discussions he has had with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the development of the Revised Early Years 0-6 Strategy.

(AQO 3247/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I meet on a regular basis with Minister Poots regarding a range of matters of common interest and the revised early years framework has been and will continue to be a key item for discussion.

Each department needs to be clear about the contribution it makes to improving outcomes for children and families, and how that contribution helps achieve the wider and collective aims of the Executive. I am committed to working with Ministerial colleagues to enhance the delivery of early years and early intervention services.

Learning to Learn is set within the main priorities for education, while recognising the importance of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working, particularly with health services.

Both Minister Poots and I have agreed that officials will continue to work together on key issues which are relevant to our respective early years services for the benefit of children and families.

DHSSPS officials were actively engaged during the development of the revised framework for early years education and learning particularly around proposed actions directly linked to health provision.

Officials will also liaise directly around the implementation of relevant actions in the Framework, for example Minister Poots has agreed to my request that our respective officials work closely on the review of Sure Start proposed in 'Learning to Learn' subject to the outcome of my consideration of responses to the consultation.

Pre-School Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Education what additional resources have been allocated to voluntary and private settings in the pre-school programme that meet the criteria for extended schools funding.

(AQO 3248/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I launched 'Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning' in December 2012. The proposed actions are currently the subject of focused consultation which concludes on 31 January 2013.

Included in the framework is an action to review how early years education and learning services are effectively targeted to address barriers to learning and enhance access and equity. I propose establishing criteria, similar to that used for Extended Schools, for voluntary and private settings in the Pre-School Programme to access additional resources proportionate to the amount they receive per place.

Extended schools funding is available to schools that meet the published criteria. In terms of pre-school provision it is currently only available to statutory nursery schools and nursery units in primary schools that meet the set criteria.

Information which is used to determine eligibility for Extended Schools is currently not available in the same format for voluntary and private settings in the pre-school programme. Subject to any refinement on the proposed actions following consultation, the data collection system for voluntary and private providers in the pre-school programme will be revised, which will enable resource requirements and allocations to be determined.

Grammar Schools: Funding

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the Education Bill, for his assessment of whether the system for funding grammar schools should be maintained and made available to other schools which meet the Department's criteria as effective organisations.

(AQO 3249/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Bill will make no change to the arrangements for funding voluntary grammar schools, other than to transfer the function of paying grants from my Department to the Education and Skills Authority.

The report of the independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme includes a recommendation to extend grant-based funding arrangements to a broader range of schools. I intend to consider carefully the report, and the views of stakeholders, before deciding on the way forward.

EU Erasmus For All Programme

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's plans to encourage individuals and educational institutions to avail of the opportunities which will become available as part of the EU Erasmus For All programme in 2014.

(AQO 3250/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not been formally consulted regarding Erasmus For All Programme. My understanding is that the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (DfBIS) is leading on the tendering exercise to appoint an Agency / Agencies to take forward the Programme. DfBIS is planning to consult devolved administrations. I am aware that the tendering exercise is due to commence in March / April with a closing date of May for submissions. It is expected that the winning tender will be awarded in July with the successful Agency / Agencies carrying out any marketing / promotion etc.

Key Stage 2 Pupils: Class Size

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education, given the importance of Equality of Educational Provision, whether he has any plans to review the maximum class size for Key Stage 2 pupils.

(AQO 3251/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans to review the maximum class size for Key Stage 2 pupils at this time.

Considerable research has been conducted on the effect of class sizes on teaching and learning. Evidence suggests that smaller class sizes in early years can have a positive impact on outcomes but the quality of teaching is the most important factor.

Therefore, it is policy to keep classes for our youngest pupils, (Years 1-4), to a maximum of 30 pupils.

What is essential is high quality teaching, a curriculum that is matched to needs, interests and abilities of pupils and a focus on improvement and raising standards.

The Revised Curriculum provides teachers with flexibility to tailor the curriculum and adapt their teaching to suit the needs of pupils. Furthermore, effective use of data facilitates identification of pupils at risk of not achieving their full potential. Teachers can adapt their delivery of the curriculum, customising it to best effect. Recent findings of the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMMS) studies of Year 6 pupils shows that our Key Stage 2 outcomes show high attainment at primary level education.

School Inspectors

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to ensure that school inspectors have recent classroom and school management experience.

(AQO 3252/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Inspectors are appointed on the basis of having extensive classroom and school management experience.

In addition inspectors are in classrooms and other training and education settings almost every day they are open and as a result they are up to date with and apprised of what constitutes effective learning and teaching and exemplary practice both within the classroom and within the structures of leadership and management.

Inspecting in itself demands great skill and ETI's inspectors bring to each inspection, consistency and system wide knowledge and expertise gleaned from the many inspections and visits they carry out. The inspectors' extensive understanding and experience of inspection is complemented by the associate assessors who are current practitioners in our schools and providers.

In addition, the ETI has a comprehensive and highly regarded staff development programme for its full-time inspectors.

Special EU Programmes Body

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) the nature of the discussions that have taken place between officials from his Department and the Special EU Programmes Body on the possibility of an Educational theme being included in a future Peace IV Programme; and (ii) the outcome of these discussions and how the issue will be taken forward.

(AQW 19068/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Senior officials from my Department have met with SEUPB at their request for preliminary high level discussions as part of their consultation for the new European Territorial Co-operation programme cycle (2014-20). Discussions focused on what role an education theme might play in any Peace IV programme and relevant educational policy.

It is understood that SEUPB are engaged in the analysis of a range of proposals for any Peace IV programme received from a wide range of stakeholders during their first public consultation (August-November 2012). SEUPB are expected to hold further discussions with the NI Executive and the Irish Government over the coming months and a draft Operational Programme will be subject to a further public consultation during 2013. No requests for further meetings with DE officials have been received at this stage.

Department for Employment and Learning

Training for Success Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 17073/11-15, how many young people have left the Training for Success scheme and gained employment.

(AQW 18231/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The Training for Success programme is designed to move young people closer to the labour market by providing them with an opportunity to attain skills and qualifications; it is not an employment programme. The programme targets and monitors the achievements and qualifications and progression mainly in the context of further education and training.

It has three strands and provides a guaranteed training place for all eligible unemployed young people aged 16 and 17, with extended eligibility for those with a disability up to age 22 and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background. Two strands, Skills for your Life and Skills for Work, focus on those young people who have barriers, and the training and support offered aims to address these and to help the young people to benefit from training.

The third strand is offered through a Programme-Led Apprenticeship and it is aimed at those young people who are closer to the labour market with a focus on helping them to gain qualifications at level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSE at levels A*-C) and also Essential Skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The aim of Training for Success is to give young people the training and allow them to attain the qualifications they need to best equip themselves for the world of work. Consequently, and in common with other education and training initiatives, primary data collection is concentrated on achievement of qualifications.

Agri-Food Industry

Mrs Overend asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether there is any provision for developing skills relevant to the Agri-Food industry in order to consolidate and grow this sector?
(AQW 18377/11-15)

Dr Farry: I fully recognise the importance of the Agri-Food sector to our economy. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has the central authority under the Agriculture Act (1949) to provide formal education and training for the agricultural sector. However, to add value and provide support I have identified the food and drink manufacturing and processing sub sector as one of a number of priority industries for employment and skills provision.

Employers are concerned about a perceived shortage of food technologists and engineers and the need to increase the management and leadership skills within the industry. In June 2012 I launched a Skills Action Plan, which outlines how these challenges will be addressed by the department, employers, education providers, Improve (the Sector Skills Council) and colleagues in DARD and Invest NI working together, in a coordinated manner. I have placed a copy of the Plan in the Assembly Library and it is also available on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>. A number of actions within the plan have already been taken forward.

I met recently with the Agri-Food Strategy Board and although its initial report is not yet published, it is likely that the skills and capability of the workforce will form a major strand of its work and I envisage the actions contained in the Action Plan will make a major contribution to this

Finally, it is also important to note that in addition to the training provision offered by government departments, the sector also benefits from provision at the three campuses of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise and at both Queen's University and the University of Ulster. Work is ongoing with all of these institutions to ensure that they continue to work closely with industry to meet their requirements.

DEL: Unemployment Issues

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department is taking to address unemployment issues for young people from working class communities in North Down.
(AQW 18426/11-15)

Dr Farry: Addressing youth unemployment, in all areas of Northern Ireland including North Down, is a priority.

In the period April to November 2012 my Department helped 564 young people move into work in North Down (the area served by Bangor and Newtownards Jobcentres). This is 17% above target for those areas for the period. (The target for Bangor was 241 and for Newtownards, 240).

Steps to Work is the Department's main return to work provision and in the North Down area (served by Bangor and Newtownards JobCentres) 487 young people are currently availing of this programme. This is a flexible programme which tailors provision to the individual's need with the aim of assisting participants to find and sustain employment.

In March the Executive agreed a package of new measures – “the Youth Employment Scheme” - to help young people gain experience, acquire new skills and find employment.

My Department is actively working with employers to secure as many opportunities as possible as quickly as possible across Northern Ireland. I have been encouraged by the response of employers so far and I expect many more to come forward to offer opportunities for young people in the coming months.

A new initiative has recently been implemented within the StW programme known as 'First Start'. Between now and 2014 First Start will support 1,700 waged employment opportunities across Northern Ireland, each lasting a minimum of six months, for young people aged 18 to 24 who have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for at least six months. Young people in North Down will be able to avail of these.

The Department's Pathways to Work programme assists people with health conditions and disabilities move into employment and presently 70 young people in the North Down area (served by Bangor and Newtownards JobCentres) are involved in this programme.

In terms of other initiatives my Department is undertaking, I secured Executive endorsement of 'Pathways to Success', the cross-departmental NEET strategy for Northern Ireland.

'Pathways to Success' Strategy

My Department is now implementing several new initiatives under the 'Pathways to Success' strategy, to complement existing and developing programmes of intervention to tackle youth unemployment as follows:

- a Community Family Support Programme working with disadvantaged families as opposed to individual young people. Ultimately this will be rolled out to provide support to some 500 families across Northern Ireland..
- a Community Based Access Programme which will enable non-statutory organisations to provide learner support to young people aged 16 to 18 and commences enrolments in September 2013.
- a training allowance for young people participating in projects funded by the European Social Fund on 15 October 2012. This allowance has been designed to ensure there are effective incentives for young people to progress from provision which re-engages them with learning to programmes that provide the skills and qualifications to support progression and success in work; and.
- a new Collaboration and Innovation Fund into help those young people most marginalised in our society engage effectively with the world of work. Four out of the 18 successful projects from the Collaboration and Innovation Fund are located in North Down. The four schemes will be delivered by Fit4life, South Eastern Regional College, Training for Women Network and the South Eastern Health and Social Services.

Careers Service

Finally, the Department's Careers Service provides an all-age, impartial careers information, advice and guidance service to clients throughout Northern Ireland. In addition to services provided to young people in school, and adults through JobCentres and Jobs and Benefits Offices, careers advisers actively case-manage all young people aged 16 and 17 who do not have a positive destination when they leave school or who drop out of provision early. The aim is to help them to secure and sustain suitable employment, education or training provision.

I trust that this answers your question.

University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in the event of St Mary's University College winning its appeal against non-Departmental Public Body Status, to detail what variation there would be between Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College in terms of the regulatory burden placed on the respective colleges and the checks and balances applied by his Department to each.

(AQW 18461/11-15)

Dr Farry: As a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB), Stranmillis University College is subject to the regulatory framework which currently applies to all government departments. This requires the College to comply with Dear Accounting Officer letters, Managing Public Money Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy. The Principal is formally designated as the College's accounting officer. The College is also subject to the public sector pay remit process and is currently within the department's budgetary boundary. From 2014/15, the College's accounts will be consolidated with the department's resource accounts.

St Mary's on the other hand would be subject to those requirements set out in its Financial Memorandum and to the terms and conditions attached to grants provided by the Department.

In the case of either college, the department exercises the degree of control appropriate to its status.

It is not my intention to make a difference between the two colleges but circumstances beyond the control of both my department and the Northern Ireland Executive, has resulted in this situation which requires that a different approach is adopted with respect to each college.

University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why a financial memorandum has not been issued to Stranmillis University College following its designation as a non-Departmental Public Body, and whether his Department will permit the college to spend the money it raises.

(AQW 18464/11-15)

Dr Farry: A valid Financial Memorandum currently exists between my Department and Stranmillis University College. As a consequence of the College's designation as a Non Departmental Public Body, this will be replaced in due course by a combined Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

I can confirm that the College will continue to be permitted to spend money which it raises, providing it requests and secures appropriate budget cover from the Department.

University Counselling

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many counsellors have been trained by each university, in the last 5 years.

(AQW 18508/11-15)

Dr Farry: As the Department does not hold the information requested, my officials contacted Queen's University, the University of Ulster and the Open University. The universities have indicated that a total of 902 students have completed counselling courses in the last 5 years.

I have placed details of the universities responses in the Assembly Library and on my department's website <http://www.delni.gov.uk>.

Counselling Courses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many counselling courses are offered by (i) further education colleges; and (ii) higher education institutes.

(AQW 18509/11-15)

Dr Farry: As the Department does not hold the information requested, my officials contacted Queen's University, the University of Ulster and the Open University. The universities currently offer a total of 8 courses.

Regarding further education, my officials have contacted colleges to confirm their counselling provision at all levels. I can confirm that in the current academic year there are 1,589 enrolments on Professional and Technical courses that include counselling. There are currently 31 courses across all campuses, with provision ranging from level 2 to level 7. Level 4 and above is deemed equivalent to Higher Education.

Information provided by the universities and details of the courses held across the further education campuses have been placed in the Assembly Library and is available on my department's website .
<http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

Higher Education Students: Financial Assistance

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the financial assistance available to higher education students who wish to enrol in courses outside Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 19030/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that under European Union (EU) law, Northern Ireland undergraduate students who wish to study in the EU can apply to the host country for help with their tuition fees. Any additional financial help is optional and a matter for the host country. There are reciprocal arrangements for EU students studying in Northern Ireland.

There is no student financial support under the Regulations or other legislation for Northern Ireland domiciled undergraduate students who wish to study internationally, outside the United Kingdom (UK) or EU, other than as an integral part of a course of study at a UK or Republic of Ireland higher education institution.

Pathways to Success: Rural Areas

Mr McCallister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how the Pathways to Success Collaboration and Innovation Fund will help equip disadvantaged young people in rural areas for employment.

(AQO 3259/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Collaboration and Innovation Fund is a key element of the Pathways to Success strategy for meeting the needs of young people not in education, employment or training; often referred to as NEET. I have provided £9million to the fund over the period December 2012 to March 2015, to finance initiatives that will equip disadvantaged young people throughout Northern Ireland to find and sustain employment.

Following a competitive procurement process, 18 successful organisations drawn from the community, voluntary and educational sectors have been chosen to provide support to over 5,500 disadvantaged young people in the NEET category. These organisations will provide a service throughout Northern Ireland including specific rural areas around Bangor, Newtownards, Downpatrick, Newry, Lisburn, Banbridge, Omagh, Dungannon, Mourne, Derry City Council area and counties Armagh and Fermanagh.

A range of innovative approaches will be used to support these young people, including individual assessment of need, bespoke training and development plans, work placements, mentoring and in some cases the offer of full-time employment. A key point will be to encourage progress in the development of key skills in order to bring the young people closer to the labour market.

I have established a NEET Advisory Group with membership drawn from across the Executive Departments, business, the voluntary and community sectors, local Government, and from the NEETs Strategy Forum. The NEET Advisory Group had its first meeting on 22 January 2013 and will meet to monitor the effectiveness of the programme on a regular basis throughout the year.

Essential Skills: Information, Communication and Technology

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he is working to improve the number of Essential Skills enrolments in Information, Communication and Technology subjects.

(AQO 3260/11-15)

Dr Farry: Since its launch in 2002, the overall Essential Skills Strategy has been extremely successful, with nearly 340,000 enrolments and almost 169,000 qualifications achieved in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

ICT, was piloted from 2007/08, and introduced as a third essential skill in August 2009. Between then and July 2012 there were over 42,000 enrolments, with almost 20,000 qualifications in ICT being achieved. In each academic year the number of enrolments in essential skills of ICT has increased, as has the number of qualifications achieved. So, considerable momentum has already been established.

However, I am not complacent, and my Department continues to work with a wide range of organisations, including further education colleges, training suppliers, public sector bodies, employers and trades unions to actively encourage and promote the uptake and delivery of all Essential Skills provision, including ICT. All of these courses are free to all learners.

Engaging with hard to reach groups in a wide variety of settings remains a priority. In addition, qualifications in essential skills are promoted through all departmental programmes for young people and for adults.

The department also funds the provision of Entry Level ICT qualifications through the further education colleges. This was introduced to assist learners to develop basic skills and knowledge in ICT, to facilitate and encourage progression into the main essential skills ICT courses, and to gain a recognised qualification in the process.

My Department will continue to run an advertising campaign, now called "Get the Know How". This is designed specifically to encourage adults to improve their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in order to enhance their lives, increase their employability, and contribute to the growth of the Northern Ireland economy.

Therefore, while more remains to be done, the Essential Skills Strategy, including the ICT strand, has been a success story in Northern Ireland.

Employment and Learning: East Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the work his Department is undertaking to improve employment and learning in East Belfast.

(AQO 3261/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is responsible for the Steps to Work programme which provides a range of support measures to help the unemployed find and sustain employment. In the period April to November 2012, my Department helped 992 people move into work in East Belfast. At present, 515 people from the East Belfast area are participating in the Steps to Work programme.

In addition, 376 people from East Belfast are participating in Pathways to Work, a programme that helps people with health conditions and disabilities to prepare for, secure, and sustain employment.

My Department has recently appointed 18 providers to deliver the Collaboration and Innovation Fund throughout Northern Ireland. I have agreed to the allocation of just under £4m over the period up to March 2015, to fund six organisations in the greater Belfast area, to provide support to 1,500 young people in the NEET category. Fit4Life will target 550 youth unemployed in East Belfast among other areas.

My Department also provides a guarantee of a training place on its Training for Success programme for all unemployed young people in the 16 to 17 age group. As of 3 January 2013, 348 young people from East Belfast are currently participating on the programme.

The Community Family Support Programme pilot commenced in January 2013 and will focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged families to support parents, help prevent younger family members falling into the NEET category and help other young family members already in this situation to re-engage with education, training or employment.

The pilot will work initially with 44 disadvantaged families in East and West Belfast, Strabane, Cookstown and Newtownabbey before being rolled out across Northern Ireland.

I would like to emphasise that many of these programmes have been specifically designed for Northern Ireland and are not available in the wider UK.

Steps to Work

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on Steps to Work. (AQO 3262/11-15)

Dr Farry: A recent evaluation of my Department's Steps to Work programme found that it has met its employment targets and was an effective employment intervention. The current target for Steps to Work participants moving into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more is 25%. The latest performance statistics available show that from September 2008 to March 2012 the programme has achieved 29% into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more.

Steps to Work continues to show itself to be a flexible and dynamic programme that performs well in a very challenging economic climate.

The additional funding my Department has received through the Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative has enabled me to introduce First Start and Step Ahead 50+. These are two new employment strands within the Steps to Work programme which will help address the increase in unemployment

The First Start initiative was introduced in November 2012 to provide an immediate and direct response to the latest increase in long term unemployment, particularly the rising jobless rate among long term unemployed young people.

This is a targeted intervention for 18 to 24 year olds which will provide supported employment for 1,700 young people over the next three years.

The Step Ahead 50+ employment strand, introduced in January 2013, provides those aged 50 or over with work experience and a recent employment history, which will enable them to compete more effectively for jobs in the current economic climate.

This intervention will provide 1,100 supported employment opportunities for this age group over the next three years.

As well as providing valuable experience in the workplace and in some cases permanent jobs, these initiatives will also prepare people for job opportunities when the downturn ends.

Employment: Science-related Careers

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what action is being taken by his Department to ensure that more young people are choosing science related employment as a choice of career. (AQO 3263/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Strategy, 'Success through STEM', sets out how Government and business will encourage more people to gain skills in these increasingly sought after subjects. My Department has an important role to play in its implementation.

Firstly, we must ensure that there are enough places at our colleges and universities for people to study these economically relevant courses.

I have announced previously that by 2015, there will be an additional 1200 undergraduate places in STEM related subjects and 300 PhD places, focussed on areas of economic relevance to Northern Ireland, available at our universities. I have also launched a Public/Private Sector information and communication technology Apprenticeship, a Higher Level Apprenticeship pilot in information and communication technology and a second cohort of the Software Testers Academy. Furthermore, our universities are now offering a Masters in information and communication technology, specifically aimed at non information technology graduates.

All of this provision, in addition to that already available at our colleges and universities, will help to increase the supply of people with relevant STEM skills into the workforce.

Secondly, young people need to be encouraged to study STEM subjects at school, college and university and go on to pursue a career in these areas. While Government will play its part, it is employers who need to do more to highlight the attractiveness of their professions.

My Department's Careers Service recognises the importance of raising young people's awareness of industries which are likely to offer positive employment prospects and the relevant skills and entry requirements. Our universities and colleges are also promoting STEM through the likes of the South West College's STEM Centre and Queen's University's STEM bursaries.

However, all too often, young people inadvertently close doors by their subject choices. The Careers Service continues to work with schools to highlight the importance of subject choices to ensure that career options are kept open, particularly in respect of STEM.

Graduates Employment

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the current increase in the number of undergraduate student places, for his assessment of the adequacy of future degree-related employment opportunities for graduates.

(AQO 3264/11-15)

Dr Farry: Higher level skills, including those at graduate level, will become increasingly critical to our economy over the coming years.

This is recognised in the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures'. That overarching strategy is underpinned by comprehensive research which sets out the future skill needs of the Northern Ireland economy. It emphasises the importance of helping people to progress up the 'skills ladder'. In particular, it shows that around half the jobs in 2020 will require higher education level qualifications, up from 37% in 2012.

This requirement for higher level skills, particularly skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, was confirmed in further work that I commissioned to look at skill needs in a lower corporation tax environment.

It is important, therefore, to continue to invest in skills, including those at the higher level, so that we can deliver the Executive's vision for future economic success. This is why I have announced recently an additional 1,200 economically-focussed undergraduate student places in Northern Ireland.

Nevertheless, I recognise that the current labour market is challenging for graduates and for others. I can assure members that my Department remains focussed on supporting people into employment while also building the skills base to secure sustained economic growth.

For example, my Department's Graduate Entry to Management Programme has been offered since 2007, operating under the INTRO brand. The programme is designed to provide well equipped managers for businesses in Northern Ireland, while at the same time easing graduate unemployment pressures.

Apprenticeships: Financial Assistance

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the financial assistance available to enable apprentices to complete their training.

(AQO 3265/11-15)

Dr Farry: ApprenticeshipsNI is my Department's flagship training programme for those in employment. Employers meet all salary costs for apprentices.

The apprenticeship training package on offer to employers is attractive, in that direct training costs are met by my Department. This can range between £1,300 and £10,800 depending on the age of the apprentice and the level and occupational area of study.

On successful completion of training, an incentive bonus of up to £1,500 is also paid to the employer.

There are almost 11,000 people undertaking apprenticeship training at the moment. This figure is testimony to the value that employers place on ApprenticeshipsNI training.

I plan to make a statement in the Assembly in February on a fundamental review of the future of the apprenticeships and youth training provision.

Education: Preparation for Employment

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what action his Department is taking to encourage education providers to ensure that young people are equipped and educated to meet the demands of employers.

(AQO 3266/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department ensures that further education colleges and higher education institutions provide services which meet the needs of the local economy.

It is essential that we understand the current and future needs of employers. My Department's Skills Strategy, which has been informed by research and forecasting work, sets out the direction to 2020. The study advocates the need to promote training that can equip the workforce with recognised qualifications that meet employers' needs.

In support of the Economic Strategy, I have recently identified a number of economic sectors that will be the focus of my Department's employment and skills provision, and I am actively supporting the demands of employers in those sectors.

For example, I chair information and communication technology and advanced engineering services working groups. These bring together business, government and local colleges and universities, to consider how the current and future skills needs of these important sectors can be met.

Second, most of the further education and training delivered in Northern Ireland leads to qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. These qualifications are based on National Occupational Standards, into which employers have a major input. This ensures that young people are following courses of study that meet employers' needs.

In addition, employers always stress the importance of young people having a range of "softer" employability skills. Therefore, all further education and training provision is based on individual programmes of learning which include a range of employability skills, which address young people's personal and social development needs, and which include the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT where necessary.

Further education colleges have an important role in being flexible and responsive to the very specific needs of small employers. My Department's Skills Solutions Service works in tandem with colleges, brokering bespoke solutions where no existing training and development product will meet the employer's specific needs.

DEL: Counsellors

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department is ensuring that the level of trained counsellors meets demand.

(AQO 3267/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department sets high level targets in respect of the curriculum in further education colleges, and agrees broad targets with individual colleges through the annual college development planning process.

While the Department sets this strategic direction for the sector, each College is responsible for its own curriculum offer, including the provision of courses in relation to counselling. Decisions on whether

specific courses such as counselling are provided, are informed by the level of demand from employers and learners in college areas.

My officials have contacted the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the demand for trained counsellors. While that Department does not hold this information, it published a “Strategy for the Development of Psychological Therapies” in June 2010.

This Strategy highlights the need to ensure the quality of service provision in the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors. It recommends that practitioners are properly trained in the therapies they are providing, which is a key measure of a safe and effective service.

I can confirm that the courses currently provided by further education colleges include certificates in counselling from level two to level four, as well as foundation degrees. The subject areas covered are diverse, ranging for example from an introduction to counselling skills, to areas such as working with trauma, bereavement, mental health and self harm.

Therefore, it is for employers, professional bodies and other parts of government to identify and articulate their education and training requirements, which colleges will make every effort to meet.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Down Business Park

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the companies who own or rent premises in Down Business Park.

(AQW 18101/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Invest NI, in line with its intervention criteria, provides property to qualifying businesses across Northern Ireland in support of approved economic development projects.

The table below details those companies that have purchased property within Down Business Park directly from Invest NI. You will note that there is only one property within the Park owned by the Agency that attracts a rent; this factory is currently occupied under licence.

Invest NI does not maintain records of any onward property transactions that may have taken place since the completion of the original sale.

You will note that amongst the transactions listed in the table is a property sale to Jobspace (NI) Limited in May 2000. This site was subsequently developed as Down Business Centre. Invest NI does not hold records of businesses that are located within the Centre.

Name	Date	Form of Agreement - Lease/Licence	Size of Site (in acres)
Ashvale Engineering	Dec 2007	999 year lease	1.21
Kennedy Fish	Apr 2006	999 year lease	1.56
Quinn Piling	Dec 2005	999 year lease	3.74
NIE (large substation)	Mar 2003	999 year lease	0.18
Crossgar Meats	Mar 2001	999 year lease	2.95
Jobspace (NI) Ltd	May 2000	999 year lease	4.99
Lynn's Country Foods	Sep 2011	Licence	1.63 (11,388 sq ft factory)

Business: Flag Protests

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has carried out an assessment on the impact the recent protests and riots have had on the local economy and investor confidence in Belfast.

(AQW 18293/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The recent protests and associated disorder have had a detrimental impact on business in Belfast, particularly on the retail and hospitality sectors.

Economic and political stability are crucial for our economy to grow and for us to attract investment, create jobs and bring prosperity to all the people of Northern Ireland.

Selective Financial Assistance Rates

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the Selective Financial Assistance rates being due for reduction, what action is being taken to support and encourage investment in the Agri-food sector.

(AQW 18376/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While the draft Regional Aid Guidelines for the period 2014-20 indicate that the rates of support to business across much of Europe may be reduced in future, it is important to note that Regional Aid will continue across the EU post 2013. Given ongoing consultation between EU member states, it is not yet possible to conclude how this will impact Northern Ireland. The Executive acknowledges the importance of Regional Aid and SFA to businesses in Northern Ireland. We are in ongoing, active discussions with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in London and with representatives of the European Commission with a view to optimising Northern Ireland's position post 2013 and we expect Regional Aid to continue in Northern Ireland.

Last year my Department, through Invest NI, made 93 offers of Selective Financial Assistance to assist the Agri-Food Sector. This totalled over £4.4 million of support leveraging over £37 million investment into the sector. This builds on the previous year highlighting nearly £100 million planned investment by the food industry from April 2010 to March 2012. The latest statistics on the food processing sector continue to show growth with turnover increasing by 6.7% from £3.7 billion in 2010 to nearly £4 billion in 2011.

My Department is also working with DARD and the recently appointed Agri-Food Board to develop a longer term strategy for the Agri-Food Industry.

Foyle Cup Tournament

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, considering the economic appraisal conducted by Cogent on the Foyle Cup Tournament, to detail (i) whether the baseline figures are correct; and (ii) whether the allocation from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board reflects the economic impact to the city and district.

(AQW 18379/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The report undertaken in July 2011, as a condition of The Northern Ireland Executive funding, found a possible return to the Northern Ireland economy from the event of £269,711 and an economic return to the secondary economy of £541,694. These figures are correct and therefore stand.

This figure has no bearing in relation to the current funding application or award received through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

- (ii) The allocation from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board is not based on the economic appraisal, but is based on key tourism criteria such as visitor numbers and spend, and representing Northern Ireland as a tourism destination, as the scheme is designed to increase tourism.

The scheme also reflects the four main principles which underpin financial support. These principles cover additionality, leveraging of other funding, partnership working and significance.

EU and Canadian Free Trade Agreement

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the benefits that will result from the pending Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada.

(AQW 18408/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will assist Northern Ireland companies to better access the Canadian market. Canada offers Northern Ireland companies a sophisticated, stable and growing marketplace for the broad range of products and services produced in Northern Ireland. CETA also reinforces Northern Ireland's position as a destination for investment.

Canada is a developed and sophisticated market providing many opportunities across multiple sectors. In September 2011, Invest NI appointed an in-market advisor to help Northern Ireland companies maximise the trade and investment opportunities that exist in Canada. More recently, Invest NI has developed an initiative known as GoCanada which is a dedicated export development programme designed to help Northern Ireland companies win business there. Twelve companies are currently on the first phase of the programme and are scheduled to visit Canada as part of a multi-sector trade mission in March this year.

In addition over 30 companies met with the in-market advisor during 2012 to discuss their strategies for the Canadian market and 10 companies have had tailored research conducted for them on the Canadian market through Invest NI's Trade Advisory Service.

Together with our investment in additional resources in the marketplace, the elimination of duties, common standards, improved access to Canadian Government procurement projects and simpler regulations will help our companies to sell more and sell better in this important market.

For Canadian companies with investments already in Northern Ireland like Bombardier, BTI Systems and McCloskeys, as well as potential new investors, CETA offers additional reasons for investing in Northern Ireland.

Natural Gas Network

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail why east and north Antrim have not been included in her Department's plans for the extension of the natural gas network.

(AQW 18441/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Natural gas is already available in towns such as Ballymena, Ballymoney, and Larne in North and East Antrim.

Responses to my Department's 2011 consultation on extending the natural gas network in Northern Ireland agreed that the main towns in the West and North West of Northern Ireland and those in East Down, represent the key remaining areas in which the natural gas network might feasibly be developed at this time.

Provision of new gas networks to further areas will depend on the availability of suitable gas loads in such areas, interest by a gas company in developing new gas networks, and the commitment of consumers in new areas to connect to natural gas in the event of it becoming available. In November 2012, the Utility Regulator approved additional development plans for firmus energy which will see the gas network extended to Bushmills and to quarries in the Ringsend and Slemish electoral wards.

Foyle Cup Tournaments

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the reason for the further 50 percent reduction in funding for the Foyle Cup Tournament for the second consecutive year.

(AQW 18465/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A key condition of Government funding is the principle of additionality. NITB has assessed that the grant offered is the minimum level of Government assistance required to enable the event to take place.

I would advise you that grants can only be paid out against eligible expenditure and NITB has confirmed to me that their support only relates to a portion of the predicted total Foyle Cup budget.

Fuel Prices

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 17776/11-15, whether her Department uses wholesale oil and wholesale gas price forecasts in its assessments and decision making, and if so, what forecasts does the Department use.

(AQW 18545/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While my Department has no direct role in setting or forecasting fuel prices, it makes use of information such as that provided in the Sutherland Tables for comparison of retail energy costs between different fuel sources.

The Department also engages in energy tariff reviews led by the Utility Regulator which involves consideration of movements in wholesale energy prices. The Utility Regulator uses direct market information on the price of future wholesale gas prices at the National Balancing Point (this is the price at which gas is traded in Great Britain) in making decisions related to tariff setting.

When necessary, the Department also makes use of other publically available sources for assessment of wholesale and retail oil and gas prices, and has access to analysis provided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in London.

Movements in wholesale energy prices are very difficult to predict and are influenced by many international factors including economic activity, changes in technology, commodity trading, and the political environment.

G8 Summit

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the economic boost that will be brought about by hosting the G8 Summit.

(AQW 18578/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A report for the Scottish Executive assessed the economic impact of hosting the G8 summit in Gleneagles during 2005. It identified short term benefits such as the expenditure by delegates, by international media organisations, by visitors from other events related to the G8, and also the benefits from the additional public expenditure directed towards running and servicing the event. In addition, the media coverage provided a platform for further economic benefits from tourism and investment brought about by Scotland's increased international profile.

Having been selected as the venue for the G8 in 2013, Fermanagh and Northern Ireland have a tremendous opportunity to attract many of the same types of economic benefits enjoyed by Scotland back in 2005. In addition a recent report from the University of Toronto suggests that smaller communities and cities tend to gain enhanced benefits from hosting these types of events compared to already high profile capital cities.

So, in the short term, there will be economic benefits for our local businesses, particularly those involved in accommodation, event management, catering and transport related activities. In order to maximise the longer term economic impacts for business, Invest NI is working with government and partners to showcase our key inward investment and export sectors. In addition NITB and Tourism Ireland are working to promote Northern Ireland and generate publicity in key overseas markets to maximise benefits for tourism.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from her Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to her departmental budget.
(AQW 18604/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) No formal record of numbers was maintained and therefore (ii) the financial cost to the Department is not known.

Crescent Capital

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of InvestNI's intervention in the technology sector through Crescent Capital, and the value for money it provided.
(AQW 18633/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are two Crescent Capital funds. Crescent Capital I was a £14 million fund into which DETI invested £7 million on a subordinated basis. The balance of fund investment was from the private sector. It invested in 12 companies. This fund closed in 2007. The successor fund is Crescent Capital II. It was set up in 2004 with a 10 year term. It is a £22.5 million fund with Invest NI providing £7.5 million on a subordinated basis. It has invested in 14 companies.

My assessment is that Invest NI's intervention in the technology sector through the Crescent funds has been excellent. The Crescent funds have invested in 26 companies of which 22 are considered to be in the technology sector. The venture capital funds addressed market failure for development capital. The Invest NI intervention in both funds was £14.5 million. This attracted a further £21 million of private investment into the funds themselves. The Invest NI intervention pump primed venture capital to assist in stimulating growth in the economy. These technology companies would not otherwise have been able to attract funding. In turn, this funding has led to increased competitiveness, increased exports and job creation. Of the 26 companies, there have been seven profitable exits to date and one stock exchange listing. The investee companies experienced overall increases in sales, profits and employees although it is always difficult to determine the extent to which economic impacts are a direct result of Crescent interventions. The funds delivered wider and regional benefits including raising awareness of Venture Capital, meeting the demonstrable need and providing non financial supports to investee companies.

The appointment of fund managers to such funds is through the Open Journal European Union, an open tender process. Tenders are evaluated on the basis of methodology and cost. This process ensures that value for money for the management of the funds is achieved.

Crescent Capital

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how Crescent Capital helped to stimulate the venture capital industry and accelerate the quality and quantity of venture capital available to small and medium enterprises.
(AQW 18634/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are two Crescent Capital funds. Crescent Capital I was a £14 million fund into which DETI invested £7 million on a subordinated basis. The balance of fund investment was from the private sector. It invested in 12 companies. This fund closed in 2007. The successor fund is Crescent Capital II. It was set up in 2004 with a 10 year term. It is a £22.5 million fund with Invest NI providing £7.5 million on a subordinated basis. It has invested in 14 companies. The Crescent funds have therefore invested in 26 companies. The venture capital funds addressed market failure for development capital. Without these funds, there would have been little venture capital available to SMEs.

Both of the funds were the subject of independent evaluations in 2009. Crescent Capital I was a final evaluation and Crescent Capital II was an interim evaluation. For the Crescent Capital II evaluation, the

output was to provide a review of the progress the fund was making. It was considered to be on track to meet its objectives.

Findings from the evaluations confirm that the Crescent funds:

- Introduced Venture Capital as a mainstream funding mechanism and educated SMEs to this source of finance;
- Contributed to stimulating growth in the economy, funding projects, which would not otherwise have been capable of accessing finance;
- Increased competitiveness leading to increased export sales and job creation; and
- Providing non financial supports to investee companies.

The evaluations reported that the Crescent investee companies have experienced overall increases in sales, profits and number of employees although it is always difficult to determine the extent to which these commercial impacts are a direct result of the Crescent interventions.

Crescent Capital

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how Crescent Capital operated a cost-effective fund achieving returns for investors.

(AQW 18635/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are two Crescent Capital funds. Crescent Capital I was a £14 million fund into which DETI invested £7 million on a subordinated basis. The balance of fund investment was from the private sector. It invested in 12 companies. This fund closed in 2007. The successor fund is Crescent Capital II. It was set up in 2004 with a 10 year term. It is a £22.5 million fund with Invest NI providing £7.5 million on a subordinated basis. It has invested in 14 companies. The Crescent funds have therefore invested in 26 companies with a government intervention of £14.5 million attracting £22 million of private money into the funds. The venture capital funds addressed market failure for development capital.

Both of the funds were the subject of independent evaluations in 2009. Crescent Capital I was a final evaluation and Crescent Capital II was an interim evaluation. For the Crescent Capital II evaluation, the output was to provide a review of the progress the fund was making. It was considered to be on track to meet its objectives.

Private investors in Crescent Capital I achieved a rate of return of 7.9% per annum just below the target rate of 8%. DETI was a subordinated investor and wrote off its £7 million investment. In comparison to other UK regional funds, Crescent Capital I performed well. The British Venture Capital Association reported an Internal Rate of Return of -10.3% over a 5 year period for early stage regional funds.

The interim evaluation of Crescent Capital II confirmed that the fund had met its fund raising objective and was on track to operate a cost effective fund and achieve returns for investors. It went on to state that it was too early to say whether Crescent Capital II will achieve the target Internal Rate of Return.

Management fees were benchmarked during both evaluations. Fee levels were reported to be consistent with industry standards.

Sustainable Energy Programme

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail what funding for home insulation is available through the Sustainable Energy Programme.

(AQW 18637/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) is run by the independent Utility Regulator. However, the Department understands that for the current 2012/13 schemes a figure of £2,333,178 has been allocated to home insulation (cavity wall and loft) only schemes.

A further £4,560,109 has been allocated to domestic schemes which provide whole house solutions to priority (vulnerable) customers i.e. a full package of heating system, cavity wall and loft insulation and hot water cylinder jacket. It is not possible to identify at this stage how much of this funding will be spent on the insulation measures as some properties will already have adequate insulation.

Credit Unions

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has had any discussion with local banks on enabling Credit Unions to obtain better interest rates on their holdings.

(AQW 18668/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have not had any discussion with local banks on enabling credit unions to obtain better interest rates on their holdings. The range of financial products that a credit union can invest in is a matter for the Financial Services Authority as the regulator of all UK credit unions.

Broadband Access

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the level of (i) broadband; and (ii) fibre optic broadband provision in Moyle.

(AQW 18745/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold details of broadband provision to the level requested.

Basic broadband services are currently available to 100% of premises across Northern Ireland, delivered via a mix of technologies. Ofcom's Infrastructure Report 2012 Update identifies that Superfast broadband services delivered over platforms that include fibre and cable are available to 95% of premises across Northern Ireland.

I understand that the mapping associated with this report provides details of coverage to District Council level. The mapping data is accessible at the following link:

<http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/broadband/broadband-data/>

EU Electricity and Gas Directives

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the costs to the Executive for not fully transposing the EU Electricity and Gas Directives.

(AQW 19019/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The vast majority of the work to transpose the Directives was completed by the original deadline and, as already notified to the European Commission, it is the intention to complete the remaining work by April 2013. It is not, therefore, anticipated that there will be any costs to the Executive.

Business: Flag Protests

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 18293/11-15, what is her Department's estimated financial impact on local businesses.

(AQW 19088/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible to estimate the impact of current local events on regional economic performance. However there have clearly been impacts on local businesses, particularly those in the retail and hospitality sectors.

Quinn Group

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any discussions she has had with (i) senior management of the Quinn Group; (ii) Irish Bank Resolution Corporation; and (iii) Minister of Finance Michael Noonan TD, regarding the news that further jobs are to go within the

Quinn Group and that a voluntary redundancy scheme has been opened for all employees based in the Derrylin/Ballyconnell area.

(AQW 19146/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My response to AQW17967/11-15 sets out detail of meeting dates involving both myself and Invest NI with senior management of the Quinn Manufacturing Group. A further operational meeting took place at Derrylin on 7 January.

Quinn Manufacturing employs approximately 1,170 people in the Derrylin/Ballyconnell area. As a result of a strategic review the Company has proposed a net reduction of 13 jobs in the Derrylin area. The referenced jobs directly support the Radiator business located in Newport, Wales. There will be an opportunity for a number of the affected job holders to relocate to Wales. Recognising that relocation may not be desirable nor practical for some individuals, the company has offered a voluntary redundancy scheme to the wider Quinn Manufacturing businesses within the Derrylin/Ballyconnell area, in anticipation that this initiative may create some job opportunities for the 13 affected job holders.

It should be noted that employment levels across the Quinn Manufacturing Group currently stands at 2,812, an increase of 80 jobs since the company was restructured. Employment levels in the Derrylin area have increased marginally over the same period.

The Quinn Manufacturing Group is committed to the development of its various businesses and in the last year has made significant capital investments within its Glass and Cement divisions, the latest being a €15.7 million investment announced in December 2012.

Senior executives from Invest NI will continue to work closely with the top management team in the Quinn Manufacturing Group.

Department of the Environment

Proposed National Parks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many representations his Department has received on the proposed national parks; and what proportion of the representations were (i) supportive of; (ii) opposed to; and (iii) neutral on, the concept of national parks.

(AQW 17166/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Since I came to office, a total of 248 representations have been made to my Department in relation to national parks. This figure includes responses to the Department's consultation on enabling legislation that was held last year. Of these, 54 were supportive of the concept of national parks, 189 were opposed, and five were neutral. The figure of 189 opposed includes 164 identical campaign letters from people living in the Mourne area.

Downpatrick Planning Office

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment to list all the enforcement cases dealt with since 2005 by the member of staff who was recently dismissed from the Downpatrick planning office.

(AQW 17766/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A planning officer who worked in Rathkeltair House, Downpatrick was suspended and subsequently dismissed from the NICS in September 2012. This dismissal followed an internal investigation and a review of numerous case files dealt with by this officer or in which he may have had an involvement.

The Department considers that to list all the cases dealt with by this officer since 2005 could lead to the identification of this officer. As the disciplinary process is ongoing and not yet concluded, the Department is of the view that this would be inappropriate and a breach of its responsibilities under the Data Protection legislation.

Right of Way Legislation

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment what legislation exists to prevent an established right of way from being blocked by the erection of a gate by one of the owners.

(AQO 3098/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The power for erection or removal of gates along a right of way is contained within the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 (the Access Order).

Under Article 3 of the Access Order a district council has the duty to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any public right of way. Any dedicated public right of way is subject to the limitations imposed by existing gates, stiles or similar structures that are in place at the time of dedication.

There is no legislation that empowers the Department to be involved in this process.

Renewable Energy Projects

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what he is doing to create consistency across planning divisions on decisions relating to renewable energy projects.

(AQW 17932/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department welcomes the contribution that renewable projects make to the reduction of carbon emissions and acknowledges the importance of processing these types of applications in a consistent and timely manner.

In order to improve consistency in decision making I have established a Sub Group of the Planning Forum to look at measures to improve planning performance for renewables and to consider issues such as licensing requirements, resources and structures.

To date this work has resulted in the majority of renewable applications being redirected from Strategic Planning Division to the Area Office network which has increased capacity to speed up the decision making process. Prior to the redistribution of this work training was rolled out across the Area Offices to ensure consistency in decision making.

Performance within each area office is carefully monitored and a Performance Action Plan has been put in place in order to improve and manage performance. This action plan identifies a number of initiatives and allows for the monitoring and active management of performance within agreed timescales.

However, applications for wind turbines differ in complexity and in quality of submission and are attracting increasing levels of objection. Consultation with a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies is required to inform the decision making process and all of these issues may prolong the processing of an application.

To improve the consultation process and to reduce the number of consultations staff have been provided with additional training to ensure consistency in consultation and reminded that they should only consult in the correct circumstances and avoid unnecessary consultations and delays.

I will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that Planning delivers in an efficient and timely manner and continue to monitor performance to ensure consistency across the area office network.

Street Naming

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment which organisations and public bodies must give their approval before a street or road can be renamed.

(AQW 17954/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Article 11 of The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 describes the powers district councils have in relation to street naming and signage. In

exercising those powers, legislation requires that a council shall have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street.

A council is not required to obtain approval from any other organisations or public bodies when exercising its powers in relation to the naming of streets.

The 1995 Order does not make specific provision about the renaming of streets.

A consultation on councils' powers in relation to street naming will issue in the near future. This will present an opportunity for interested parties to give their views on any changes that may be required in relation to councils' powers in relation to street naming, including the issue of the renaming of streets.

Craigtlet Hills Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what protection his Department provides to the Craigtlet Hills area.

(AQW 17957/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Craigtlet Woods, which are located in the Craigtlet Hills, were declared an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) on the 25 June 1997 and it covers 21.4 hectares. It is of special scientific interest because of the woodland flora and fauna; and consists of three small, calcicolous valley-woods on the southern flank of the Craigtlet Hills.

Together they represent the largest block of semi-natural woodland remaining in the north Down region. The woodland flora includes a number of rare plants such as Wood Millet, Wood Fescue and Toothwort.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how his Department, and in particular the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), is working with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to combat and help eradicate Ash Die Back; (ii) whether any actions undertaken by DARD have been approved by the NIEA; and (iii) when was contact made by DARD with the NIEA or his Department.

(AQW 17970/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Officials in my Department have been working closely with colleagues in Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) over several years with respect to diseases of plants with a potential nature conservation or landscape impact. Specifically with respect to Chalara Ash die back, NIEA scientists have been liaising closely with DARD on a review of plant health policy since March 2012; have been on the Incident Management Team established in Oct 2012, attend a daily "bird table" meeting to receive updates and are also present on a Chalara Policy and Strategy Group. NIEA scientists have also provided technical support to DARD with respect to development of evidence-based policy response options at a UK, GB and island-of-Ireland basis.

Currently DARD, specifically Forest Service, is taking the lead on eradication of the Chalara in NI. Infected trees are young, recently planted, saplings on sites planted from stock imported from Scotland. Surveillance is also being carried out by Forest Service, related to recently planted sites. NIEA have offered support to expand the surveillance operation to the wider countryside and is currently exploring appropriate methodology and equipment requirements. In addition, NIEA has provided input to facilitate disposal of diseased trees.

My Department continues to work closely with DARD on this issue. We are being fully consulted and are supportive of the actions currently being taken.

Plastic Bag Tax

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why biodegradable bags will be subject to the plastic bag tax.

(AQW 18008/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The primary purpose of the carrier bag levy is to reduce or eliminate the unnecessary use of single use carrier bags in Northern Ireland – regardless of the materials from which they are made. This objective has driven the current legislative provision for exemptions, which is largely consistent with the position in Wales.

The speed at which biodegradable bags degrade can vary considerably, depending upon both the composition of the bag and the environmental conditions to which it is subjected. The “ideal” conditions cited by bag manufacturers are unlikely to be replicated in a landfill site. Moreover, even bags which are capable of rapid degradation have an environmental impact through their production, transport and disposal.

An exemption from the levy for degradable bags – without further qualification – would therefore be unclear and open to misinterpretation. As a minimum, the exemption would need to focus on the constituent materials of the bag and the likely time period over which degradation can be expected to occur.

However even if this could be achieved, such an exemption is also likely to mean that PFG targets for significant reductions in single use carrier bag consumption could not be achieved. Many retailers could simply switch to using a carrier bag that qualifies for that exemption – and can therefore be issued free of charge. This would effectively remove the incentive for consumers to change their shopping behaviour by avoiding the unnecessary use of single use carrier bags.

I should point out that the levy applies to bags used to carry goods purchased. While this means that the levy will apply to degradable single use carrier bags, it will not apply to categories of degradable bags which are designed and used for other purposes, such as food waste bags, biodegradable nappy bags and caddy liners.

I have already made a commitment to keep charging arrangements under review as implementation progresses. In doing so, I will take into consideration any representations that are received.

Plastic Bag Tax

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for an estimate of the cost of administering the plastic bag tax; (ii) how many staff have been engaged, or will be engaged in the public sector in administering the tax; and (iii) for an estimate of the number of jobs in the private sector that will be lost as a consequence of the tax.

(AQW 18009/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Subject to specific exemptions in the Regulations, the Carrier Bag Levy will apply to new single use carrier bags, regardless of the material from which they are made.

The annual cost of administering the levy is estimated at £630k. This includes the staff, administration and ICT costs associated with enforcing the levy and collecting the anticipated revenue. Revenue from the levy is expected to cover these costs and provide funds for Departmental environmental programmes and activities.

Administration of the levy will not commence until 8 April 2013. However, the Carrier Bag Levy Team, which will administer the levy, was established in October 2012 to engage with retailers and their representative bodies in advance of the introduction of the levy. This in-house solution was identified as the most cost effective from a range of options and affords maximum flexibility should a change in approach be required at a future date. In addition to its compliance role, the team provides retailers with information and guidance on the levy. The team consists of 10 staff and the structure and composition of the team will be reviewed in 2015.

For disclosure reasons, the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment is unable to release information on manufacturers, importers and distributors of carrier bags in Northern Ireland. However, the Regulatory Impact Assessment identified 16 businesses in Northern Ireland potentially engaged in the manufacture, import or distribution of plastic and paper bags. Based on a number of assumptions, these businesses are estimated to employ around 90 people locally, with half of these dependent on

carrier bag sales. Of these, around one quarter were estimated to depend on sales within Northern Ireland. Therefore, based on an anticipated 83% reduction in single use carrier bag consumption, the introduction of the levy could result in the loss of up to 10 jobs in the private sector.

Some of the estimated job losses may be offset if manufacturers diversify into other products. A dramatic reduction in single use carrier bag consumption will also strengthen Northern Ireland's clean and green credentials which are so important to our tourist industry.

Wildfowl Deaths

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of wildfowl deaths as a result of lead poisoning since the ban on lead shot was introduced in 2009; and whether there has been a reduction in lead poisoning rates in wildfowl since the ban.

(AQW 18020/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Unfortunately my Department does not collect this detailed information on wildfowl deaths for Northern Ireland that you requested. The Environmental Protection (Restriction on use of lead shot) Regulations (NI) 2009 to which you refer bans the use of lead shot from a shot gun over areas of wetland (Wetlands as defined by the 'Ramsar convention' 1976). This legislation was primarily designed to reduce the build up of toxic lead in sensitive wetland environments to protect ecosystems and drinking water supplies.

There would be no economical way of collating aggregate data. Instead, specific post mortems are carried out where deemed necessary such as where a criminal offence or outbreak of disease is suspected.

Department of Transport in Whitehall: Consultation Paper

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the consultation paper issued by the Department of Transport in Whitehall, if he has any plans to scrap the counterpart paper section of the driving licence.

(AQW 18030/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The counterpart to the Northern Ireland licence is required for the purposes of recording endorsements ordered by courts or made by fixed penalty clerks. It is also used by my Department to record restrictions on licences, and to indicate provisional entitlements not shown on plastic photocard licences.

Before the counterpart could be abolished, it would be necessary to have in place alternative methods of enabling those with a legitimate interest in the data, including licence holders, to have access to information about endorsements, restrictions and provisional entitlements. Since such methods are not yet available in Northern Ireland, I have no plans at present to abolish the counterpart.

Drink-Driving and Drug-Driving

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the risk that greater enforcement of drink-driving will decrease enforcement of drug-driving.

(AQW 18039/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is responsible for enforcing drink and drug driving laws and for detecting people who drive while impaired.

On coming to office, I reinstated the Ministerial Road Safety Group to oversee the delivery of the Road Safety Strategy to 2020 and provide a top-level forum for discussion of road safety and related matters of interest. As a key road safety partner, the PSNI sits on that Group and enforcement is often discussed.

In conducting checks, the police look for impairment whatever the underlying cause and an officer will take the appropriate action against any person suspected of driving whilst impaired, whether that is

through alcohol or drugs or a combination of both. Therefore, as driving while impaired through drink and drugs are typically enforced together, any increase would be in enforcement of both drink and drugs driving rather than one or the other.

In 2011, consumption of alcohol/drugs by drivers or riders was the most common single cause of fatal and serious injuries on our roads accounting for almost 11% of all deaths serious injuries. In the five years from 2007 to 2011, 76 people were killed and 598 seriously injured as a result of alcohol or drugs by driver or rider.

The problems caused by drink drivers are well known and there is an increasing awareness of the dangers of driving while unfit through drugs. Penalties for drivers convicted of being impaired through drugs are just as severe as those for drink driving – fines, disqualifications and imprisonment, not to mention the effects such a conviction will have on future insurance costs.

However, drug driving is a much more complex issue with a wide variety of drugs possibly being consumed, including prescription and illicit drugs, and with varying intoxicating and impairing effects. Unlike drink driving, we currently have no drug testing device equivalent to the breathalyser and, when dealing with a driver who has taken drugs, the police have to demonstrate impairment under the current law.

I am therefore bringing forward legislation to tackle drink driving in a Road Traffic (Drink Drive) (Amendment) Bill to be introduced to the Assembly by April 2013. I also plan to bring forward a further Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill in 2014 and I would envisage new drug drive legislation forming part of that Bill. Progress in this second Bill is dependent on the Department for Transport delivering on the scientific underpinning for the drugs to be specified in new offences, at what levels the law will be set and in bringing forward the equipment necessary to detect them.

Legislation is already in place to allow drug testing to be conducted by means of such a device, type-approved by the Department and this will, in time, complement the current field impairment tests. I understand that the development and approval of a device remains at least two years away and continuing impairment testing for drug driving is essential if we are to apprehend drug drivers in the interim. PSNI has advised that a programme of training in field impairment testing is ongoing which includes refresher training to keep officers' skills up to date.

I have no doubt that well thought out, robust legislation to strengthen the existing impaired driving laws will certainly assist future enforcement against drug drivers.

Speed Limit on Rural Secondary Roads

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment why less emphasis is being placed on reducing the speed limit on rural secondary roads from 60mph to 50mph compared to reducing the drink-drive limit.
(AQW 18040/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department of the Environment is responsible for co-ordinating a strategic approach to improving road safety in Northern Ireland, primarily through delivery of the Road Safety Strategy to 2020.

I therefore have an interest in all measures with the potential to reduce casualties on our roads. Responsibility for their prioritisation and delivery, however, rests with the implementing department or agency.

The Strategy contains over 200 measures to be delivered over a ten-year period; those relating to the roads network, including reviewing speed limits, lie with the Department for Regional Development.

On coming to office, I reinstated the Ministerial Group to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and provide a top-level forum for discussion of road safety and related matters of interest. As a key road safety partner, the Minister for Regional Development sits on that Group and speed limits have been discussed on a number of occasions.

The relevant Strategy commitment is for DRD to undertake a review of all upper tier rural roads. I understand that review is ongoing. If the review indicates that, due to the nature of individual roads, a majority require lower limits, then consideration would be given as to whether the best way to progress would be to lower the national speed limit to 50 mph on rural single carriageway roads. Higher class roads, which would allow for safe driving at higher speeds might then, in those circumstances, be signed to 60 mph.

As you know, introducing measures to tackle drink driving is one of a number of initiatives to which I have given priority. This is because of the high levels of casualties on our roads that result from collisions in which drink is a factor. I can assure you that the necessary work is ongoing to bring to the Assembly, as soon as possible, the Bill that will enact those measures.

Hydraulic Fracturing in Fermanagh

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment, given the recent resumption of hydraulic fracturing in England, what impact this will have on his assessment of the forthcoming planning application from Tamboran in Fermanagh.

(AQW 18074/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I stated in my Press Release on 13 December 2012, I note the further position of the London government. However, decisions on fracking in Northern Ireland are strictly for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly and I have repeatedly warned against a head long rush in to fracking.

Tamboran have not made any planning applications nor given any indication of timescale or the likely locations where they might apply to establish well pads. In the meantime Departmental Officials are continuing to supplement knowledge of this process through reviewing and engaging with emerging research, studying case studies from other parts of the world and liaising with counterparts in other Environment Agencies in Britain and Ireland, and other countries where fracking is currently proposed or taking place.

The DOE is also planning to part finance the Southern Government's Environmental Protection Agency's research programme into fracking. There is also ongoing research being carried out by the US Environmental Protection Agency into fracking. All relevant information will be in the public domain in the future when the various research projects are complete. Finally, all relevant Northern Ireland Government Departments including DOE, participate in a local Shale Gas Regulators Forum and NIEA officials participate with similar groups at an EU and National level.

I have personally met with Tamboran senior management to reinforce to them that there are stringent legislative, procedural and policy requirements that apply to fracking and any associated exploratory activities and to confirm that my Department will robustly assess any proposals against these stringent requirements taking full account of the findings of the relevant research which is currently being undertaken.

North Down Borough Council

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how much has been spend on legal fees in relation to staff disciplinary issues and grievances in North Down Borough Council over the last two years; and (ii) how much senior management time has been spent in dealing with staff disciplinary issues and grievances.

(AQW 18294/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department does not hold the information you have requested. It is specific and relevant only to one council, and in these circumstances it would be more fitting that you contact North Down Borough Council directly.

Commercial Vehicles

Mr Newton asked the Minister of the Environment whether representations have been made to his Department regarding the levels of damage to commercial vehicles as a result of poorly maintained hedges and other roadside obstructions.

(AQW 18391/11-15)

Mr Attwood: No representations have been received by my Department on this issue.

Environmental Issues

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what his Department can do to further promote environmental issues in North Down.

(AQW 18414/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There is no doubt that we can do more, not just to promote environmental issues in North Down, but all of Northern Ireland. Six of the top ten visitor attractions are our built and natural heritage. Growing tourism from a £500m to a £1 billion a year industry will revolve around the positive protection and development of this heritage. We must do so, given that there are over 60,000 out of work.

Last year I commissioned economic research into the contribution made by our historic environment to the economy. It accounts for £532 million of output every year and generates up to 10,000 jobs. For every £1 of public sector money invested in the sector, £3 to £4 of spending by the private sector is generated. These figures are impressive but they are not as high as other jurisdictions, suggesting more potential here. I am making the argument with my Executive colleagues that we need to invest further in this sector.

Specifically, with regard to North Down, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's (NIEA) primary outreach to the general public is delivered through Crawfordsburn Country Park where the Visitor Centre has been remodelled with a new entrance opening directly into the exhibition area. As resources permit NIEA runs events at which environmental messages are presented to visitors.

Redburn Country Park will also receive new interpretive signage which will allow visitors to navigate around the park and highlight key environmental issues. In addition, a new guide card will be designed and produced in 2013/14 financial year.

NIEA's Built Heritage has contributed to the promotion of environmental issues in North Down such as through European Heritage Open Days. These are held each year, usually in September, and we have seen increases over recent years in public participation at these events

Within the North Down district there are several important historic monuments that are frequently opened to the public including the State Care Monument at Grey Point Fort. NIEA is contributing to the conservation of some of the most important Christian Heritage sites in the area for example the conservation of 'Malachy's Wall', one of the last upstanding parts of the great monastery of Bangor. DOE has worked closely with North Down Borough Council and NITB to develop and promote the St Patrick's Trail and work on this is set to continue.

A wide mix of marketing tools and partnerships, particularly with NITB, councils and Translink, are being developed and enhanced that will directly benefit the important environmental messages to be delivered for North Down. These include a strong presence of NIEA events, sites and properties on the NITB 'discovernorthernireland' website; a continuing programme of events in North Down, including European Heritage Open Days, living history events, nature walks and tours and the Autumn Festival at Crawfordsburn Country Park; regular and wide reaching news releases, social media posts and a 'daysoutni' text messaging service.

In March 2013 a lecture will be given by staff of Built Heritage as part of the Bangor 400 series organised by the Bangor Historical Society.

The Department provides grant aid to Outdoor Recreation NI to promote areas where people can enjoy walking in the natural environment across Northern Ireland, including areas in North Down.

75% of North Down Constituency's schools are registered Eco-Schools, the International Programme, funded and promoted by the DOE, which encourages and recognises young people in taking an active role in reducing the environmental impact of their schools by awarding them the internationally recognised Green Flag Award.

Two schools from the North Down Constituency (Priory College and Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College) participated in a pilot training course for the Young Reporters for the Environment Programme, hosted by the Minister at Crawfordsburn Country Park in September 2012. This international programme encourages young reporters, aged between 12 and 21 years to investigate environmental issues and propose solutions through published investigative reporting, photographic and video journalism.

Four new education booklets are currently in development and planned for publication during 2013: Geo-Garden at Crawfordsburn; Kilyner Woods Activity Booklet for Key Stage 2; Crawfordsburn Woodland Trail Activity Booklet – Glen Woodland for Key Stage 1; and Crawfordsburn Woodland Trail Activity Booklet – Skelly's Hill Woodland for Key Stage 2.

With regard to promoting the protection of the environment, the NIEA aims to achieve a reduction in the number of high and medium severity water pollution incidents, through a number of proactive initiatives which include advisory publications, site meetings and working closely with Stakeholders. NIEA's Water Environment Community Awards (2011 & 2012) were open to organisations/groups within the Catchment Stakeholder Group areas. Cloughey and District Community Association were awarded £1000 each to take forward a project to test the quality of their local bathing water and to raise awareness of protecting their local water environment.

Correct Use of Car Lights

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department has taken to educate people about the correct use of the lights on their cars, particularly using headlights, main beams, hazard warning lights and fog lights.

(AQW 18431/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The requirements relating to the proper fitting, maintenance and use of lamps, reflectors, rear markings and devices are set out in the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (NI) 2000.

Education on the correct use of lights begins at the earliest opportunity. The Northern Ireland driving test process as a whole is designed to test all aspects of learning to drive in a logical and structured manner. It is intended to ensure that learner drivers have a broad range of both theoretical and practical driving knowledge, understanding and skills.

The current theory test questions are designed to test candidates on a broad range of driving related topics, including the legal requirement and correct use of lights. The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA), who are responsible for the theory test in Northern Ireland, provide a list of recommended learning material to help candidates prepare for the test. These include the official Highway Code for Northern Ireland and the official Driving Standards Agency Guide to Driving – the essential skill.

When preparing for the theory test, DVA recommends that candidates study the learning material available. All publications include information and guidance relating to the legal requirement and use of lights.

The practical driving test is developed to assess a candidate's practical skills and understanding of the Highway Code. At the start of the test candidates are asked "show me", "tell me" type questions which include the candidate demonstrating how to operate the lights. During the test, candidates will also be expected, if necessary, to operate the lights and will be assessed accordingly.

Education does not end with the passing of the driving test. The Department issues advice to road users on a regular basis. It encourages motorists to take responsibility for their driving behaviour and to adapt it accordingly when required. Likewise, motorists are advised to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy at all times.

The Department is consistent in its message to road users to refer to the current edition of the Highway Code for Northern Ireland that addresses all road safety issues. In particular it outlines vehicle lighting requirements together with advice for drivers and riders on the most appropriate and effective use of lights in different situations.

Rules 113 to 116 of the Highway Code sets out the most important legal requirements contained in the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (NI) 2000 relating to the use of headlights, hazard warning lights and fog lights. It includes detail on when headlights must be used, advice on the appropriate use of dipped headlights and, importantly, advice on when headlights, hazard warning lights and fog lights must not be used.

The Highway Code dedicates a section to driving in adverse weather conditions (Rules 226 to 237) that includes advice on the proper and appropriate use of headlights and fog lights when visibility is seriously reduced together with the need to ensure that lights are clean.

The Department has and continues to promote the Highway Code as essential reading for everyone and not just for young learner and novice drivers. It is important that all road users remain aware of the rules in the Code including the need for proper, considerate use of vehicle lighting.

To promote the continuous use of the Highway Code, the Department has made it available to download free of charge from NI Direct at: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/motoring/the-highway-code.htm>

It is also available in six alternative languages through NI Direct, and remains widely available to buy at local bookshops.

The proper maintenance and appropriate use of lighting is key to safe motoring and I will continue to take every opportunity to educate all road users of their responsibility in this matter.

The Department also supports similar advice issued by its road safety partners including the Police Service for Northern Ireland, whose leaflet 'Making for a safer winter drive' includes advice on the need to check that all lights are clean and in working order before setting off on a journey.

Drive Safe Initiative

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of figures showing that in 25 percent of all people killed in recorded road traffic collisions in 2012 were between the ages of 16 and 24 years, does he plan to develop an initiative to encourage this age group to drive safely.

(AQW 18432/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department is already progressing major road safety initiatives aimed at helping to reduce road deaths and serious injuries from collisions involving new drivers, the majority of whom are aged 16 to 24. With the planned introduction of a system of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), these initiatives include changes to driver training and testing and the way drivers gain experience once they pass their practical test.

When fully implemented, the revised regime for learner and novice drivers will establish the most radical advances in driver training and improvements in new driver safety anywhere in these islands.

On 29 May 2012 I announced my intention to introduce a package of 'new driver' measures and on 5 July 2012 the Executive agreed in full to the policy and to the drafting of the necessary legislation. The provisions are currently being drafted in a Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, which is intended to be introduced into the Assembly by April 2013. The Bill will also provide for another key element of GDL in the form of a lower drink drive limit of 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood for learner/novice and professional drivers compared with 50mg/100ml for all other drivers.

The package of 'new driver' measures includes:

- The age at which young people can start to learn to drive or ride (i.e. obtain a provisional licence) will go down from 17 years of age to 16½.

- Learners will have to hold their provisional licence for a minimum of 12 months before they can sit their first practical test.
- The combined effect of reducing the provisional licence age by six months and the introduction of a minimum learning period of 12 months means that the earliest age at which someone will be able to get a full licence will be 17½.
- All learners will have to follow a new, structured, 'Learning to Drive' syllabus and before they take their first practical test they will have to produce evidence – in the form of compulsory student logbook signed off by their Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) and/or supervising driver – that they have completed it.
- The 45mph speed restriction on learner and restricted drivers and riders will be removed – this will allow changes to be made to the driving test to include driving on a wider range of roads at up to the posted speed limits.
- Learner drivers will be allowed to take lessons on motorways when accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor in a dual-controlled car.
- Young new drivers (up to age 24) will not be allowed to carry young passengers (aged 14 to 20, except immediate family members) during their first six months after they have passed their driving test and got their first full licence. The restriction will not apply if there is a supervising driver (aged 21 years or older and who has held a full driving licence for three years) in the front seat and there will be exemptions for emergency services drivers with appropriate training.
- R plates will be replaced by N (for 'New' driver/rider) plates which will have to be carried for two years.
- During the first two years of driving, novices will be subject to a lower drink drive limit and, under the New Drivers Order, will continue to risk revocation of their licence if they accumulate six or more penalty points.
- Remedial courses will be developed for new drivers at risk of having their licence revoked because they have accumulated six or more penalty points.

The primary objective and expected outcome of these measures is to reduce the rate at which new drivers – and particularly young new drivers – are killed and seriously injured, and at which they kill and seriously injure other road users.

Another initiative which the Department is developing is about the potential to encourage young driver safety through the use of 'pay how you drive' data monitoring systems ('telematics'). There is emerging evidence of the effectiveness of telematics in improving road safety particularly among young drivers, fleet drivers and those who drive for work. There may be an additional benefit in the form of lower insurance premiums. The Department is, therefore, currently engaging with insurers to establish a pilot study of the impacts of telematics and its potential effectiveness in changing driver behaviour.

Local Government Reform

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment to publish the cost-benefit analysis of the current proposals for the reform of local government.

(AQW 18480/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The economic appraisal of local government service delivery, carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of and published by the Department in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration), implementation of the local government reform programme could involve expenditure of up to £118 million over five years and achieve savings of £438 million over twenty-five years.

The Regional Transition Committee has commissioned the senior local and central government officers and officials in the Finance Working Group to re-examine the costs and benefits of the local government reform programme.

Work is ongoing with the existing councils and the Voluntary Transition Committees in developing the detailed costs and benefits of the key reform work-streams, identified by the Finance Working Group.

The group's findings and recommendations will be presented to the Regional Transition Committee in March 2013.

Planning Applications

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of the Environment how many Article 31 and Article 33 planning applications are under consideration.

(AQW 18505/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are 37 current Article 31 applications. I have recently announced my decision on a further 9 and these will issue in due course. The effect of this will be to reduce the number of current cases from 60 in May 2011 when I took up my Ministerial position to 28 (this includes 8 new cases in that period).

Article 33 appeals are decided by the PAC. Records indicate that there are 12 Appeals yet to be decided.

Community Places Funding

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding his Department has awarded to Community Places in each of the last three years.

(AQW 18603/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The following grants have been provided by the Department to Community Places for the last three financial years to ensure people from disadvantaged areas have equal access to, understanding of, and participation in the planning system.

Financial Year	Amount Awarded (£)
2009-10	177,000
2010-11	88,500
2011-12	80,000

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18608/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Similar to other NICS Departments the Department of Environment has a Flexible Working Time facility which allows staff flexibility in the way they arrange their working hours. With the approval of their line manager, staff can leave work in the afternoon within the agreed flexible working hours band (3.30pm to 6pm). There is no cost to the Departmental budget when using Flexible Working Time arrangements.

The Department therefore has no record of staff leaving the office early during the civil unrest associated with the flag protests.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of corporation tax generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18172/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 17701/11-15 and AQW 17994/11-15 respectively.

Capital Valuation List

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of new houses entered onto the Capital Valuation List in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 18311/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of new houses added to the Capital Valuation List in each of the last 5 years, including this year up to 31st December 2012, broken down by Westminster constituency is set out in the table overleaf.

Constituency	April 08 to March 09	April 09 to March 10	April 10 to March 11	April 11 to March 12	April 12 to Dec 12
Belfast East	389	434	317	410	109
Belfast North	602	822	702	253	146
Belfast South	856	686	527	457	204
Belfast West	299	281	121	127	312
East Antrim	639	562	331	225	127
East Londonderry	659	535	592	227	257
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	904	709	459	592	391
Foyle	396	396	404	391	116
Lagan Valley	966	1182	733	497	451
Mid Ulster	625	503	384	400	351
Newry & Armagh	664	998	571	341	298
North Antrim	913	896	502	427	299
North Down	468	448	325	219	230
South Antrim	948	557	381	362	242
South Down	915	961	700	517	286
Strangford	1054	668	422	384	331
Upper Bann	1465	793	595	424	197
West Tyrone	669	412	334	631	335

Article 6 of the Energy Efficiency Directive

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how he intends to meet Article 5 of the Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU) to renovate public buildings to high energy efficiency standards; and (ii) how he intends to meet Article 6 of the Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU) to ensure that central government purchases only energy efficient buildings, products and services.

(AQW 18459/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In relation to Article 5 (Exemplary role of public bodies' buildings) DFP will, as part of its on-going Accommodation Plan, renovate 3% (or more) of the DFP office estate in line with the requirements in this Article. DFP will also ensure that Departments which manage their own properties are aware of the requirements of the Directive and will encourage them to implement the requirements within their estate, including the need to produce an energy performance rating for each of their appropriate buildings.

In relation to Article 6 (Purchasing by Public Bodies) Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in DFP already includes a requirement in its procurement specifications to comply with the Government Buying Standards. These standards, administered by DEFRA, are designed to make it easier for government buyers to buy sustainably. They include mandatory (minimum) and best practice standards for energy efficiency. Further, the current Sustainable Construction Action Plan agreed by CPD and the other Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs), includes Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) targets for the procurement of new and refurbished public buildings. The BREEAM scoring methodology typically results in energy efficiency standards that are more onerous than the requirements of the NI Building Regulations. The UK Building Research Establishment (BRE) has estimated that achieving an 'Excellent' BREEAM rating can increase capital costs by 2.5%-3.4% (for naturally ventilated buildings) and 3.3%-7% (for air-conditioned buildings). While much of this additional up-front investment will generate longer term operational savings, some of the additional costs, aimed at generating wider sustainability benefits will not generate direct savings.

University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) why non-Departmental Public Body status was imposed on Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College; (ii) what regard was given to the level of Stranmillis' self-generated income; and (iii) what regard was given to the resulting regulatory burden and the loss of the right to hold and spend surplus funds on the college.

(AQW 18467/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Taking account of governance and control arrangements, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification of these bodies as Central Government led to their designation as non-Departmental Public Bodies.

In arriving at its determination on Stranmillis University College, the ONS found that the Colleges of Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 brought the College under the control of the Department for Employment and Learning, removed any freedom that might have existed for the College to borrow and made it subject to public sector approval. It found the majority of its income came from Funding Grants, and concluded that it is a non-market entity. In addition, it noted that the College's Governing Body is directly appointed by the Employment and Learning Minister. Against this background and taking account of all relevant issues, the ONS concluded that these governance and control arrangements are relevant to Central Government.

University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, should St Mary's University College, Belfast succeed in reversing its non-Departmental Public Body status, whether his Department will consider the designation of Stranmillis University College, Belfast as a non-Departmental Public Body, given

the competitive advantage which will result to St Mary's and the level of self-generated income that Stranmillis can sustain.

(AQW 18468/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The case for St Mary's University College was put to my Department by the Department for Employment and Learning and we are awaiting the outcome of the Office for National Statistics' deliberations on the matter. However, my Department has not been provided with a case that would allow for a review of the status of Stranmillis University College.

University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the legislative steps taken in Great Britain to exempt Further Education colleges from non-Departmental Public Body status, whether his Department will consider a similar initiative and include Stranmillis University College, Belfast and St Mary's University College, Belfast in such an exemption.

(AQW 18469/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department will consider any proposals from the Department for Employment and Learning that could impact on the status of its bodies.

Nevin Economic Research Institute

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the report by the Nevin Economic Research Institute entitled Policy Options for Investment in Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.
(AQW 18491/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This report contributes to the ongoing debate on alternative funding options for infrastructure investment which is an important issue for the Executive. The types of schemes outlined in the report such as alternative funding for energy efficiency and demand management in the water industry here would need further consideration. As indicated in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21, the Executive is considering affordable means of raising up to £1.09 billion of alternative finance over the period in health, roads and education infrastructure. The report notes that there may be alternatives in future which do not rely on public bodies (as used in Great Britain) such as access to the Green Investment Bank or private sector funding vehicles in the energy sector which may allow for the sort of access locally to the wider financial markets envisaged in the report for these types of investment.

The ISNI makes reference to the Executive's commitment that all funding options will be considered to increase the levels of investment needed to deliver much needed infrastructure. But this must be done in a manner that protects the public interest, protects frontline services to users, facilitates greater efficiency and offers genuine long-term value for money. Alternative finance for certain projects will be used where it is affordable and offers value for money. Options in this regard, including those associated with retrofitting - which is a key focus of the Nevin Institute report - are being considered. This is complex work which is ongoing.

Domestic and Non-Domestic Rates

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of domestic and non-domestic rates generated in 2010-11, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18529/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, NI domestic and non-domestic rates revenues for 2006-07 & 2007-08 were provided by DFP officials and required no further estimation. For the financial years 2008-09 onwards the split between domestic and non-domestic rates has not been available. Therefore, the respective shares of

total rates in 2007-08 have been applied to the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 total regional rates data.

The UK figure for other taxes and royalties is comprised of a number of small revenues. Separate apportionment methods are used to allocate these revenues to NI.

- 1 Consumer Credit Act fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.
- 2 UK revenues paid to levy funded bodies are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK agricultural GVA.
- 3 Regulatory fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.
- 4 UK TV licence revenue is apportioned based on NI's share of UK private households.
- 5 National lottery revenues are apportioned according to NI's share of UK expenditure on gambling.
- 6 Renewable energy obligations are apportioned using the NI share of UK electricity consumption.
- 7 Fishing licence fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.

UK betting and gaming duty revenue is apportioned to NI based on regional household expenditure data. Average weekly household expenditure is scaled up by the number of households to estimate total weekly expenditure in NI and the UK. The NI/UK ratio of total weekly expenditure on gambling is used to apportion UK betting and gaming duty revenue to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Taxes and Royalties

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of other taxes and royalties generated in 2010-11, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18531/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, NI domestic and non-domestic rates revenues for 2006-07 & 2007-08 were provided by DFP officials and required no further estimation. For the financial years 2008-09 onwards the split between domestic and non-domestic rates has not been available. Therefore, the respective shares of total rates in 2007-08 have been applied to the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 total regional rates data.

The UK figure for other taxes and royalties is comprised of a number of small revenues. Separate apportionment methods are used to allocate these revenues to NI.

- 8 Consumer Credit Act fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.
- 9 UK revenues paid to levy funded bodies are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK agricultural GVA.
10. Regulatory fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.
11. UK TV licence revenue is apportioned based on NI's share of UK private households.
12. National lottery revenues are apportioned according to NI's share of UK expenditure on gambling.
13. Renewable energy obligations are apportioned using the NI share of UK electricity consumption.

14. Fishing licence fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.

UK betting and gaming duty revenue is apportioned to NI based on regional household expenditure data. Average weekly household expenditure is scaled up by the number of households to estimate total weekly expenditure in NI and the UK. The NI/UK ratio of total weekly expenditure on gambling is used to apportion UK betting and gaming duty revenue to NI.

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Betting and Gaming Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of betting and gaming duty generated in 2010-11, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18536/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, NI domestic and non-domestic rates revenues for 2006-07 & 2007-08 were provided by DFP officials and required no further estimation. For the financial years 2008-09 onwards the split between domestic and non-domestic rates has not been available. Therefore, the respective shares of total rates in 2007-08 have been applied to the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 total regional rates data.

The UK figure for other taxes and royalties is comprised of a number of small revenues. Separate apportionment methods are used to allocate these revenues to NI.

15. Consumer Credit Act fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.
16. UK revenues paid to levy funded bodies are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK agricultural GVA.
17. Regulatory fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.
18. UK TV licence revenue is apportioned based on NI’s share of UK private households.
19. National lottery revenues are apportioned according to NI’s share of UK expenditure on gambling.
20. Renewable energy obligations are apportioned using the NI share of UK electricity consumption.
21. Fishing licence fees are apportioned to NI on a population share basis.

UK betting and gaming duty revenue is apportioned to NI based on regional household expenditure data. Average weekly household expenditure is scaled up by the number of households to estimate total weekly expenditure in NI and the UK. The NI/UK ratio of total weekly expenditure on gambling is used to apportion UK betting and gaming duty revenue to NI.

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Air Passenger Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of air passenger duty generated in 2010-11, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18537/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

UK air passenger duty revenue is apportioned to Northern Ireland (NI) according to its share of the UK population.

Likewise, UK insurance premium tax is apportioned to NI according to its share of the UK population.

UK Landfill tax is apportioned to NI according to its share of UK waste sent to landfill. The quantity of municipal waste sent to landfill is recorded in annual Municipal Waste Management reports produced by NI Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Environment Protection Agency (England and Wales). These surveys are used to calculate the total quantity of municipal waste sent to landfill in the UK. The NI/UK ratio of UK waste tonnage is used to apportion UK landfill tax (as published by ONS) to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Insurance Premium Tax

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of insurance premium tax generated in 2010-11, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18538/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

UK air passenger duty revenue is apportioned to Northern Ireland (NI) according to its share of the UK population.

Likewise, UK insurance premium tax is apportioned to NI according to its share of the UK population.

UK Landfill tax is apportioned to NI according to its share of UK waste sent to landfill. The quantity of municipal waste sent to landfill is recorded in annual Municipal Waste Management reports produced by NI Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Environment Protection Agency (England and Wales). These surveys are used to calculate the total quantity of municipal waste sent to landfill in the UK. The NI/UK ratio of UK waste tonnage is used to apportion UK landfill tax (as published by ONS) to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Landfill Tax

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of landfill tax generated in 2010-11, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18539/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

UK air passenger duty revenue is apportioned to Northern Ireland (NI) according to its share of the UK population.

Likewise, UK insurance premium tax is apportioned to NI according to its share of the UK population.

UK Landfill tax is apportioned to NI according to its share of UK waste sent to landfill. The quantity of municipal waste sent to landfill is recorded in annual Municipal Waste Management reports produced by NI Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Environment Protection Agency (England and Wales). These surveys are used to calculate the total quantity of municipal waste sent to landfill in the UK. The NI/UK ratio of UK waste tonnage is used to apportion UK landfill tax (as published by ONS) to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

UK Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact that the reductions in UK corporation tax will have on Northern Ireland as an investment location, should corporation tax be devolved and lowered.

(AQW 18549/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A reduction in the UK main rate of corporation tax prior to the devolution of responsibility for the tax would be expected to increase the attractiveness of Northern Ireland as an investment location, relative to international competitors.

Following the devolution of responsibility for corporation tax, the impact of further lowering the rate in respect of companies operating in Northern Ireland will depend on the scale of the reduction from the national rate, as well as wider economic conditions.

This is in the context that the Programme for Government 2011-15 does not specify the rate at which the Northern Ireland Executive would intend to set devolved corporation tax.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18606/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Since 3 December 2012 a total of 74 DFP staff in city centre offices left early due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests.

The associated financial cost to the departmental budget was £3492.

Department Performance

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why, according to its own published data, his Department is the worst in forecasting performance in both capital and ring fenced resource; and for an explanation for the figures revealed in the November 2012 position on forecast outturns.

(AQW 18615/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My department has a relatively small capital budget, which is spread across a large number of small projects. This means that variances that are small in absolute terms and can be caused by minor delays across a number of these projects nevertheless produce large percentage variances. It is worth noting that none of the variances reported in the period in question exceeded £1m in absolute terms and on all but one occasion the variance was below £0.5m.

I am more concerned about the performance in forecasting ring-fenced resource, which, as it mainly relates to the depreciation of assets, should be more predictable. The major contributing factor in the abnormally large variance is due to a timing issue regarding the recording of actual depreciation against forecast on the accounting system. My officials will ensure that the two are fully aligned in future.

Department Administrative Expenditure

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) level; and (ii) proportion of administrative expenditure on (a) staff pay; (b) procurement of goods and services; (c) accommodation; and (d) travel by each Department, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 18707/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The level and proportion of administrative expenditure on the listed categories by the Department of Finance and Personnel in each of the last three financial years is as follows:

	2011-12		2010-11		2009-10	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
Staff Pay	£67.3m	36%	£85.3m	41%	£84.7m	38%
Procurement of goods and services	£55.5m	30%	£61.3m	29%	£59.2m	27%
Accommodation	£51.5m	28%	£55.0m	26%	£51.6m	23%
Travel	£0.8m	0%	£0.7m	0%	£0.9m	0%

The proportion is reflected by the percentage of total administrative spend and the categories of spend are not mutually exclusive (for example elements of accommodation expenditure are also included as procurement of goods and services).

This response is provided for the Department of Finance and Personnel only, as information on spend across the wider Civil Service is not held centrally. Individual departments should be contacted directly for their information.

Executive Expenditure

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the proportion of expenditure, for which the Executive was responsible in 2010 and 2011 which was derived from the Total Expenditure on Services Framework, which was employed by his Department in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18708/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Total Expenditure on Services (TES) may be disaggregated into two components: identifiable and non-identifiable expenditure. Our identifiable expenditure is taken from the October 2011 Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (PESA) publication.

As per table 9.21 in PESA, in 2009-10 the Executive were responsible for £17.1 billion of expenditure, which includes both Departmental Expenditure Limit and Annually Managed Expenditure. Likewise, in 2010-11 the Executive was responsible for £16.8 billion of expenditure. In both years the proportion managed by the Executive is 89% of the total.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate the Gross Operating Surplus in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18710/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 18847/11-15, AQW 18848/11-15, AQW 18849/11-15 and AQW 18850/11-15 respectively.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate rent and other current transfers in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18711/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 18847/11-15, AQW 18848/11-15, AQW 18849/11-15 and AQW 18850/11-15 respectively.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the procedure used to estimate the value of public sector revenues generated in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18712/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 18847/11-15, AQW 18848/11-15, AQW 18849/11-15 and AQW 18850/11-15 respectively.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the procedure used to estimate the proportion of payments to the EU in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18713/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 18847/11-15, AQW 18848/11-15, AQW 18849/11-15 and AQW 18850/11-15 respectively.

Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the Law Commission's consultation paper on apartments.

(AQW 18720/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The paper was eagerly awaited and I think those who are affected by the problems which have arisen in respect of multi-unit developments will welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Commission's review. It is clear that the Commission has formed some preliminary views, for example in relation to strata title. However, the paper confirms that it is keen to test those views and to try and

cast its net as wide as possible and I welcome that. It will be interesting to see what recommendations emerge from the consultation.

Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the protection afforded to the current owners of properties in multi-unit developments by the proposals within the Law Commission's consultation paper on the Review of the Law Relating to Apartments.

(AQW 18721/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Commission's paper poses a number of questions, which are designed to elicit information which will help to inform its final recommendations. It has endeavoured in those questions to cover the main issues which are of concern to current unit owners, including the transfer of common parts, maintenance/sinking funds, regulation of managing agents and unfinished developments. However, during the consultation, additional issues of concern could be raised with the Commission. The Commission has previously assured me that the pressing problems of existing owners will be dealt with and I have welcomed that assurance.

Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what lessons have been learnt from the Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments paper that will be of benefit to current multi-unit developments.

(AQW 18723/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The benefits can only be assessed when the Commission's final recommendations have been made and I do not think it would be appropriate for me to comment in advance of the completion of the review project.

Regulatory Framework for Multi-Unit Developments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether his Department would support a new regulatory framework for multi-unit developments similar to those in the Republic of Ireland or Scotland.

(AQW 18724/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Republic of Ireland and Scotland have adopted different approaches and have introduced provisions which are designed to address the difficulties which have emerged in their respective jurisdictions. I think it is important that any solutions in Northern Ireland should be similarly tailored. I know the Commission is assessing developments in other jurisdictions and, if appropriate, it can draw on those developments when making recommendations for Northern Ireland.

People who Emigrated

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of people from (i) East; and (ii) North Antrim who have emigrated to find employment in each of the last three years, broken down by (a) council area; (b) age group; and (c) the country to which they emigrated.

(AQW 18737/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf shows the estimates of out-migration to (a) Great Britain and (b) to all other countries for the years (i) mid-2008 to mid-2009, (ii) mid-2009 to mid-2010 and (iii) mid-2010 to mid-2011. It is only possible to distinguish between out-migration to Great Britain and out-migration to all other countries.

The table is split into the six Local Government Districts (Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Larne, Moyle and Newtownabbey) which cover the East and North Antrim constituencies and is broken down by the four broad age bands noted. There are no estimates made of the reason for out-migration.

(I) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2008-MID 2009

Age	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain							
	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Carrickfergus	Larne	Moyle	Newtownabbey	Northern Ireland	
0-15	25	29	24	20	10	21	934	
16-39	249	142	205	151	96	267	8,144	
40-64	23	22	27	22	7	18	956	
65+	4	2	3	2	7	2	164	

(b) Out Migration to all other countries

Age	(b) Out Migration to all other countries							
	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Carrickfergus	Larne	Moyle	Newtownabbey	Northern Ireland	
0-15	26	13	26	14	9	76	1,772	
16-39	239	26	74	27	28	485	7,609	
40-64	66	3	29	6	6	59	1,598	
65+	6	0	6	0	5	6	250	

(II) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2009-MID 2010

Age	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain							
	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Carrickfergus	Larne	Moyle	Newtownabbey	Northern Ireland	
0-15	27	12	19	14	16	49	1,213	
16-39	242	147	185	176	104	313	8,704	
40-64	43	13	30	24	17	48	1,156	
65+	9	3	8	8	3	3	206	

(b) Out Migration to all other countries							
Age	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Carrickfergus	Larne	Moyle	Newtownabbey	Northern Ireland
0-15	40	11	9	1	5	63	1,525
16-39	220	30	52	22	24	592	7,918
40-64	63	10	19	7	6	81	1,601
65+	1	1	2	5	5	0	218

(III) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2010- MID 2011

(a) Out Migration to Great Britain							
Age	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Carrickfergus	Larne	Moyle	Newtownabbey	Northern Ireland
0-15	31	6	16	25	15	44	1,189
16-39	265	115	201	176	118	303	8,580
40-64	40	16	42	25	17	40	1,124
65+	9	6	8	6	5	4	228

(b) Out Migration to all other countries							
Age	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Carrickfergus	Larne	Moyle	Newtownabbey	Northern Ireland
0-15	39	3	21	10	4	55	1,813
16-39	260	27	85	23	37	630	9,869
40-64	53	5	34	17	5	51	1,860
65+	5	0	4	3	3	12	282

Executive Budget

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the maximum amount that can be retained within the Executive budget, from the sale of an asset, before the money must be surrendered to Treasury.

(AQW 18747/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The income from asset sales provides additional spending power for the Northern Ireland Executive. Capital asset disposals may generate impacts in both the Capital DEL and Resource DEL budgets. On disposal of a capital asset the 'book value' scores as a benefit in the Capital DEL budget. If the actual sale value exceeds the 'book value' the department will register a profit and the opposite scenario generates a loss. Profits and losses score in the Resource DEL budget.

There is currently no limit imposed by HM Treasury as to the amount of Capital DEL receipts that can be retained by the Executive.

However, profits scoring in the Resource DEL budget are limited to £20 million or 5 per cent above the 'book value' (whichever is lower). Even this scenario does not necessarily mean that HM Treasury will claw back profits above the limit. Instead, it is likely that it will insist that profits above the limit be retained in the NI Executive's Capital DEL budget. Significant profits realised on disposal is a very rare occurrence due to the need for regular revaluation of assets.

Rate Relief Schemes

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail, for each of the last five years, the amount of (i) Small Business; (ii) Empty Premises; (iii) Residential Homes; (iv) Industrial Derating; (v) Non-Domestic Vacant Rating; and (vi) Hardship Relief rate relief scheme (a) applications; (b) successful applications; (c) financial relief granted in total and on average; and (d) cases in which Land and Property Services determined that exceptional circumstances warranted a write-down or write-off and the total cost of these write-downs or write-offs, for properties with a Net Asset Value of (i) less than £2000; (ii) between £2000 and £5000; (iii) between £5000 and £10000; and (iv) more than £10000, broken down by (a) each existing local council district; and (b) the eleven proposed local council districts.

(AQW 18840/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information is not available in the form requested and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Rate Relief Schemes

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail, for each of the last five years, the number of (i) Small Business; (ii) Empty Premises; (iii) Residential Homes; (iv) Industrial Derating; (v) Non-Domestic Vacant Rating; and (vi) Hardship Relief rate relief scheme cases that (a) Land and Property Services has brought to Court; (b) resulted in bankruptcy and what this figure represents as a percentage of the cases taken; (c) taken for bankruptcy that were settled prior to the completion of the cycle of litigation; and (d) were paid in full or part as a full and final settlement to cease bankruptcy proceedings, for properties with a Net Asset Value of (i) less than £2000; (ii) between £2000 and £5000; (iii) between £5000 and £10000; and (iv) more than £10000, broken down by (a) each existing local council district; and (b) the eleven proposed local council districts.

(AQW 18841/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information is not available in the form requested and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Gross Value Added

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate the public sector Gross Value Added in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11. **(AQW 18843/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, Public sector GVA is derived from the ONS 'Regional Accounts' – GVA industry groups 'Public administration and defence', 'Education', and 'Health and social work'.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Gross Value Added

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the proportion of public sector Gross Value Added received each year from 2005 to 2013. **(AQW 18844/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: The proportion of public sector GVA attributable to Northern Ireland contributable to is detailed below for 2005 to 2010. This is the latest year for which data is available and is subject to revisions made by ONS.

Year	NI % Share of UK Public Sector GVA
2005	3.34%
2006	3.27%
2007	3.24%
2008	3.24%
2009	3.20%
2010	3.15%

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Interests and Dividends

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate the interests and dividends in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data. **(AQW 18845/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, the UK figure for interest and dividends to central government, local government and public corporation, as published by ONS, is apportioned to NI according to its share of UK public sector GVA. Public sector GVA is derived from the ONS 'Regional Accounts.'

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the separate figures for central government, local government and public corporations used to estimate the Gross Operating Surplus in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18846/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The UK figures, taken from the PSAT2 database produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and used to estimate Gross Operating Surplus are shown below. These were then apportioned to NI based on NI share of UK public sector GVA.

£ million	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Central Government	5951	6125	6488	6682	7193
Local Government	6474	6774	7164	7550	8037
Public Corporations	9618	9660	10722	8126	8030

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate the Gross Operating Surplus in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18847/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, to calculate Gross Operating Surplus (GOS) for NI separate figures for central government, local government and public corporations are taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) PSAT2 database. Each of these are then apportioned to NI according to its share of public sector GVA.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate rent and other current transfers in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18848/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, the UK figure for rent & other current transfers is taken directly from GERS and is apportioned to NI according to its share of UK public sector GVA, as published by the ONS.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the procedure used to estimate the total value of the public sector revenues generated in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18849/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The revenue estimates contained within the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 are used to provide an overview of Northern Ireland's public sector finances and in particular to produce an estimate of our overall net fiscal balance position or fiscal deficit.

The majority of data is not available at a regional level and therefore various apportionment methodologies, as set out in Annex B, are employed to provide an estimate of individual revenue streams which are then collated to provide a total estimation of public sector revenue.

As indicated in the report, these are not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items - many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. As such the report indicates that individual revenue estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the procedure used to estimate the proportion of payments to the EU in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.

(AQW 18850/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex C Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, UK payments to the EU are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK GVA (less extra regio), as published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Savings Delivery Plans

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how often each Department is submitting progress reports on savings delivery plans.

(AQW 18902/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In order that I can provide an update to both the Executive and Committee for Finance and Personnel, I seek bi-annual progress reports from departments on implementation of Savings Delivery Plans. The most recent exercise sought updates on progress to 30 September 2012. I will be seeking a further update to 31 March 2013.

Disappointingly, the Education Minister wrote to me advising that his department would not be participating in the Savings Delivery Plan monitoring exercises. As a consequence, in a time of constrained budget allocations it remains difficult for the Executive, Assembly and citizens of Northern Ireland to gain assurance that the Education Minister is making every effort to minimise the impact on frontline educational services.

Savings Delivery Plans

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel on what basis a Department would be able to report less frequently, or opt out of participation in, submitting savings delivery plans to his Department.

(AQW 18903/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The process established for publication and monitoring of Savings Delivery Plans is designed to provide transparency to the Executive and Assembly Committees in relation to savings identified by departments and their performance in delivering those savings. The monitoring process also aims to identify risks to the delivery of these savings plans and highlight implications for the delivery of frontline services.

I believe there are no circumstances under which a department should exempt itself from participating in the process established for publication and monitoring of Savings Delivery Plans.

I seek bi-annual progress reports from all departments on implementation of Savings Delivery Plans. My most recent progress report to the Executive and Committee for Finance & Personnel provided an update to 30 September 2012 and advised that all departments, with the exception of the Department of Education, have now published Savings Delivery Plans relating to the current budget period, noting that DHSSPS are publishing their plans on an annual basis.

Financial Assistance Act

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Financial Assistance Act will be utilised to provide businesses with financial assistance needed as a result of the disruption caused by the recent civil unrest; and on what grounds this assistance will be made available.

(AQW 18935/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 provides the First Minister and deputy First Minister with the joint power to enable the Northern Ireland departments to provide financial assistance in certain 'exceptional circumstances'.

It is for the First Minister and deputy First Minister to determine whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist and whether it is desirable to provide financial assistance in those circumstances. Therefore, any queries on the utilisation of this Act should be directed to them.

I can assure you that Executive Ministers will continue to explore proposals to promote economic growth in Northern Ireland.

Executive: Revenue

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the range of revenue raising options currently available to the Executive.

(AQO 3270/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are a number of revenue raising options available to the Executive, which includes items such as the Regional Rate, RRI borrowing and capital receipts.

Budget 2011-15 included nearly £900 million of additional spend over the four year period generated through revenue raising measures.

This included additional spend of some £200 million over the four year period from the Regional Rate increase.

There was also more than £440 million of capital receipts identified by departments and an additional £100 million of capital receipts to be identified by the Central Asset Management Unit.

Belfast Port was asked to contribute some £40 million, while there was to be a £80 million contribution in respect of the Housing Associations' increased contribution to housing starts and finally some £12 million from the new Plastic Bag Levy.

Rates: Debt Recovery

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action is being taken to ensure that Land and Property Services will be able to recover the £160 million outstanding rates debt.

(AQO 3274/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Debt arises because ratepayers have not paid their rate bills. It is important to set the outstanding £160 million rating debt in context. This debt is set against assessments raised to a value of over £4.7 billion over 4 years; in other words 3.5% of this money remains to be recovered. We must also accept that we are in tough economic times and many people are struggling to pay their bills. We are seeing increasing numbers of individuals and businesses facing bankruptcy, administration and liquidation.

I can assure you that LPS takes a serious view of non-payment of rates and rigorously pursues all debt. However, this must be balanced against assisting ratepayers who are genuinely struggling during this difficult period. There has been an increase in the amount of relief paid both to domestic and non-domestic ratepayers. In addition, LPS will allow ratepayers to pay smaller amounts, over a longer period of time. However this inevitably increases the level of rating debt at the end of the rating year.

While LPS will make efforts to support those who are struggling to pay, they must, and will, rigorously pursue those who don't pay. Where ratepayers fail to pay or do not enter into payment arrangements or break those arrangements, LPS will take Court action and seek to recover the debt through the Enforcement of Judgements Office or will instigate bankruptcy proceedings.

It is worth noting that the £160 million debt has remained fairly constant over the past 3 years, while the cash collected by LPS has risen by over £125 million since 2008/09. This means extra millions can be invested in front-line services such as education, healthcare, roads and District Council services from which all residents in Northern Ireland benefit.

EU Commission: Multiannual Framework Proposals

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the possibility of Northern Ireland being considered as a transition region in the EU Commission's Multiannual Framework Proposals for 2014-2020.

(AQO 3275/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The creation of transition regions for European Structural Investment Funds in the 2014-2020 funding period will depend on the outcome of the discussions between EU Governments on the European Commission's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposals, which are due to resume in February.

If the final settlement includes transition regions on the basis that is currently being proposed, then Northern Ireland meets the criteria and should be confirmed as a 'transition region'. I would welcome that – it should give us greater flexibility in programming and perhaps a higher allocation of funds.

However, so many of the budget proposals are still open in the negotiations that it would be foolish to count on anything at this point.

Construction: Subeconomic Tendering

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he is taking to tackle the problem of sub-economic tendering in the construction industry.

(AQO 3276/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As I announced after the last meeting of the Procurement Board my department will bring forward measures to ensure that government contracts are not awarded to firms that have submitted sub-economic tenders.

The Public Contract Regulations (2006) permit abnormally low tenders to be excluded from public procurement competitions. Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has agreed a voluntary arrangement with construction industry representatives, to use a formula to identify abnormally low tenders on government construction contracts.

These new arrangements will be introduced next month.

Rates: Orange Halls

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much the Loyal Orders saved as a result of the decision to provide rate relief for Orange Halls.

(AQO 3277/11-15)

Mr Wilson: 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 £4.53 million has been saved through exemption under the terms of Article 41A by the Loyal Orders.

Prompt Payment: Arm's-length Bodies

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he is taking to improve the performance of the arms-length bodies identified in the recent NI Audit Office report "Financial Auditing and Reporting" as having far from satisfactory performance in relation to prompt payment of invoices by Health and Social Care Trusts and Education and Library Boards.

(AQO 3278/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My department is responsible for issuing guidance and seeking assurance that guidance issued is being implemented. In regard to prompt payment, guidance was issued in 2008 and reissued in 2010 to reinforce the importance of prompt payment. I also wrote to Ministerial colleagues asking them to ensure that appropriate steps were being taken in their departments, agencies and arms-length bodies to action the guidance issued.

I note from the Northern Ireland Audit Office report that the performance of the Health and Social Care Trusts and the ELBs is not satisfactory and the reasons for this as explained by the respective Ministers. I understand that corrective action is currently being addressed by the responsible departments.

Business: Flag Protests

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what support his Department is offering to businesses that have experienced trading loss as a consequence of flag protests.

(AQO 3279/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This is a matter for wider Executive consideration in terms of what other Departments can do to offer help. My Ministerial Colleagues and I have held meetings with a number of retail organisations including the Northern Ireland Independent Retailers Association, Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and Pubs of Ulster to discuss the matter and look at the way forward. The focus of this is on remedies that will increase footfall, such as providing financial support for marketing campaigns.

This is rather than looking to the rating system. Rates relief will not get people back out shopping and socialising. In any case there is little or no scope within rates legislation to provide relief in these circumstances and it would take too long to develop a rates policy to deal with this, which would then require new legislation.

LPS, however, is prepared to consider flexibility in terms of payment arrangements for those badly hit by the current disturbances. Many will already have payment arrangements in place and will have paid all or most of their rates for the year. However, LPS will consider sympathetically any requests to defer a final payment to next year when it would be added to next year's instalments. I would urge anyone in real difficulty to talk to LPS as soon as possible. LPS cannot, however, waive rates nor can they terminate recovery of rate debt where ratepayers have made little or no effort to pay.

Civil Service: Recruitment

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will ensure that continuous internal monitoring is undertaken so that recruitment to the Civil Service demonstrates equality of opportunity.

(AQO 3280/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to equality of opportunity in recruitment and employment and undertakes a range of monitoring activities.

Under Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, and through its Review of Gender, the NICS regularly reviews the composition of its workforce and employment practices. The reviews help to inform decisions on the approach to recruitment competitions and indicate when positive action advertising statements should be used to encourage applications from under-represented groups. In addition, the NICS monitors equality of opportunity in recruitment competitions and data on this is published annually in "Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions" by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

In the interests of achieving the most efficient service possible, I will continue to make sure that recruitment procedures ensure that the most suitable person for the job is appointed.

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme: North Down

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses in North Down have benefited from the current Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.

(AQO 3281/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of businesses in the North Down Constituency that have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only.

The latest figures available, as at 31st December 2012, indicate that 1,163 non-domestic properties in the Ards District Council Area and 936 non-domestic properties in the North Down District Council Area have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.

Special Advisors

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how his October 2011 procedures for the appointment of Special Advisors to Ministers differ from the previous arrangements,

(AQO 3282/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are two main differences from the arrangements which existed prior to 6 September 2011.

The first is that compliance with the previous Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisors is now mandatory for each Minister and Departments must ensure that the necessary documentation is completed and retained, with Corporate HR in DFP reporting compliance with the Code to me.

Secondly, a new vetting / character checking process has been introduced to apply to the appointment of Special Advisors. A criminal record check is conducted on each prospective Special Adviser who is selected for appointment by Ministers and Corporate HR will make a recommendation to the Minister on the appropriateness of the appointment using the arrangements that are applied to all other civil

servants. Uniquely for Special Advisers, appeals against those decisions will be heard by an external, independent panel whose decision will be final.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the capital value of stores belonging to the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 18319/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The table details the capital value of all stores held by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service for the last five years.

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£664,955.00	£667,739.00	£843,638.00	£747,378.41	£748,112.86

Changing Places Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision there is for Changing Places facilities in hospitals; and what plans he has to increase provision.
(AQW 18352/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present no hospitals in NI provide “Changing Places” Toilets (CPTs). All Hospitals within Northern Ireland currently provide public ambulant toilets and wheelchair accessible toilets, which allow a wheelchair user to independently use the facilities.

There are currently 9 CPTs across Northern Ireland and it is my intention that all new major hospitals and healthcare developments will consider the inclusion of such facilities.

Initially Phase B redevelopment within the Ulster Hospital, which will be complete in 2015 will incorporate this facility. Omagh Hospital, Ballymena Health and Care Centre and Banbridge Health and Care Centre, currently all in design phase, will also have CTPs facilities.

My officials are currently working with MENCAP (who are leading on this issue) to identify and agree further appropriate opportunities to incorporate CPTs across the province.

People with Special Needs

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the Northern Health and Social Care Trust’s plans to improve the health and well being of people with special needs in east and north Antrim; and how families and carers are included in these plans.
(AQW 18400/11-15)

Mr Poots: The consultation on Transforming Your Care, recently concluded, reinforced the need to help people with special needs to be supported at home, thus promoting their independence. The Northern Trust advise me that this principle underpins their current work with, and planning of services for, children and adults with special needs and is encompassed within services delivered through Children’s Social Work Teams, Community Nursing Teams, Child Development Teams, the Autism Diagnostic Service, Challenging Behaviour Services, Speech and Language Therapy, Paediatric Physiotherapy Service, Children’s Occupational Therapy, Dental Teams and Psychiatry Services.

Also Community Adult Learning Disability Teams and Day Services, in line with the Trust’s delivery of its Day Services Strategy - Widening Choice and Opportunities, provide respite based on assessed need, health facilitation and health related programmes for people with learning disabilities. The Trust’s broader Priorities and Plans are available on their website at <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/141.htm>

In addition, in support of the estimated 44,000 unpaid carers within the Trust area, recognising the vital role that carers play and the demands placed on them, the Trust has recently published its 2012-2017 Carer's Strategy. The priorities within that Strategy are in response to carers' needs, identified through consultation with representative groups (including those caring for people with special needs), and will be implemented in conjunction with those in the voluntary and community sector.

Diabetes

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department is doing to combat the rise in the number of people diagnosed with diabetes in East Antrim.

(AQW 18402/11-15)

Mr Poots: The prevention of diabetes in the East Antrim area is a high priority for the Northern Trust. High risk individuals are screened and programmes are run to prevent obesity and highlight the importance of exercise. The Trust has supported two initiatives specifically targeting weight loss: the Managed Obesity Network which co-ordinates and oversees weight management programmes and; the Motivate Programme, a clinical treatment service targeting patients with a weight related co-morbidity, particularly diabetes. Proposals are in train to establish specific weight management services that will compliment current preventative programmes.

Integrated care teams also have a number of initiatives on their agenda including involvement of community Pharmacists in screening and educating people at high risk of developing diabetes. A community Diabetologist works with Primary Care colleagues to promote a healthy lifestyle and provide access to exercise programmes such as Health Matters. GPs refer newly diagnosed patients to clinics run by multi-disciplinary teams in either Whiteabbey or Moyle Hospitals. Diabetic Nurse Specialists and Practice Nurses review and educate patients in an appropriate setting.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Interpreter Fees

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 17753/11-15, (i) for which languages does the Health Service require interpreters most often; (ii) what processes are in place to determine whether a patient requires an interpreter; and (iii) given the growing costs of interpreter fees, whether Health and Social Care Trusts have considered appointing interpreters on a full-time salaried basis as Trust employees.

(AQW 18449/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The latest available information shows that Polish is currently the language for which interpreter services are required most often.
- (ii) Interpreters are required for all patients who do not speak English as a first or second proficient language. Comprehensive and consistent training is delivered across the Health and Social Care sector to ensure that staff and professionals are cognisant of when an individual requires an interpreter. Examples of establishing proficiency in English include asking the individual to repeat back the instructions and the use of a "point-to-your-language" poster or a language identity card.
- (iii) A review of Interpreting and Translation Services across the Health and Social Care sector is currently underway and is considering the various options available for cost effective, sustainable and high quality language support. Recommendations from this review will be known later this year.

Pain Clinics: Waiting Times

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department's target waiting time is for patients to be referred to a pain clinic.

(AQW 18568/11-15)

Mr Poots: Pain management services are provided either as an inpatient or an outpatient service depending on clinical need. I have set challenging waiting time targets for first outpatients

appointments and inpatient/daycase treatment that cover not just this type of treatment, but all clinical specialties. These are as follows:

- From April 2012, at least 50% of patients wait no longer than nine weeks for their first outpatient appointment with no one waiting longer than 21 weeks; increasing to 60% by March 2013 and no one waits longer than 18 weeks;
- From April 2012, at least 50%, of inpatients and daycases are treated within 13 weeks with no one waiting longer than 36 weeks; increasing to 60% by March 2013, and no patient waits longer than 30 weeks for treatment.

Average Waiting Times

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average waiting time for an appointment for patients referred to pain clinics in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18569/11-15)

Mr Poots: Waiting times for a first outpatient appointment are collected by my Department on a quarterly basis by aggregate weekly timebands. It is therefore not possible to calculate average waiting time, but the median timeband, a similar statistical measure, can be provided. Comparable information, in weekly timebands, is only available for the last four years, as prior to the quarter ending June 2008, waiting time data was collected in monthly timebands. .

The number of people waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in the Pain Management specialty at the Belfast HSC Trust, and the median waiting time in weeks, is outlined in the table below. Data is presented for the waiting time position at 30th September 2012, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, and for the position at the 31st March in each of the last four years.

Quarter Ending	Total Waiting	Median Waiting Time
31st March '09	424	Waiting no longer than 6 weeks
31st March '10	634	Waiting no longer than 6 weeks
31st March '11	486	Waiting no longer than 6 weeks
31st March '12	391	Waiting no longer than 6 weeks
30th September '12	349	Waiting no longer than 6 weeks

Source: Departmental Return CH3

Promoting Healthy Living

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what funding streams are available for community groups in North Down to promote healthy living.

(AQW 18583/11-15)

Mr Poots: The resource for health and social wellbeing improvement available from the Public Health Agency within the South Eastern area, including North Down, is provided in two ways. Firstly through the direct commissioning of services to address both the regional strategic programme priorities and local related needs, and secondly through the provision of a small grants programme targeted at key areas/ issues of priority.

The PHA anticipates that in 2013/14 it will continue to make available a small grants scheme to encourage and support action within local communities. Groups within the North Down Area will be able to apply to deliver activities, services and programmes against the criteria and priorities of the programme to be determined nearer the time. All applications will be assessed on merit against the programme criteria.

Dental Health in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department can do to promote dental health in North Down.

(AQW 18584/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has been very proactive in introducing evidence-based programmes to improve the oral health of the population of Northern Ireland including those in North Down. For maximum effect these are mainly directed at children but schemes are also targeted at adults from deprived areas and elderly patients in residential and nursing homes.

Since 2004, we have introduced the following measures:

- Fluoride toothpaste schemes for young children in the most deprived areas.
- Preventive fissure sealant scheme delivered through the General Dental Services for young people.
- Enhanced capitation payments for dentists providing care to children from certain deprived areas. (In North Down this includes the electoral wards of Bloomfield, Conlig, Crawfordsburn, Dufferin, Rathgael, Silverstream and Whitehill).
- Enhanced continuing care payments to incentivise dental care for adults in deprived areas with the highest decay rates. (In North Down this is Conlig).
- Focussing the work of the Community Dental Service (CDS) across the whole of Northern Ireland, including North Down, to improving the oral health of those with special care needs such as children from socially disadvantaged areas, the learning disabled, and housebound and residents in nursing and residential homes. In addition they deliver evidence-based oral health improvement programmes.

Since the implementation of these schemes, we have noticed a significant improvement in the oral health of our child population. We have noted a reduction in extractions under general anaesthetic from 39,682 in 2004 to 23,806 in 2010. North Down comes under the Eastern Area data where figures fell from 17,657 to 7727 over the same period. We have also recorded a large reduction in the number of fillings carried out in children under 18 over this period.

A dental practice was also opened by Oasis Dental Care in Bangor under my Department's Additional Dental Services tender to improve access to health service dental treatment. They also run practices nearby in Holywood and Dundonald to improve local access for patients.

Across Northern Ireland the Public Health Agency run a number of healthy eating initiatives, smoking cessation and alcohol reduction programmes to improve both general and dental health. .

The 2007 Oral Health Strategy stated that the greatest oral health gain is likely to be achieved through community water fluoridation. Water fluoridation ensures delivery of fluoride to 'hard-to-reach' groups such as those of lower socioeconomic status who are more likely to experience dental disease. I am giving consideration to fluoridation of the water supplies at present.

My Department is also supporting a large research trial to investigate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of using fluoride varnish and fluoride toothpaste to prevent decay in young children.

We will continue to use these evidence-based programmes to further improve the oral health of all of our population.

Patient Referrals

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of referrals for patients in the Upper Bann constituency to (i) occupational therapy; (ii) physiotherapy; and (iii) speech and language therapy who are awaiting (a) an initial appointment; and (b) treatment commencement broken down by age band.

(AQW 18602/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not held centrally by the Department but has been provided by the Southern HSC Trust. The Southern HSC Trust does not collate the information requested on the basis of electoral wards or constituencies. However the information is gathered on a geographical Trust locality basis. Table 1 below displays the figures for those patients awaiting an initial assessment for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech & language therapy at 18 January 2013. Patient information has been broken down into two age groups, adults and children.

TABLE 1

Craigavon & Banbridge No. awaiting initial assessment as at 18 January 2013		Total
Physiotherapy	Adult	1091
	Child	56
Craigavon & Banbridge Total - Physiotherapy		1147
Occupational Therapy	Adult	369
	Child	40
Craigavon & Banbridge Total - Ot		409
Speech & Language Therapy	Adult	45
	Child	128
Craigavon & Banbridge Total - Slit		173

Occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech & language therapy initiate treatment at initial assessment. Treatment is delivered in a number of formats including individual, group, school visits advice and programmes, parent/carer training, advice and home programmes, equipment provision and housing and environmental adaptations. As such, the figure for those awaiting treatment aligns with the figures for those awaiting an initial assessment.

Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when his Department will begin to submit the appropriate data on the relevant patients to the Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project.

(AQW 18611/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present, two Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts submit data to the Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project (MINAP). Funding has been approved for the remaining three HSC Trusts to recruit specialist nurses to this project and submission of data will commence thereafter.

Hair Loss Referrals

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people with conditions that cause them to suffer hair loss have been referred for wig fitting in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 18616/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not collected centrally within the DHSSPS and was requested from the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. The response from each HSC Trust is listed below and cannot be disaggregated by geographical areas smaller than HSC Trust. Note the variances in both definitions and time frames provided.

Belfast HSC Trust:

Please see table below for number of Belfast HSC Trust patients referred for wig fitting in each of the last five years.

Year	Number of Belfast Trust patients referred for wig fitting
2008	926
2009	905
2010	872
2011	887
2012	1,052
Total	4,642

Northern HSC Trust:

The Northern HSC Trust has received the following number of referrals for wig fitting in the previous five year period.

Year	Number of referrals for wig fitting
2007/2008	193
2008/2009	253
2009/2010	252
2010/2011	272
2011/2012	318
Total	1,288

South Eastern HSC Trust:

The South Eastern HSC Trust confirm the following wigs were provided to patients as follows:

Year	Number of wigs provided
2008	196 wigs supplied to 151 people
2009	292 wigs supplied to 213 people
2010	460 wigs supplied to 290 people
2011	540 wigs supplied to 325 people
2012	395 wigs supplied to 308 people
Total	1,883 wigs supplied to 1,287 people

Southern HSC Trust:

Please see below figures for the Southern HSC Trust in relation to referrals for wigs for both alopecia and cancer patients.

Year	Number of referrals for wigs
2007/08	Unable to provide data
2008/09	289
2009/10	340
2010/11	398
2011/12	385
Total	1,412

Western HSC Trust:

The Western HSC Trust has referred 928 clients for wig fitting from April 2008 to December 2012. Below is a breakdown of referrals per year.

Year	Number of referrals for wig fitting
April 08 to March 09	142 clients
April 09 to March 10	90 clients
April 10 to March 11	246 clients
April 11 to March 12	242 clients
April 12 to December 12	208 clients
Total	928 clients

Young Adults with Learning Disabilities

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of his departmental budget is spent on young adults with (i) learning disabilities; and (ii) severe learning disabilities in the Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trust areas.

(AQW 18638/11-15)

Mr Poots: Unfortunately this information can only be provided at a disproportionate cost as the Trusts' financial systems do not capture this level of analysis.

Foster Care in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which Department or agency has overall responsibility for foster care in North Down.

(AQW 18649/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has responsibility for legislation and policy relating to foster care in Northern Ireland. Under Article 17 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 and Article 3(1) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 day to day responsibility and decision making is delegated to the Health and Social Care Board and Health and Social Care Trusts.

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has responsibility for foster care in North Down.

Dementia Strategy

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all Health and Social Care Trusts have a dementia strategy in place.

(AQW 18651/11-15)

Mr Poots: In November 2011 I published Dementia Services in Northern Ireland – A Regional Strategy, which contains a number of recommendations designed to improve dementia services across Northern Ireland. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for improving dementia services across Northern Ireland. The HSC Board and Public Health Agency jointly lead a regional group to oversee implementation of the Strategy and its recommendations across NI. Each HSC Trust is represented on the regional implementation group and provides regular updates on the implementation of the strategy in their area.

Dental Hygiene

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is a dental bus that could be used to go into working class communities, such as Kilcooley Estate, Bangor, to help with dental hygiene.

(AQW 18673/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department's Oral Health Strategy (2007) states that preventive interventions, whether within or outside the clinical setting, should have their effectiveness supported by a strong evidence base.

Effectiveness reviews have shown that there is not a strong evidence base for Dental Health Education programmes. Community-based oral health instruction only leads to a short term improvement in knowledge but has a limited effect on behaviour and clinical outcomes. The use of a dental bus to access deprived communities to improve dental hygiene would fall into this category and, therefore, is not currently used.

In terms of community interventions in areas of lower socioeconomic status, my Department's policy is to concentrate on evidence-based schemes delivered by appropriate healthcare professionals for improving oral health, primarily through fluoride toothpaste schemes focussed on children to gain the maximum effect at the earliest opportunity. We have provided funding, since 2005, through Investing for Health to support these schemes. 700 nursery children from the most deprived electoral wards in the North Down and Ards area receive toothbrush and toothpaste packs three times per school year from the South East HSC Trust Community Dental Service.

Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts: Extra Consultant Clinics

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what additional secretarial and administrative support the Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts have put in place to support their extra consultant clinics.

(AQW 18684/11-15)

Mr Poots: When the Health and Social Care Board agrees to fund additional Consultant clinics, over and above a Consultant's Programmed Activity contract, the required level of nursing, secretarial and administrative support is also agreed and included in the additional funding. Existing staff who work additional hours to support these extra clinics are paid in line with Agenda for Change terms and conditions. Where it is not possible to meet the additional hours from within existing staff additional administrative and clerical support is brought in on a temporary basis to support Trust staff in servicing these extra consultant clinics.

Dentists Accepting National Health Service Patients

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many dentists are currently taking new Health Service patients.

(AQW 18716/11-15)

Mr Poots: As General Dental Practitioners are independent contractors neither my Department nor the Health and Social Care Board maintains a list of dentists that are accepting patients for Health Service treatment and care. However, between February 2012 and January 2013, 959 of the 1,055 dentists in Northern Ireland registered at least one new patient for Health Service treatment and care.

Changing Places Facilities

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the hospitals that have plans to provide Changing Places facilities, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 18717/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following Health facilities in planning will provide Changing Places Toilets:

- Phase B Ulster Hospital; South Eastern Trust
- Mid Ulster Hospital; Northern Trust
- Ballymena Health and Care Centre; Northern Trust
- Omagh Hospital; Western Trust
- Banbridge Health and Care Centre; Southern Trust

It is my intention that all future new major hospitals and healthcare developments will consider the inclusion of Changing Places Toilets, as appropriate.

My Department is further giving consideration to the incorporation of Changing Places Toilets or suitable alternative amenities into existing Healthcare facilities; including at this time, Antrim Area Hospital and the South West Hospital, Enniskillen.

My officials will continue to support MENCAP (who are leading on this issue), and whilst recognising this is not just an issue for the Health Service to address, we are contributing to the provision of an appropriate network of Changing Places Toilets across the province.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the Fire and Rescue Service's declared underspend will be used.

(AQW 18743/11-15)

Mr Poots: Any underspends arising within the resource budgets of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, or any of my Department's Arms Length Bodies, are considered as part of the management of the Department's overall financial resources to secure the key Ministerial priority of delivering financial breakeven. In terms of capital underspends, these are typically considered as part of the overall proactive management of the capital programme in order to identify other projects to which funding can be allocated.

Cataract Surgery

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current waiting time for cataract surgery at the Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 18767/11-15)

Mr Poots: Cataract surgery is not provided at the Ulster Hospital.

Fire Station at Cushendall

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the £6m underspend cannot be used for a new fire station in Cushendall.

(AQW 18809/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department declared a capital reduced requirement of £4.8m in January monitoring due to circumstances beyond my control in two major capital projects: Omagh Fire Station, where the collapse of the Patton group caused a delay on this project; and, the RVH Critical care block where a contractual problem caused a delay.

Departmental Capital budgets are set on an annual basis and government budgeting rules mean that any underspend identified within a financial year cannot be carried over into future years. Thus, I was unable to commit these resources to projects which would commence in future years.

No business case has yet been developed for a replacement fire station in Cushendall and it is not currently profiled as one of the highest priority projects in the current budget period.

Muckamore Abbey

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether any wards in Muckamore Abbey are due for closure in 2013; (ii) for an explanation for the closures; and (iii) the number of patients involved.

(AQW 18859/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is anticipated that one ward in Muckamore Abbey Hospital will close during 2013. This will be achieved by the amalgamation of 2 existing wards and is part of the Health and Social Care overall plan for resettlement.

Resettlement is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Bamford Action Plan and is carried through into the Transforming Your Care proposals.

The ward closure will affect approximately 16 patients who, following assessment of their needs, will be reintegrated into the community. The principle of betterment for the individual remains the priority of the resettlement process.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the £6m in the Fire and Rescue Service budget was not spent.

(AQW 18869/11-15)

Mr Poots: A total of £6.4m was surrendered from the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service's DEL Other Resource budget in 2011/12. This comprised £3m retracted by my Department in August 2011 in light of NIFRS' projected expenditure profile and £3.4m surrendered by NIFRS as part of their routine budgetary management processes. The latter amount was primarily due to a reduced number of retained firefighter operational call outs, together with lower than anticipated provision payments and a number of smaller easements across other budget headings.

Muckamore Abbey

Mr Nesbitt asked Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 18859/11-15, whether suitable alternative accommodation has been found for all the patients concerned.

(AQW 18904/11-15)

Mr Poots: Pursuant to AQW 18859/11-15, those people in Muckamore Abbey Hospital, identified for resettlement in 2013, would not be discharged from the Hospital unless suitable alternative accommodation, along with a care package appropriate to their individual and assessed needs, had been identified and is available.

New Administration Building on the Bangor Health Centre Site

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposed new build for the administration building on the Bangor health centre site.

(AQW 18912/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is progressing plans to relocate staff from the administration building on Bangor Health Centre site to other locations within the Bangor area.

I am pleased to confirm that work is underway to facilitate the first phase of decanting staff and this initial work is due to be completed by end March 2013.

It is expected that relocating staff from this building will take approximately 2 years to complete and when all staff have been relocated the Trust plans to demolish the Administration block.

Department of Justice

Northern Ireland Prison Service Estate Managers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Northern Ireland Prison Service Estate Managers (i) are brought in from outside Northern Ireland; (ii) the cost of their travel in and out on a weekly basis; (iii) the cost of their accommodation to date; and (iv) the projected final annual cost.

(AQW 17653/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Infrastructure Manager for the Northern Ireland Prison Service is seconded to the Prison Service by the Strategic Investment Board on a three year fixed term contract. The Prison Service does not contribute to any travel or accommodation costs.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, what is the legal aid composite fee for (i) Senior Counsel; and (ii) Junior Counsel, in relation to High Court proceedings.

(AQW 18356/11-15)

Mr Ford: Fees in respect of the majority of cases in the High Court are assessed (taxed) by the Taxing Master in accordance with Part 2, Schedule 2 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. On taxation of High Court civil cases there is no legal aid composite fee for either senior or junior counsel.

Practitioners can elect to be paid composite fees instead of having the costs taxed in respect of High Court bail applications. The fees payable for one counsel, either senior or junior are:

- Application for bail £180
- Application to vary bail conditions £180

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total amount of legal aid that has been paid individually for Brian and Paula Arthurs in relation to fraud charges.

(AQW 18357/11-15)

Mr Ford: A claim for payment has been received from the solicitor who represented both defendants and the total fees paid in respect of proceedings in the Magistrates' Court, in respect of these charges, is £6,265.49 (including VAT of £817.24). As the legal aid certificates predate the introduction of standard fees, the claims were determined on a time based claim submitted by the solicitor in respect of both defendants. It is not possible to detail the fees separately for each defendant.

The Crown Court case has not yet finished and no bills have therefore been submitted for payment.

Maghaberry Prison: Serious Self-Harm Incidents

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) why routine investigations of serious self-harm incidents at Maghaberry Prison are limited, given that, on average, there are twenty-one incidents per month; and (ii) to outline how the Northern Ireland Prison Service intends to manage all such incidents and investigations effectively in the future.

(AQW 18358/11-15)

Mr Ford: Where an incident meets the criteria of a serious self harm; that is death could have occurred without the intervention of staff, required immediate medical intervention to resuscitate and revive, or required the immediate response of an ambulance and the person being taken to an outside hospital for treatment, an investigation will be led by NIPS Headquarters. Maghaberry Prisoner Safety and Support Team (PSST) review all other incidents of self harm.

The PSST will continue to monitor prisoners at risk and complete regular audits of safer custody processes and procedures. In addition, regular safer custody multi-disciplinary meetings are held to identify the appropriate package of care for vulnerable prisoners.

Legal Services Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18098/11-15, how much has been paid, to date, from the 2012/13 legal aid budget on civil cases and how many cases does this represent.

(AQW 18359/11-15)

Mr Ford: Legal Services Commission confirms that the amount of £27.3m has been paid up to, and including 17th January 2013, in relation to some 5,530 Civil Legal Aid Certificates.

The Commission's case management system records details of certificates granted to individuals.

It is not possible for the Commission to provide information on the number of cases to which payments relate as some of the 5,530 certificates will have been granted to individuals who are parties in the same case.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the status of the Northern Ireland Prison Service mentoring scheme and related training programme and; (ii) the number of days in 2011 when the Strategic Committee convened to discuss training priorities required to meet the needs of prison officers.

(AQW 18364/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) launched its mentoring scheme on 1 October 2012 and to date, a total of 39 mentor/mentee relationships have been established. All staff who volunteered to engage as mentors were offered training to support them in undertaking this role.

The Strategic Learning Committee met once in May 2011.

Northern Ireland Legal Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18098/11-15, (i) whether he was made aware of the Northern Ireland Legal Service letter prior to it being sent and; (ii) when he was made aware of the letter.

(AQW 18383/11-15)

Mr Ford: I met members of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission on 13 December 2012 to discuss the legal aid funding pressure. At that meeting Commissioners advised me of the action they proposed to take in response to the funding position, and that the Commission would be writing to the Law Society and the Bar Council to advise them of that action.

Legal Aid: Composite Fee

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether all law firms and junior and senior counsel who are paid through Legal Aid have been in receipt of the composite fee since its introduction,
(AQW 18384/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no statutory prescribed standard legal aid fees for civil cases, with the exception of bail application fees. In relation to these applications, all payments have been made in accordance with the prescribed fees.

In criminal legal aid cases the Legal Services Commission pays the relevant standard fee in accordance with the prescribed statutory schemes. For Crown Court cases, since 2005, and for magistrates' court cases, since 2009, all new cases are paid the statutory fee set out in the prescribed legislation.

Prisoner Ombudsman

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice on what date and through what media source the Prisoner Ombudsman alleged publicly that on the balance of probabilities a prison officer at Maghaberry planted a note containing information concerning the Governor in a prisoner's cell.
(AQW 18386/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman is an independent body and the Member may wish to write to her directly about this matter.

Northern Ireland Authorities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the defendant in case number 12/143005, (i) whether he or the Lithuanian authorities, notified Northern Ireland authorities of the conviction and sentence prior to, or on his arrival in Northern Ireland, or to clarify how his conviction was discovered; (ii) why he was permitted to enter Northern Ireland so soon after being released from custody for a serious offence; (iii) whether he will be made subject to sexual offender monitoring, alongside the Notification Order; and (iv) whether he is currently facing any other court charges at this time.
(AQW 18387/11-15)

Mr Ford: The defendant was arrested in June 2011 on suspicion of theft. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) made an application to the Lithuanian authorities for a copy of his criminal record which showed that he had a conviction for a serious sexual offence. On receipt of this information the PSNI made an application for a Notification Order which was granted at Dungannon Magistrates' Court on 11 January 2013. The defendant is subject to the Public Protection Arrangements and is being managed as if he had committed the sexual offence in Northern Ireland. He is in custody for non-sexual offences he committed after arriving in Northern Ireland and is not facing any other court charges.

Responsibility for granting entry into Northern Ireland is a matter for the UK Border Agency and is not something upon which I can comment.

Maghaberry Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to an officer suspended at Maghaberry prison for allegedly planting information about Governor Steve Rodford in a republican's cell, to detail (i) the date the officer was suspended from duty and on whose direction; (ii) the date the suspension was lifted and by whom; (iii) to clarify whether consideration was given to relocating the officer within the prison as an alternative to suspension; (iv) to detail how often the suspension was reviewed and by whom; (v) whether in accordance with Regulation 118 (2) of the Prison & Young Offenders Centre Rules (NI) 1995, the matter was fully reported to the Secretary of State and detail the directions given; and (vi) the cost of the suspension to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.
(AQW 18388/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is unable to provide the Member with the details requested, as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Fraud Awareness Workshops or Training

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department has any responsibility for the delivery of fraud awareness workshops or training to other Departments and their arms-length bodies.

(AQW 18429/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice is not responsible for arranging fraud awareness training for other Departments or their arm's length bodies. The Department of Finance and Personnel has advised that generic fraud awareness training is delivered through the Centre for Applied Learning by the appointed training provider.

Course material for such training is quality assured by DFP through the NICS Fraud Forum. However, where Departments provide specific training to staff, this is a matter for the Department concerned.

Fraud Awareness Workshops or Training

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to detail how any organisation that was responsible for the delivery of fraud awareness workshops or training to other Departments or their arms-length bodies met the competency requirements.

(AQW 18430/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice is not responsible for arranging fraud awareness training for other Departments or their arm's length bodies. The Department of Finance and Personnel has advised that generic fraud awareness training is delivered through the Centre for Applied Learning by the appointed training provider.

Course material for such training is quality assured by DFP through the NICS Fraud Forum. However, where Departments provide specific training to staff, this is a matter for the Department concerned.

Maghaberry Prison

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the work carried out in the separated section of Maghaberry Prison, and the associated costs, since the ending of the so called dirty protest by republican prisoners.

(AQW 18435/11-15)

Mr Ford: Separated republican prisoners in Roe House ended their protest action on 3 December 2012. The associated costs to date are £50,149. A breakdown of these costs is included in the table below:

Work Carried Out to 17 January 2013	Associated Costs
Upgrading of the access to the external exercise area	£13,360
Reinstatement of Sanitary Ware in cells	£15,789
Cleaning of cells	£21,000
Total Costs incurred to date	£50,149

Prison Officers: Sick Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of prison officers who have been absent due to illness as a result of injury by a prisoner and who were subsequently dismissed; and (ii) if any expressed a wish to return to work on reduced duties.

(AQW 18443/11-15)

Mr Ford: Between 12 April 2010 and 31 December 2012 there have been no prison officers dismissed due to illness as a result of an injury by a prisoner.

Legal Services Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18098/11-15, to detail the total amount paid to date from the Legal Aid budget on civil cases, in each of the last three full financial years, and how many cases were involved, broken down by year.

(AQW 18447/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission confirms that the amounts paid in relation to Civil Legal Aid Certificates in each of the last three full financial years is as follows:

Financial Year	Amount Paid	Number of Certificates
2009-10	£25,162,043	8,466
2010-11	£25,727,837	7,993
2011-12	£37,229,148	8,760

The Commission's case management system records details of certificates granted to individuals.

It is not possible for the Commission to provide information on the number of cases to which these payments relate as some of the Certificates will have been granted to individuals who are parties in the same case.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Reports and Accounts

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Reports and Accounts, to detail the 'Key Performance and Targets' for staff training for the year 2011-12.

(AQW 18448/11-15)

Mr Ford: The 2011/12 annual report and accounts did not have a specific Key Performance Target (KPT) associated with training. The 2011/12 Annual Report does have a development objective for future training, which states, "NIPS will bring forward a tailored training and development strategy to be rolled out to Managers and staff from April 2012 onwards".

This is in line with Year One of the Northern Ireland Prison Service reform programme, Preparing for Structured Change.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16845/11-15, whether expressions of interest from other Departments, for the use of Bangor Courthouse, are being sought (i) ahead of, or (ii) after its closure in 2013.

(AQW 18452/11-15)

Mr Ford: Land and Property Services has commenced a targeted public sector trawl ahead of the closure of Bangor Courthouse to determine if an alternative use can be found for the building.

Prison: Millisle

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17168/11-15, whether the site at Millisle has been ruled out as a possible contingency/emergency prison facility.

(AQW 18454/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to use the Millisle site as a contingency/emergency prison facility.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what assessment has or will be carried out on the impact on users of the closure of Bangor Courthouse in order to identify ways of minimising inconvenience. **(AQW 18455/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The impact on users of Bangor Courthouse was considered throughout the consultation process and informed my decisions on the Hearing Centre closures.

While there is potential that some users may be inconvenienced, there will be other users who will benefit from the transfer of business to Newtownards Courthouse. All court users, in particular victims and witnesses, will be provided with a higher standard of accommodation and facilities at Newtownards Courthouse.

I do not intend to commission a future assessment of the impact of the closure of Bangor Courthouse on users.

HMP Maghaberry

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Justice whether (i) the prison regime at HMP Maghaberry has been relaxed; and (ii) concessions are being granted to dissident republicans following the murder of Mr David Black.

(AQW 18484/11-15)

Mr Ford: The prison regime in Maghaberry has not been relaxed and no concessions have been granted to separated republican prisoners following the tragic death of Officer David Black.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how much has the Northern Ireland Prison Service spent on televisions for prisoner use per prison facility in each of the last five years; (ii) how many televisions does this collectively equate to; (iii) whether there are specific criteria for the televisions; (iv) how many suppliers are used to provide televisions; and (v) whether a tendering process or best value study is carried out prior to purchase.

(AQW 18499/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Prison Service has spent £ 356,181 on televisions for prisoner use in the last five years. Of this amount, £101,618 was paid from the Prisoners Amenity Fund, which is funded by tuck shop profits, recycling initiatives, and prisoner television rental fees. Details of expenditure are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Expenditure on televisions for prisoner use

Year	Hydebank £	Maghaberry £	Magilligan £	Total £
2008/9	8,859	2,015	4,732	15,606
2009/10	1,728	4,232	17,523	23,483
2010/11	72,659	17,248	60,673	150,580
2011/12	15,308	29,295	15,120	59,723
2012/13 (to 18 January 2013)	12,156	85,867	8,766	106,789
Total	110,710	138,657	106,814	356,181

- (ii) Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.
- (iii) The contract for the purchase of televisions was tendered requesting certain popular sizes to ascertain best value for money.
- (iv) One supplier is contracted to provide televisions. Televisions required for new build accommodation are purchased under the construction contract which offers a turnkey solution.
- (v) A full tender process was carried out prior to letting the contract for the purchase of televisions through the Central Procurement Directorate.

Criminal Cases: Name Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17945/11-15; AQW 17560/11-15; and AQW 14945/11-15, why he was in a position to provide details in respect of Civil Legal Aid for Marion McGlinchey, but was unable to provide the same details for (i) the sex-offender who took High Court action against Facebook; and (ii) a Carrick Hill resident who challenged a Parades Commission ruling on 28 September 2012.

(AQW 18501/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 24 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (NI) Order 1981 prohibits the release of information in respect of civil cases in which Legal Aid has been granted, it does not apply to criminal cases. There are exceptions to this, one of which is that the information can be released with the consent of the person on whose behalf the information was furnished or if he did not furnish the information himself, the consent of the person who furnished the information.

Regarding AQW/13367/11-15, the question related to all fees paid in respect of Marion McGlinchey's case. This comprised criminal fees, which can be released without agreement, and civil fees. In providing draft responses to AQW's in respect of criminal legal aid the Commission routinely advises solicitors that it will be providing particular data. On this occasion, in response to notification that the Commission intended to respond to an AQW on the subject, the solicitor indicated he was content for the release of all fees, including civil fees.

The Commission does not routinely request authority under Article 24 for the release of information in respect of civil cases as these can involve a number of different legal representatives and the time available would not allow this process to be routinely followed to answer AQW's. Consent can be withheld by individuals.

At the time of answering AQW/17560/11-15 and AQW/14945/11-15, the Commission had not received any bills for payment. These are both civil cases which are covered by Article 24.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant AQW 17850/11-15, to explain the anomaly in his answer given the content of the responses to AQW 17721/11-15 and AQW 16744/11-15 in which he stated, "that all prison officers undergo extensive induction training, including SPAR, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills and practical training consistent with the recommendations as set out in the European Court Rules etc".

(AQW 18502/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service wishes to clarify its response to AQW/17721/11-15 and AQW/17850/11-15.

The response to AQW/17721/11-15 did not make it clear that this was in reference to the new current custody officer training programme. All prison officers have undergone extensive induction training including the supervision of prisoners, which is an integral role of a prison officer.

However, not all prison officers have been trained in Supporting Prisoners at Risk procedures or Applied Suicide Intervention Skills.

Elm 2 Hydebank Wood Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail what occurred in Elm 2 Hydebank Wood Prison on Christmas Day and the estimated costs involved.

(AQW 18503/11-15)

Mr Ford: Nothing of note occurred on Elm 2 landing on Christmas Day. However, an incident did occur on Elm 3 landing late in the afternoon of Christmas Day. The incident involved five inmates who participated in a concerted act of indiscipline by barricading themselves into the dining hall. The incident was brought under control within 40 minutes. Whilst barricaded in the dining hall, the inmates caused damage to the fixtures and fittings and the cost of repairing this has been estimated at £5000. The matter is currently subject to investigation by the PSNI.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18189/11-15, in view of whether the functions discharged by the Central Investigation Service, for his assessment it should be specified as an organisation that is inspected by the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland.

(AQW 18554/11-15)

Mr Ford: I understand that the Central Investigation Service was established in 2002, which would have been after legislative instructions had been prepared for the list of organisations that Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) is able to inspect under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. I am happy to consult with the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice on whether it should be added to that list. I am meeting with the Chief Inspector within the next few weeks and intend to raise the matter then.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to detail why the Central Investigation Service within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development was not specified in section 46 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

(AQW 18555/11-15)

Mr Ford: I understand that the Central Investigation Service was established in 2002, which would have been after legislative instructions had been prepared for the list of organisations that Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) is able to inspect under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. I am happy to consult with the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice on whether it should be added to that list. I am meeting with the Chief Inspector within the next few weeks and intend to raise the matter then.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice, in view of the functions discharged by the Central Investigation Service within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, for his assessment of whether it should have been included in the list of organisations that the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland could inspect.

(AQW 18556/11-15)

Mr Ford: I understand that the Central Investigation Service was established in 2002, which would have been after legislative instructions had been prepared for the list of organisations that Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) is able to inspect under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. I am happy to consult with the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice on whether it should be added to that list. I am meeting with the Chief Inspector within the next few weeks and intend to raise the matter then.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, since April 2010, in how many instances has the Prisoner Ombudsman made recommendations on suspension, discipline or dismissal of staff, which were accepted and acted upon by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, but were then overturned on appeal or legal challenge.

(AQW 18562/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman has not made any recommendations of this nature.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) why the Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts for 2011-12 does not detail statistics under Key Performance and Targets for staff training, given that such information was published in previous years; (ii) who made the decision not to publish these statistics; (iii) to explain the rationale for the decision; (iv) who approved the decision; and (iv) given the criticism in various external reports regarding a lack of staff training, whether such information will be included in future relevant reports.

(AQW 18570/11-15)

Mr Ford: The publication of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) 2011-15 Corporate Plan set out a four year strategic overview for each year of the NIPS reform programme. The focus of Year One, to which the 2011-12 Annual Report and Accounts pertain, was on preparing for structural change. With this in mind, the 2011-12 Annual Report and Accounts did not have a specific Key Performance Target (KPT) associated with training

In keeping with year two of the reform programme which includes preparing for cultural change, NIPS has demonstrated its commitment to staff training by including development objectives with regard to training programmes and competency frameworks for staff in the 2012-13 NIPS Business Plan. Additionally, in this Business Plan NIPS has included a Key Performance Target which measures the adequacy of training for staff entering into new roles. NIPS will continue to keep business objectives and Key Performance Targets under review as areas of focus and business needs change: NIPS does intend to include a target for training in the 2013-14 Business Plan.

Responsibility for setting and approving items included in the NIPS 2011-12 Annual Report falls to the Director General of NIPS.

Sexual Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17771/11-15 and AQW 16244/11-15, will he expand the parameters of serious case reviews to include these types of cases where there has been clear evidence of defaulting or poor monitoring.

(AQW 18571/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department has issued guidelines under Article 50 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 which already require the multi agency strategic forum for the public protection arrangements to consider a serious case review where a significant failure has occurred in the risk management of an individual case.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17822/11-15, and in light of the extensive procedures set out in the Prison Service Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Policy (2011), the Prison Service Standard Operating Procedures on Suicide and Self Harm Prevention (2010) and the attached Appendices, what assurances he can give that these procedures have been implemented and are being rigorously followed in all establishments managed by the Prison Service.

(AQW 18572/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is the responsibility of prison service managers to ensure that prison service policies and procedures are fully implemented. Line managers' performance will be monitored through the performance management procedures.

Independently, Northern Ireland Prison Service policies and procedures are subject to scrutiny by a number of external bodies, including Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. In addition, audits are carried out by safer custody managers across all prison establishments.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Prison Service staff who were dismissed but had the dismissal overturned on appeal, but who opted for compensation instead of a return to work, how soon after the decision is issued will compensation be paid; and to detail the timeframe which should be met in all such cases of this nature.

(AQW 18573/11-15)

Mr Ford: NIPS have a 42 day period to make payment from receipt of notification from the Civil Service Appeal Board (CSAB) of the compensation amount to be awarded. Payments are issued within this timeframe.

Newtownards Courthouse

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans for the redevelopment of Newtownards Courthouse in light of the proposed closure of Bangor Courthouse.

(AQW 18594/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service has no immediate plans to redevelop Newtownards Courthouse in light of the closure of Bangor Courthouse. However, an additional consultation room will be made available at Newtownards Courthouse and utilisation monitored.

The Courthouse estate will be examined as part of a wider review of the Department of Justice estate.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of civil servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18785/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice (DOJ) is fully aware of its responsibility to maintain a service to the public and every effort is made to keep its offices open for business.

Whilst the timing of the protests allowed most staff to make their way home unhindered, affected staff were entitled to seek approval from their line manager to leave work early within the rules of the Flexible Working Time - Code of Practice and without additional credits.

Any staff who had specific concerns were advised to discuss the situation with their line manager. Line managers are best placed to consider all the relevant issues including the need to maintain a service to the public and exercise local discretion within the normal rules of the NICS HR Handbook.

Therefore no associated financial cost to the DOJ budget was recorded.

People Trafficking Prosecutions

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice for an estimate of the cost of making people trafficking prosecutions indictable only.

(AQW 18872/11-15)

Mr Ford: The current human trafficking offences are triable either summarily or on indictment and therefore human trafficking cases currently may be directed to the Magistrates' Courts, where the maximum term of imprisonment is six months, or to the Crown Court, where the maximum term of imprisonment is, generally, fourteen years.

I have indicated publicly, including to the Justice Committee, my intention to bring forward an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill that will make offences of human trafficking triable on indictment only in the Crown Court. That approach takes account of the views of the Justice Committee and others on the Bill. In particular, it reflects the fact that such cases have been prosecuted to date in Northern Ireland in the Crown Court (which is the same position as England and Wales), the potential seriousness of the offence in terms of the consequences for victims and the fact that the issue of human trafficking is covered by an EU Directive (Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims).

Given that all cases have been prosecuted in the Crown Court to date, no additional costs are anticipated. The actual costs will depend on the number of cases prosecuted.

Policing Board

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice when the Policing Board advised him that it had decided to recommence reviews into injury on duty awards.

(AQW 18996/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Policing Board advised the Department in their letter of 21 November 2011 that the Human Resources Committee had decided to recommence reviews of injury on duty awards.

Gerry McGeough's Release from Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the full terms and conditions of Gerry McGeough's release from prison.

(AQW 19012/11-15)

Mr Ford: Like all fixed term prisoners granted early release under Section 4 of the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998 Mr McGeough is being released on the licence conditions specified under Section 9(1) (a) and (b) of the Act which state:

- (a) that he does not support a specified organisation (within the meaning of section 3),
- (b) that he does not become concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland.

National Crime Agency

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the consequences for Northern Ireland, in relation to the fight against organised crime, as a result of the failure of the Executive to agree to a Legislative Consent Motion to empower the National Crime Agency in this jurisdiction.

(AQW 19056/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Crime and Courts Bill, if enacted at Westminster, will establish a National Crime Agency (NCA) to replace, and build on, the role of the Serious Organised Crime Agency which currently works in Northern Ireland in support of the PSNI to tackle organised crime.

My request for a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) was turned down by the Executive. I believe that the paper I presented was balanced. It included changes I had secured from the Home Secretary to reflect our local policing arrangements both before and after engagement with other Ministers. In the absence of an LCM the NCA will only have powers to operate in the non-devolved sphere within this jurisdiction. Its officers, therefore, will still have immigration and customs powers and will not be subject to local scrutiny. Unless steps are taken to address the gap left by the inability of the NCA to operate in the

organised crime arena the law enforcement effort here will be significantly diminished in a number of respects.

The Department has started work with the Home Office, law enforcement agencies and others to urgently assess, and then address, the implications.

Department for Regional Development

Beechfield Estate, Bangor: Footpath

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans to complete the removal of paving slabs on footpaths that have yet to be resurfaced in the Beechfield Estate, Bangor. **(AQW 18366/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service considers the footways within the Beechfield Estate, Bangor to be in a satisfactory condition. I understand none of the footways within the Beechfield Development, which was built within the last 20 years, were constructed with paving slabs.

Roads Service will continue to inspect the roads and footways within the Beechfield Estate, Bangor on a cyclical basis and when defects are identified that warrant intervention, appropriate remedial work will be undertaken in accordance with the timescales established in Roads Service's maintenance standards.

Car Parking

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total revenue generated by car parking fines issued by parking attendants in the last 12 months; and (ii) what consideration has he given to introducing a scheme to enable monthly savings for those making regular use of town centre parking.

(AQW 18439/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Revenue received by my Department from Penalty Charge Notices for the 2011/12 financial year was £4.6million. The figure for 2012/13 is not yet available.

There are a limited number of monthly and quarterly season tickets made available at the majority of Roads Service's charged car parks. Season tickets offer a cost saving in comparison with daily charges. The number of season tickets offered for each car park will depend on the number of spaces and normal uptake of spaces within the car park, however, it should be noted a season ticket does not guarantee the availability of a parking space in a car park.

Towerview Primary School Road Safety

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures are planned to improve road safety in the vicinity of Towerview Primary School in Bangor.

(AQW 18453/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: 'School' warning signs are currently located on both approaches to Towerview Primary School. One is positioned on the footway at number 126 Towerview Crescent, and another positioned opposite number 80, which officials are in the process of relocating to an alternative location, slightly closer to the school. The school also has 'School Keep Clear' road markings at its entrance.

My Department's Roads Service has recently carried out an assessment of Towerview Crescent for possible provision of traffic calming measures. This considered various factors including:

- the likely speed and volume of traffic;
- the previous three years' personal injury collision statistics;

- environmental factors such as, the presence of schools, playgrounds, hospitals, clinics, shops, public buildings; and
- whether or not the road in question is used as a through route.

This indicated there are a number of other sites competing for inclusion in Eastern Division's traffic calming programme that are deemed to be of greater priority. Taking account of the funding currently available for such works, Roads Service therefore does not envisage being able to provide further traffic calming measures in this area at this time.

Northern Ireland Water: Union Flag

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the arrangements for flying the Union Flag on premises occupied by Northern Ireland Water.

(AQW 18477/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Water premises are not a government building for the purposes of the Flags Regulations (NI) 2000.

Water Bills: Appeals

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, to detail the number of water bills issued in 2012 that were subject to an appeal, and how many resulted in a reduced bill.

(AQW 18493/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that 166,000 bills were issued to around 80,000 non-domestic customers during 2012. Of these customers, 14% queried their bills and as a consequence 2% of customers received a reduction.

Developments in the Gortmerron Link Area of Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 11031/11-15, what progress has been made on the adoption of these roads since May 2012.

(AQW 18504/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that the private street developments, referred to in AQW 11031/11-15, have been developed and marketed in seven separate phases and have seven separate Private Streets bonds. It is anticipated phases one, two, five and six will be adopted before the end of the 2013 calendar year.

In addition, the developer has secured Northern Ireland Water (NIW) certification of the storm and sewerage infrastructure on phase three, which can be adopted when the final road surface has been completed. A 50% bond reduction has already been granted in respect of this phase. Should the developer secure NIW certification in respect of phases four and seven and complete all outstanding works, Roads Service will finalise the adoption process in respect of these roads.

In the meantime, Roads Service will continue to liaise with the developer who, it is hoped, will continue to fulfil his legal obligations, in respect of the remaining Private Streets determinations.

Groomsport Resurfacing Work

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any resurfacing work that is planned for roads or pavements in Groomsport, over the next 12 months.

(AQW 18518/11-15)

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

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

In addition, as the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised, I am unable to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Lennon v DRD

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total cost to the public purse of the case of Lennon v DRD.

(AQW 18532/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am not in a position to provide you with the total cost to the public purse of this case.

As regards the cost to the Department, the final legal bill has not yet been settled and the Department does not hold information on either the costs incurred by the Tribunal in respect of the case or the costs incurred by the Equality Commission in supporting Dr Lennon.

Rural Transport Schemes

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Regional Development why rural transport schemes are not permitted to take patients to hospital appointments given the pressure on ambulance services.

(AQW 18652/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Services provided by the Rural Community Transport Partnerships are supported from the Rural Transport Fund (RTF). Each partnership provides services based on a specific geographical area in line with the aims of the RTF to facilitate transport for members of the Partnerships in rural areas. It is important to point out that vehicles available to the partnerships have to be available to within that geographic area to facilitate the needs of all members as far as possible.

Under the 'Dial a Lift' scheme the Partnerships have always been able to provide transport to local GP surgeries, dentists and local clinics. My Department agreed with the Partnerships in 2010 that they may provide transport to local hospitals for members who do not qualify for DHSSPS assistance with travel. This position remains unchanged.

This service should not be seen as a substitute for health funded transport, which is the statutory responsibility of the DHSSPS under the auspices of the Patient Care Service. The Patient Care Service (a tier of the NI Ambulance Service) provides non-emergency patient transport services across Northern Ireland.

I recognise the need for my department to interact with the DHSSPS on these important issues. A process has started at official level and it is hoped this will allow these issues to be progressed within statutory and budgetary constraints.

Rural Transport Schemes

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether rural transport schemes are prohibited from operating across county boundaries.

(AQW 18653/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Services provided by the Rural Community Transport Partnerships are supported from the Rural Transport Fund (RTF). Each partnership provides services based on a specific geographical area in line with the aims of the RTF to facilitate transport for members of the Partnerships in specific rural areas. It is important to point out that vehicles have to be available within that geographic area to facilitate the needs of members. If a bus was used to transport members outside the area, then clearly that bus would not be available for use by other members for locally based activities.

The Partnerships do however work closely together and with Translink and if appropriate they can take members to locations where they can use public transport for their ongoing journey.

'Welcome to Northern Ireland' Signs

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail when a 'Welcome to Northern Ireland' sign will be erected at the border on the M1 from Dublin.

(AQW 18690/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The proposed 'Welcome to Northern Ireland' Sign will be erected on the A1 dual carriageway (Northbound) at the land frontier with the Republic of Ireland, during late February / early March 2013.

The main purpose of the sign is to advise drivers using this road that the national speed limit is in miles per hour and it will include the message 'Welcome to Northern Ireland'.

Cycling Casualties

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to reduce cycling casualties.

(AQW 18701/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, by utilising a range of measures, such as road safety engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network. The overall objective is to maximise the resources it has available for cycle initiatives.

In the 10-year period, including this financial year, my Department will have invested almost £9 million in the provision of 200km of cycle lanes.

My Department also works closely with the Department of the Environment and the Police Service of Northern Ireland in the promotion of Road Safety to all road users through its Travelwise initiative. This initiative aims to increase the number of commuters who choose to cycle to work, and as part of its promotion of cycling, encourages all road users to consider the needs and safety of others.

In addition, my Department has designed a leaflet entitled 'Sharing Space on the Road' to encourage safe behaviour among road users. The leaflet sets out tips for motorists and cyclists on sharing the roads with others. The leaflet was distributed to 120,000 motorists with motor tax renewal forms in March of last year and has been made available at various government and local government locations as well as cycling outlets. A copy of the leaflet can be found online at http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sharing_space_on_the_road.pdf or from Travelwise NI (telephone 0845 378 0908).

In recent years, cycling has benefited from capital investment, and the cycling infrastructure in Northern Ireland is well established. It remains my intention to continue to improve this network, in so far as available resources permit.

Electronic Cycle Counters

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department will consider installing electronic cycle counters on key arterial routes.

(AQW 18702/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that my Department's Roads Service currently has 65 automatic cycle counters installed across the National Cycle Network. These cycle counters are generally installed on dedicated cycle paths, some of which are part of key arterial routes, for example, Hawthornden Way, Belfast. My Department's Roads Service and Travelwise NI continue to work with third sector organisations such as Sustrans, Sport N.I and the N.I Cycling Forum alongside many other local groups to identify the need for further cycle counter sites.

Cyclists

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development how often the Roads Service audits the number of cyclists on major routes.

(AQW 18703/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At present, my Department's Roads Service does not carry out audits of the number of cyclists on major routes. Every two years a Belfast City Centre Cordon Survey is undertaken by officials in Roads Service, to assist in monitoring performance against targets established in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2015. The purpose of this survey is to determine the modes of travel used by people, crossing a predefined city centre cordon, to travel into Belfast City Centre during the morning peak hour (08:00 to 09:00). The most recent cordon survey was completed in 2011.

The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2009-2011 provides information on how, over the region as a whole, people use different forms of transport, including bicycles, to meet their travel needs, as individuals or family groups. The TSNI also provides information to inform government policy, assist with setting objectives and monitor performance in relation to transport and travel in Northern Ireland, for example, in the Regional Transportation Strategy.

Northern Ireland Railways Halt at Ballykelly

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has had, or plans to have, any meetings with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the provision of a Northern Ireland Railways halt at Ballykelly and the funding issues surrounding such a provision.

(AQW 18705/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My officials are in discussion with colleagues in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to consider the transport implications, including the possibility of a railway halt, of the proposal to relocate that department's headquarters at Ballykelly.

There is no provision in my Department's budget for a rail halt. Critical to any business case for funding for such a halt will be commitments to future development in the area and projections of passenger demand arising from that development.

I note that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has not yet secured the necessary budget and other approvals for its relocation project.

Shared Gritting Arrangements

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail which councils have agreed a memorandum of understanding with his Department in relation to shared gritting arrangements on footways and pedestrian areas.

(AQW 18709/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has confirmed that sixteen Councils have signed up to agreements for the removal of ice and snow from Town Centre Footways during prolonged periods of severe wintry weather. These agreements range from formal agreements to more flexible arrangements contained in an exchange of letters between the two parties. All are based on the same fundamental principles and each contains the basic requirement of an agreed schedule of footways to be treated by the Council, the amount of salt to be provided by Roads Service and salt delivery arrangements.

The sixteen Councils that have signed up to agreements are:

Craigavon, Carrickfergus, North Down, Cookstown, Derry, Larne, Moyle, Newtownabbey, Armagh, Fermanagh, Magherafelt, Dungannon, Ballymena, Belfast City, Lisburn, Limavady.

In addition, Banbridge and Down Councils have exchanged letters setting out local arrangements whilst Strabane, Newry & Mourne and Omagh Councils have indicated they would be willing to assist Roads Service on an ad-hoc basis.

Roads Service officials are continuing to engage with the remaining Councils to ascertain if they would be willing to enter into agreements for the removal of ice and snow from Town Centre footways during prolonged severe wintry conditions.

Salary Sacrifice Scheme

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail what arrangements are being put in place for civil servants to participate in a salary sacrifice scheme to pay reduced rates for bus and train journeys, to encourage greater commuter access.

(AQW 18726/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: TaxSmart Translink's annual bus travel card available through an employer salary sacrifice scheme was introduced to the Northern Ireland Civil Service in June 2012 to allow staff the opportunity to participate in the scheme effectively paying reduced rates for bus journeys. This is a HMRC tax scheme and does not include rail travel. This scheme was rolled out to all Northern Ireland Civil Service Department's on a phased basis up to October 2012. Figures provided by Translink show 640 Active Cards for Civil Servants already participating in the scheme at 22 January 2013. Under TaxSmart staff save money on Income Tax and National Insurance contributions by paying for bus travel directly from their salary and receiving tax incentives. Depending on their personal circumstances they can save 31% on annual bus travel.

This discount is on top of savings already available to Translink customers who purchase Translink annual travel cards as opposed to paying weekly or daily fares. This form of discount is available for bus and rail users.

Causeway Hospital: Community Transport

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are being taken to ensure that patients and visitors arriving at the Causeway Hospital by Community Transport can be facilitated at a stop directly at the hospital.

(AQW 18727/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Patients and visitors arriving at the Causeway Hospital by Community Transport are able to be left off and picked up at the main doors of the hospital. They do not need to make use of the Translink bus stop which is already in place at the hospital.

Translink have also indicated a willingness to consider its existing bus services to facilitate stopping at the Hospital where this does not already happen. Specifically Service 178 Coleraine - Ballymoney – Ballycastle.

NI Water

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much NI Water has spent repairing water leaks over the last three years.

(AQW 18833/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that its expenditure over the past three financial years on repairing broken, leaking or burst water pipes which are part of the public water infrastructure is as follows:

2009/10	£6.8 million
2010/11	£6.4 million
2011/12	£6.3 million

Donaghadee Bus Depot

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail what plans Translink has for Donaghadee bus depot.

(AQW 18951/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has not specified to the Department any new plans for the bus facility at Donaghadee. I understand that if any changes were to be made, legislation requires Translink to consult with employees. The Department will also expect to be informed and would expect local consultations to take place.

Balmoral Show

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the plans for the provision of access roads to the Maze/Long Kesh site during and after the Balmoral show in May 2013.

(AQW 19103/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Transport Management Plan submitted as part of the planning permission application to create a showground facility at the former Maze/Long Kesh prison site sets out the proposed travel arrangements for the relocated Balmoral Show in May 2013.

Travel by car to the show grounds is proposed by using three access routes:

- From Greater Belfast and the east via M1, Junction 8 (Sprucefield), Hillsborough Road and Blaris Road;
- From the south via A1 and Harry's Road; and
- From the west via M1, Junction 9 (Moira) and A3, Moira Road.

Travel by public transport is proposed via a shuttle bus service to and from Lisburn Train Station.

In addition, the Transport Management Plan requires the Royal Agricultural Society (RUAS) to provide advanced directional signage on all main routes for the duration of the show.

A Development Corporation has been established to scrutinise and ratify future development within the overall site. The Development Corporation is working on longer term proposals for enhanced access provision, as further development progresses.

Department for Social Development

DRD Parking Relaxations

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has assessed the impact of the Department for Regional Development's parking relaxations on town centre trading over the Christmas period.

(AQW 18257/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): On 5 November 2012, The Minister for Regional Development announced a package of measures aimed at providing assistance to shoppers and traders in the run up to Christmas. The measures were mainly in relation to Park and Ride services in Belfast, Lisburn, Newry and Londonderry and public transport provisions, but did not include any measures in relation to parking restrictions in city and town centres.

The Department for Regional Development, who are responsible for the evaluation of the measures, have advised that initial indications suggest that these were successful with, for example, the Metro £2 Saturday offer leading to significant increases in patronage on Metro services, increased usage of park and ride facilities, especially in Belfast on the Saturdays leading up to Christmas, and increased passenger numbers on the Belfast to Coleraine railway line, where extra trains had been put on.

Homelessness

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many children under the age of 16 are in temporary accommodation because of homelessness.

(AQW 18283/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It should be noted that temporary accommodation is not defined in legislation. However, legislation requires the Housing Executive to ensure that temporary accommodation (such as Housing Executive Hostels or Voluntary Hostels or accommodation in the Private Rented sector) is made available to applicants who are deemed to be homeless.

The Housing Executive advised that it does not accept homelessness applications from children under the age of 16 years of age. Accordingly, no-one under 16 years old has been awarded Full Duty Applicant status (FDA). In the event that a young person under 16 years of age approaches the Housing Executive contact is made with the local Social Services.

However, the Housing Executive has advised that, at 14 January 2013, there were 934 households with children who are living in temporary accommodation due to homelessness as follows: -

- 115 - Housing Executive Hostels
- 144 - Voluntary Sector Hostels
- 675 - Private Sector

Suicide Prevention

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how much money his Department has invested in preventing suicides in each of the past three years.

(AQW 18346/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While my Department does not fund projects which deal solely with suicide prevention, it does support through its Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund a variety of projects and programmes that address a range of mental health and well-being matters. These projects and programmes cut across a range of social and economic determinants and provide services that address the complex issues surrounding suicide. It is therefore difficult to place a monetary value specifically on preventing suicides.

On a practical level, my Department contributes to the security coverage on the Peace Bridge in Londonderry which can help mitigate against the potential incidences of suicide.

Double Glazing Replacement Schemes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development when the double glazing replacement schemes are scheduled to take place in North Antrim.

(AQW 18360/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency. However, the Housing Executive's District Office in Ballymoney, Ballymena and Ballycastle cover the North Antrim area.

In Ballymoney a double glazing scheme for 184 properties has just completed. A second scheme for 104 properties across the Ballymoney District Office area is due to go on site in October 2013.

In Ballymena, two double glazing schemes are programmed: Phase one for 215 properties is scheduled to start in late January 2013; and Phase two for 308 properties is scheduled to start in January 2014.

In Ballycastle, a double glazing scheme for 87 properties is scheduled to start in March 2013.

The Housing Executive advises that the start dates are provisional at this stage.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18463/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the Department for Social Development the flexible working time arrangements permit staff to leave work at the end of 'core' working time which may be either 3.30pm or 4pm depending on the business area. Generally, these arrangements are sufficient for any member of staff with concerns about any unrest associated with the flag protests, to leave earlier than is their norm. Under these arrangements there is no associated cost to the Departmental budget.

However, there has been a limited number of staff with specific concerns who were allowed by management to leave work early and given credit for the time in question. Details of staff numbers and the associated financial cost are set out in the table below.

Number of staff who left work early since 3 December 2012	Associated financial cost to the Departmental budget
148	*£1801.21

The figures provided are up to and including 18 January 2013.

* This figure is based on average salary costs for the grades of the staff in question. Part of the cost is funded through DSD's contract with the Department for Work & Pensions.

Temporary Accommodation

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the Foyle constituency are registered as living in temporary accommodation.

(AQW 18471/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It should be noted that temporary accommodation is not defined in legislation. However, legislation requires the Housing Executive to ensure that temporary accommodation (such as Housing Executive Hostels or Voluntary Hostels or accommodation in the Private Rented sector) is made available to applicants who are deemed to be homeless.

The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency.

The Housing Executive has advised that at 14 January 2013 they had placed 311 households in temporary accommodation in response to their homelessness duties across their Londonderry District office areas as follows:

Waterloo	136 households
Waterside	57 households
Collon Terrace	118 households

Housing Executive: Occupational Therapists

Mr I McCrea asked Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive has a statutory obligation to take into consideration and carry out recommendations from Occupational Therapists when making an offer of housing.

(AQW 18485/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that when making an offer of housing there is currently no statutory obligation to take into consideration and carry out recommendations from Occupational Therapists. In general, the involvement of Occupational Therapists is a matter of good practice to help ensure that suitable and appropriate housing is identified where there are complex needs and where a wide range of housing options such as housing transfer, new build or housing adaptations are being considered.

Housing plays a central role in maintaining the independence of people with a disability enabling them to live safely and independently within their own homes.

The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 relates specifically to co-operation between statutory agencies and in particular between the Health and Social Care Boards and Trusts and the Housing Executive.

Article 67: Co-operation between Health and Social Services Boards and District Councils “In exercising their respective functions, Health and Social Care Boards, HSC Trusts, Special Agencies, District Councils, Education and Library Boards, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive shall co-operate with one another in order to secure and advance the health and social welfare of the people of Northern Ireland”.

Within the legislation, Health & Social Care Boards and Trusts have statutory responsibility for securing the assessment of the health and social care needs of an individual referred to them. Occupational Therapists are nominated on behalf of the Health & Social Care Trusts to carry out assessments in order to determine the needs of disabled people, including their housing need.

Housing Retrofit Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he intends to conduct an economic appraisal of the proposals for a housing retrofit scheme in the report entitled Policy Options for Investment in Infrastructure in Northern Ireland published by the Nevin Economic Research Institute. **(AQW 18492/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Nevin Economic Research Institute report has wide ranging proposals for investment in infrastructure with one of the proposals in the area of energy efficiency being an energy retro fitting- fitting scheme similar to that of the Green Deal in the UK.

Although the proposal has some merit there is still concern about how successful the Green Deal will be in the UK and if it will be taken up consumers. I think it would be premature at this time to carry out an economic appraisal on their proposal until more is known about how Green Deal will operate in practice.

Currently my Department through its Warm Homes Schemes offers a range of insulation measures to eligible householders. The Housing Executive also has a retrofitting programme which delivers energy efficiency improvements including heating and insulation. I also launched the boiler replacement scheme which will assist 16,000 householders replace their old inefficient boiler with a new boiler that can be 30% more efficient. The area based pilot also offers heating and insulation using a more targeted approach to those households who are in the most fuel poverty. I think that these energy efficiency measures are consistent with what is suggested in the report.

Prosecuted Landlords

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how many landlords were prosecuted for failure to provide rent books to their tenants in the private rented sector, in each of the last three years; and what was the average level of fine imposed during this period for each council area. **(AQW 18547/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: There has been one landlord prosecuted and 50 warning letters issued to landlords for failure to provide a rent book to their tenant during the last 3 year period (2010-2012). The landlord who was prosecuted received a £250 fine. Rather than prosecute for not providing a rent book,

Environmental Health Officers work with landlords in the private rented sector educating and making them aware of their landlord responsibilities. Normally once landlords are made aware of the need to provide a rent book, or after the issue of a warning letter, they do so preventing the need to take any further action.

The introduction of Landlord Registration (scheduled for summer this year) will allow councils to fulfil their statutory role more effectively by targeting their activity more appropriately and identifying landlords who do not comply with the law. It will be a valuable tool in enforcing standards and improving tenancy management within the sector.

Social and Affordable Homes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the target 1825 new social and affordable homes will be built in North Down.

(AQW 18576/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The 2012/13 Social Housing Development Programme includes three schemes for 45 units, which are due to start on site in the current financial year, in the North Down constituency. The schemes are as follows:

- 4 General needs units at South Circular Road, Bangor
- 37 General needs units at West Green, Holywood
- 4 Supported Housing units at Carmen Lane, Bangor

Affordable homes are currently delivered through the co-ownership scheme with the areas in which properties are purchased being determined by the demands of applicants to the scheme. There have been 59 homes delivered through the co-ownership scheme in the North Down area in this financial year to date.

Strand Area of Holywood: Maintenance Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what further maintenance schemes are planned for the Strand area of Holywood.

(AQW 18586/11-15)

Mr McCausland: An External Cyclical Maintenance Scheme for all 72 Housing Executive properties in the Strand area of Holywood is planned to start in 2014/15.

Small Pockets of Deprivation Funding

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development what arrangements have been made for the continuation of Small Pockets of Deprivation funding beyond the end of this financial year.

(AQW 18593/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Funding for the Small Pockets of Deprivation programme has been included in the Department's Urban Regeneration baseline budget for the remaining two years of the current Comprehensive Spending Review period.

New Kitchen Schemes

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of properties that will benefit from the new kitchen scheme in the Glen Estate, Newtownards; (ii) the timescale for the project; and (iii) the monetary value of the scheme.

(AQW 18595/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The kitchen scheme for the Glen Estate, Newtownards will involve works to 109 properties. The scheme is scheduled to start on the 4 February 2013 and has an estimated duration of approximately five months. The estimated cost of the scheme is £471,000.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the budget remaining in this financial year for each Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

(AQW 18599/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The budget available through the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund (NRIF) for the financial year 2012/2013 has been fully allocated. Consequently there is no NRIF remaining available to Neighbourhood Renewal Areas for this financial year.

Social Housing Schemes

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how many new build social housing schemes in the Upper Bann constituency have received the necessary statutory approvals and are awaiting funding before proceeding.

(AQW 18600/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they are not aware of any social housing schemes in the Upper Bann constituency which are awaiting Housing Association Grant funding before proceeding.

Housing Stock Levels in Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current housing stock levels in Carrickfergus.

(AQW 18613/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they currently have 1,904 social housing units in Carrickfergus. Housing Associations have advised that they have 532 units of social housing units in Carrickfergus also.

Home Insulation

Mr I McCreagh asked the Minister for Social Development what schemes are available for people who do not receive a qualifying benefit to insulate their homes.

(AQW 18617/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department continues to deliver the Warm Homes Schemes which is targeted at vulnerable householders on low income who have a qualifying benefit. The Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) allocates 80% of its annual funding at energy efficiency schemes for priority (vulnerable) customers. The Programme aims to target priority customers who do not qualify for Government energy efficiency or fuel poverty schemes like the Warm Homes Scheme. Priority customers are defined as those on low incomes and, whilst the exact vulnerability criteria may vary between individual schemes, receipt of benefits is not a qualifying criterion for any NISEP scheme.

NISEP funding has been allocated to four home insulation (cavity wall and loft) only schemes. Details of the individual schemes are as follows:

- Free Insulation – a fully funded scheme providing loft and/or cavity wall insulation for priority customers;
- Cosy Homes Insulation - a part funded scheme providing loft and/or cavity wall insulation for housing association properties (balance of cost paid by Housing Association not the tenant);
- NIHE Loft Top Ups - a part funded scheme providing top-ups (i.e. up to 270mm, the current standard) to loft insulation in Housing Executive properties (balance of cost paid by NIHE not the tenant);
- Energy Saver II - providing cash back of £150 for loft and/or £150 for cavity wall insulation for householders who do not qualify for priority schemes.

Further funding has been provided to domestic schemes which provide whole house solutions to priority (vulnerable) customers i.e. a full package of heating system, cavity wall and loft insulation and hot water cylinder jacket. The individual schemes are as follows:

- Toasty Homes Plus - a fully funded scheme providing whole house solutions for priority customers on the gas network (Firmus energy network);
- Energy saver Homes - a fully funded scheme providing whole house solutions for priority customers;
- Cosy Homes - a part funded scheme providing whole house solutions for housing association properties (balance of cost paid by Housing Association not the tenant);
- Snug Plus - a part funded scheme providing whole house solutions for priority customers on the gas network (Phoenix network);
- Toasty Homes - a part funded scheme providing whole house solutions for priority customers on the gas network (Firmus energy network);
- Discounted Heating and Insulation – a part funded scheme providing whole house solutions for priority customers;
- Snug Plus Oil - a part funded scheme providing whole house solutions for priority customers with old or broken oil boilers on the gas network (Phoenix network).

People with a Disability living in Poverty

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many people with disabilities, who are in receipt of benefits, are currently living in poverty; (ii) what impact Welfare Reform will have on this number; and (iii) how he is ensuring that no person with a disability, who cannot work as a result of their disability, is living in poverty.

(AQW 18647/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold information on how many people with disabilities, who are in receipt of benefits, are currently living in poverty.

Welfare Reform will bring about a number of changes to existing benefits and the way they are administered. Whilst the proposed changes will not have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities specifically, my Department is currently considering the impact of the changes on all vulnerable groups in order to put in place the appropriate support mechanisms moving forward.

An Executive Sub Committee has been set up to consider all the proposals under Welfare Reform and to develop an Executive response to mitigate any negative impacts and achieve long term benefits for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Social Security Agency continues to actively engage with voluntary sector organisations and customer representative groups on a regular basis to help shape and influence how Welfare Reform is implemented in Northern Ireland to best meet the needs of local people, including those with disabilities.

Housing Associations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how the accountability structure will work in the new Housing Associations, specifically how tenants will be able to hold the new associations to account.

(AQW 18729/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The design of the proposed new housing structures and governance arrangements are at an early stage. Currently, there are a number of key measures undertaken by the Department to hold Housing Associations to account. A rolling programme of Inspections are carried out by my Department's Regulation and Inspection Unit to determine individual Housing Associations' compliance

of the Housing Associations Guide and ongoing monitoring of Board minutes and relevant financial information.

I have also proposed that there should be a significant enhancement of the Department's Regulation and Inspection unit and function. This will be developed through a detailed programme of projects and key stakeholders will be consulted throughout the process. The proposed new landlord(s) would fall under this enhanced regulation and inspection regime which would regulate social housing providers within the Housing Association movement.

In relation to tenants, there will be formal rights of redress and systems for tenants to raise issues. Indeed this is a feature of both current NIHE processes and a requirement for Housing Associations.

Monitoring Round Statement

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the reasons for the (i) £7 million underspend by the Housing Executive; and (ii) £9.2 million underspend within the Social Security Agency, that were announced in the January Monitoring Round statement.

(AQW 18777/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The £7m identified by the Housing Executive in the monitoring round was made up of £1m in the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings category (arising from additional receipts achieved); £2.5m from deferral of a Voluntary Early Release scheme; and £3.5m from additional efficiencies achieved from reduced maintenance contract costs. It is worth noting that the Housing Executive has in fact identified savings of £8.5m this year. It has therefore been able to reallocate and spend £5m of this by bringing forward a significant number of additional kitchen and heating system installations.

The £9.2m reduced requirement identified in the monitoring round by the Agency comprised: £4.4m from reduced IT costs payable to the Department of Work & Pensions for the main benefit systems; £2.6m relating to the treatment of historic VAT payments; and £2.2m from easements in other areas. The passage of the Welfare Reform Bill and impact on Welfare Reform and modernisation-related projects made up the bulk of the £4.4m figure. The Agency was only able to confirm a range of IT costs and a change in the VAT treatment of some supplier costs late in the year. The easements in other areas included lower charges on the ATOS Medical Support Services contract; lower costs arising from staff turnover and vacancies; and lower appeal tribunal costs than previously projected.

The Department monitors its spending throughout the financial year and works closely with the Department of Finance and Personnel to highlight any potential over or under spends. In commenting on the scale of the above surrenders in the monitoring round, the Finance Minister recognised that some of the issues were outside my Department's control.

Home-Owners in Negative Equity

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the decision of the Lands Tribunal on 10 January 2013, what action he intends to take to provide assistance to home-owners who are in negative equity.

(AQW 18852/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have instructed my officials to re-examine the policy to support owner-occupiers in re-development areas to determine if this can be amended to take account of the issue of negative equity. However, this will require some detailed legal analysis and consultation with my Ministerial colleagues in the NI Executive.

Personal Independence Payment Applications

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether claimants currently receiving the severe disability premium will be subject to medical assessments for Personal Independence Payment applications.

(AQW 19032/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Subject to approval by the Northern Ireland Assembly, all existing Disability Living Allowance working age claimants (16 – 64), including those in receipt of Severe Disability Premium, will be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment.

Green Deal Loan Scheme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to introduce a Green Deal Loan scheme similar to that which has been announced in England and Wales.

(AQW 19041/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Responsibility for legislation to introduce any Green Deal model in Northern Ireland may become the responsibility of DETI, however I will be closely monitoring the introduction of the scheme to ascertain how successful it will be to help householders improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Currently my Department through its Warm Homes Schemes offers a range of insulation measures to eligible householders. The Housing Executive also has a retrofitting programme which delivers energy efficiency improvements including heating and insulation. I also launched the boiler replacement scheme which will assist 16,000 householders replace their old inefficient boiler with a new boiler that can be 30% more efficient. The area based pilot also offers heating and insulation using a more targeted approach to those households who are in the most fuel poverty.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Prepaid Envelopes and Stationery

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission what impact the £1,000 per annum limit has had on the level of demand for prepaid envelopes and stationery by Members.

(AQW 18380/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The total expenditure by Members on Prepaid envelopes and Stationery items (IT Consumables included) in 2011/12 (12 months) was £228,481.60*.

The total expenditure by Members on these items in the period April-December 2012 was £40,451*. It is anticipated that expenditure for the full financial year will be in the region of £54,000*.

On this basis the expenditure will have reduced in 2012/13 to 23.6% of the previous financial year.

Written Answers Index

Department for Regional Development	WA 210	Department for Social Development	WA 216
Balmoral Show	WA 216	Civil Servants	WA 218
Beechfield Estate, Bangor: Footpath	WA 210	Double Glazing Replacement Schemes	WA 217
Car Parking	WA 210	DRD Parking Relaxations	WA 216
Causeway Hospital: Community Transport	WA 215	Green Deal Loan Scheme	WA 224
Cycling Casualties	WA 213	Home Insulation	WA 221
Cyclists	WA 214	Homelessness	WA 217
Developments in the Gortmerron Link Area of Dungannon	WA 211	Home-Owners in Negative Equity	WA 223
Donaghadee Bus Depot	WA 216	Housing Associations	WA 222
Electronic Cycle Counters	WA 213	Housing Executive: Occupational Therapists	WA 218
Groomsport Resurfacing Work	WA 211	Housing Retrofit Scheme	WA 219
Lennon v DRD	WA 212	Housing Stock Levels in Carrickfergus	WA 221
NI Water	WA 215	Monitoring Round Statement	WA 223
Northern Ireland Railways Halt at Ballykelly	WA 214	Neighbourhood Renewal Area	WA 221
Northern Ireland Water: Union Flag	WA 211	New Kitchen Schemes	WA 220
Rural Transport Schemes	WA 212	People with a Disability living in Poverty	WA 222
Rural Transport Schemes	WA 212	Personal Independence Payment Applications	WA 224
Salary Sacrifice Scheme	WA 215	Prosecuted Landlords	WA 219
Shared Gritting Arrangements	WA 214	Small Pockets of Deprivation Funding	WA 220
Towerview Primary School Road Safety	WA 210	Social and Affordable Homes	WA 220
Water Bills: Appeals	WA 211	Social Housing Schemes	WA 221
'Welcome to Northern Ireland' Signs	WA 213	Strand Area of Holywood: Maintenance Schemes	WA 220
Department for Employment and Learning	WA 141	Suicide Prevention	WA 217
Agri-Food Industry	WA 142	Temporary Accommodation	WA 218
Apprenticeships: Financial Assistance	WA 148	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	WA 109
Counselling Courses	WA 144	Agricultural Food Inspection Branch	WA 113
DEL: Counsellors	WA 149	Areas of Special Scientific Interest Regulations	WA 109
DEL: Unemployment Issues	WA 142	Board of the Forest Service	WA 111
Education: Preparation for Employment	WA 149	Country of Origin Labelling on Food Products	WA 110
Employment and Learning: East Belfast	WA 146	Farm Woodland Premium Scheme	WA 109
Employment: Science-related Careers	WA 147	Forest Service Ash Dieback Emergency Hotline and Email	WA 110
Essential Skills: Information, Communication and Technology	WA 145	Forest Service Ash Dieback Emergency Hotline and Email	WA 110
Graduates Employment	WA 148	Horsemeat in Beef Products	WA 111
Higher Education Students: Financial Assistance	WA 145	Horsemeat Investigation	WA 111
Pathways to Success: Rural Areas	WA 145	Horsemeat Investigation	WA 112
Steps to Work	WA 147	Lough Neagh	WA 110
Training for Success Scheme	WA 141	Meat Plant Inspections	WA 112
University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status	WA 143	Meat Plants	WA 112
University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status	WA 144	Meat Plants	WA 112
University Counselling	WA 144	Rural Development Programme	WA 113
		Rural Development Programme	WA 113

Single Farm Payment Applicants	WA 113	Enrolment Capacity of Primary Schools in South Belfast	WA 136
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	WA 114	EU Erasmus For All Programme	WA 140
2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Tickets	WA 117	First Preference Nursery School Places	WA 125
Athletics Funding	WA 116	Grammar Schools: Funding	WA 140
Belfast City Council's Boxing Strategy	WA 118	Home to School Transport Policy	WA 126
Boxing Club: Funding	WA 117	Improving Literacy and Numeracy Delivering Social Change Signature Project	WA 118
Bushmills Salmon Station: Annual Operating Costs	WA 116	Joint Food in Schools Policy	WA 124
Civil Servants	WA 116	Key Stage 2 Pupils: Class Size	WA 140
Fishing Rights: River Bush	WA 117	New Build Projects for Schools	WA 126
Indoor Athletics Training Facility	WA 116	New School Buildings in the Hollywood Area	WA 123
Irish State Papers	WA 115	Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim	WA 138
Irish State Papers	WA 115	Post-Primary Area Plan Review	WA 134
North Atlantic Salmon	WA 114	Post-Primary Schools	WA 130
Re-Imaging Communities Programme	WA 118	Pre-school Places	WA 125
Rugby Coaches in Schools	WA 114	Pre-School Programme	WA 139
School Rugby	WA 114	Programme for Government Commitments on Shared Education	WA 123
Sport Development	WA 115	Programme for Government Commitments on Shared Education	WA 123
Sports Development in North Down	WA 117	Pupils Enrolled in School	WA 124
Waterways Ireland	WA 117	Review of Public Administration	WA 133
Department of Education	WA 118	Revised Early Years 0-6 Strategy	WA 139
A and AS Level Changes	WA 127	Roddensvale School, Larne	WA 128
A and AS Level Changes	WA 127	Roddensvale School, Larne	WA 129
A and AS Level Changes	WA 128	Russell Group of Universities	WA 127
A Level System	WA 128	School Inspectors	WA 140
Central Procurement Directorate	WA 120	School Starting Age	WA 138
Central Procurement Directorate	WA 120	Somme Battlefields	WA 126
Centre of Procurement Expertise	WA 120	Southern and Western Education and Library Board: Budget	WA 123
Civil Servants	WA 122	Special Educational Needs Review	WA 136
Classroom Sizes	WA 132	Special EU Programmes Body	WA 141
Classroom Sizes	WA 132	Teacher Discipline	WA 134
Computer-Based Assessments	WA 125	Temporary Classrooms	WA 125
Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment	WA 134	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	WA 150
Cross Border Shared Education	WA 122	Broadband Access	WA 156
Dangers Associated with the Internet	WA 135	Business: Flag Protests	WA 151
DE: Advertising Campaigns	WA 132	Business: Flag Protests	WA 156
Disruptive Pupils	WA 135	Civil Servants	WA 154
Early Years Education Support Clusters	WA 119	Credit Unions	WA 156
Education and Library Board: Anticipated Expenditure	WA 121	Crescent Capital	WA 154
Education and Library Board: Expenditure	WA 121	Crescent Capital	WA 154
Education and Library Boards: Goods and Services Procured	WA 119	Crescent Capital	WA 155
Education and Library Boards: Savings	WA 119	Down Business Park	WA 150
Education and Skills Authority Chairperson	WA 133	EU and Canadian Free Trade Agreement	WA 152
Education and Skills Authority: Education Bill	WA 133	EU Electricity and Gas Directives	WA 156
		Foyle Cup Tournament	WA 151

Foyle Cup Tournaments	WA 152	Prompt Payment: Arm's-length Bodies	WA 187
Fuel Prices	WA 153	Rate Relief Schemes	WA 181
G8 Summit	WA 153	Rate Relief Schemes	WA 181
Natural Gas Network	WA 152	Rates: Debt Recovery	WA 186
Quinn Group	WA 156	Rates: Orange Halls	WA 187
Selective Financial Assistance Rates	WA 151	Regulatory Framework for Multi-Unit Developments	WA 178
Sustainable Energy Programme	WA 155	Savings Delivery Plans	WA 184
Department of Finance and Personnel	WA 169	Savings Delivery Plans	WA 185
Air Passenger Duty	WA 174	Small Business Rate Relief Scheme: North Down	WA 188
Article 6 of the Energy Efficiency Directive	WA 170	Special Advisors	WA 188
Betting and Gaming Duty	WA 173	Taxes and Royalties	WA 172
Business: Flag Protests	WA 187	UK Corporation Tax	WA 175
Capital Valuation List	WA 169	University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status	WA 170
Civil Servants	WA 175	University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status	WA 170
Civil Service: Recruitment	WA 188	University Colleges: Non-Departmental Public Body Status	WA 171
Construction: Subeconomic Tendering	WA 186		
Department Administrative Expenditure	WA 176	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	WA 189
Department Performance	WA 176	Average Waiting Times	WA 191
Domestic and Non-Domestic Rates	WA 171	Cataract Surgery	WA 197
EU Commission: Multiannual Framework Proposals	WA 186	Changing Places Facilities	WA 189
Executive Budget	WA 181	Changing Places Facilities	WA 197
Executive Expenditure	WA 176	Dementia Strategy	WA 196
Executive: Revenue	WA 185	Dental Health in North Down	WA 192
Financial Assistance Act	WA 185	Dental Hygiene	WA 196
Gross Value Added	WA 182	Dentists Accepting National Health Service Patients	WA 197
Gross Value Added	WA 182	Diabetes	WA 190
Insurance Premium Tax	WA 174	Fire and Rescue Service	WA 197
Landfill Tax	WA 175	Fire and Rescue Service	WA 198
Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments	WA 177	Fire Station at Cushendall	WA 198
Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments	WA 178	Foster Care in North Down	WA 195
Law Commission's Review of the Law on Apartments	WA 178	Hair Loss Referrels	WA 193
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 169	Health and Social Care Trusts: Interpreter Fees	WA 190
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 177	Muckamore Abbey	WA 198
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 177	Muckamore Abbey	WA 198
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 177	Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project	WA 193
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 183	New Administration Building on the Bangor Health Centre Site	WA 199
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 184	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service	WA 189
Net Fiscal Balance Report	WA 184	Pain Clinics: Waiting Times	WA 190
Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus	WA 177	Patient Referrals	WA 192
Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus	WA 183	People with Special Needs	WA 189
Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus	WA 183	Promoting Healthy Living	WA 191
Net Fiscal Balance Report: Interests and Dividends	WA 182	Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts: Extra Consultant Clinics	WA 196
Nevin Economic Research Institute	WA 171		
People who Emigrated	WA 178		

Young Adults with Learning Disabilities	WA 195	Correct Use of Car Lights	WA 165
		Craigantlet Hills Area	WA 159
Department of Justice	WA 199	Department of Transport in Whitehall: Consultation Paper	WA 161
Bangor Courthouse	WA 203	Downpatrick Planning Office	WA 157
Bangor Courthouse	WA 204	Drink-Driving and Drug-Driving	WA 161
Central Investigation Service	WA 206	Drive Safe Initiative	WA 166
Central Investigation Service	WA 206	Environmental Issues	WA 164
Central Investigation Service	WA 206	Hydraulic Fracturing in Fermanagh	WA 163
Civil Servants	WA 208	Local Government Reform	WA 167
Criminal Cases: Name Release	WA 205	North Down Borough Council	WA 163
Elm 2 Hydebank Wood Prison	WA 206	Planning Applications	WA 168
Fraud Awareness Workshops or Training	WA 202	Plastic Bag Tax	WA 159
Fraud Awareness Workshops or Training	WA 202	Plastic Bag Tax	WA 160
Gerry McGeough's Release from Prison	WA 209	Proposed National Parks	WA 157
HMP Maghaberry	WA 204	Renewable Energy Projects	WA 158
Legal Aid	WA 199	Right of Way Legislation	WA 158
Legal Aid	WA 199	Speed Limit on Rural Secondary Roads	WA 162
Legal Aid: Composite Fee	WA 201	Street Naming	WA 158
Legal Services Commission	WA 200	Wildfowl Deaths	WA 161
Legal Services Commission	WA 203	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission	WA 224
Maghaberry Prison	WA 201	Prepaid Envelopes and Stationery	WA 224
Maghaberry Prison	WA 202	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	WA 109
Maghaberry Prison: Serious Self-Harm Incidents	WA 200	Energy Efficiency Measures	WA 109
National Crime Agency	WA 209		
Newtownards Courthouse	WA 208		
Northern Ireland Authorities	WA 201		
Northern Ireland Legal Service	WA 200		
Northern Ireland Prison Service	WA 200		
Northern Ireland Prison Service	WA 204		
Northern Ireland Prison Service	WA 205		
Northern Ireland Prison Service	WA 207		
Northern Ireland Prison Service	WA 207		
Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts	WA 207		
Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Reports and Accounts	WA 203		
Northern Ireland Prison Service Estate Managers	WA 199		
Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff	WA 208		
People Trafficking Prosecutions	WA 208		
Policing Board	WA 209		
Prisoner Ombudsman	WA 201		
Prison: Millisle	WA 203		
Prison Officers: Sick Leave	WA 202		
Sexual Offences	WA 207		
Department of the Environment	WA 157		
Ash Dieback Disease	WA 159		
Civil Servants	WA 168		
Commercial Vehicles	WA 164		
Community Places Funding	WA 168		

Revised Written Answers

Friday 1 February 2013

(AQW 17795/11-15)

The Department wrote to all District Council Chief Executives on 18 October 2012 highlighting the fact that annual fixed penalty notice figures indicate that some Councils are much more proactive than others in taking enforcement action against litter offenders and to ascertain why the figures are as they are.

18 of the 26 Councils responded to the Department, namely Limavady, Larne, Belfast, Newtownabbey, Fermanagh, Coleraine, Magherafelt, Craigavon, Antrim, Ballymoney, Ballymena, Dungannon, Cookstown, Omagh, Lisburn, North Down, Moyle and Carrickfergus. Detailed and informative responses were received from many of these Councils. The following table provides details of key points made by each Council. The table also provides details of additional action by the Councils.

Council	Litter Fines Issued 2011/12	Extracts/summaries of key points made by Councils
Antrim	30	Strongly committed to a policy of robust enforcement and environmental education programmes. A small number of complaints are received concerning cleanliness issues and Council is of the view that current balanced approach of enforcement and education is appropriate.
Ballymena	30	Employs 2 enforcement wardens covering a wide range of duties, including litter enforcement. Resources for litter related work is carefully targeted to gain maximum benefit. Enforcement is only one arm of the battle against litterproactive work includes community clean-up operations; targeting hot spots to educate rather than criminalise children; to introduce an educational "yellow card" scheme to be followed by a fine for reoffending. Additional action: currently exploring the possibility of identifying sufficient funding to allow a dedicated resource to be put in place.
Ballymoney	4	The approach taken as regards litter enforcement is proportionate to the "problem" within the Borough and available resources are targeted to need in light of intelligence obtained from a number of sources...The use of fixed penalty notices is but one approach to addressing the litter issue and its use within this Borough reflects that fact.
Belfast	1534	...there is a dedicated enforcement team consisting of Enforcement Officers and Litter Wardens. The Enforcement Officers are based in districts throughout the city and have a remit covering domestic and commercial waste, littering, graffiti and fly-posting. The Litter Wardens are based in the city centre and detect littering and fly-posting offences. One of the Council's key service performance outputs is to determine an annual target in respect of the number of fixed penalty notices issued for littering in a financial year. Additional action: The target for fixed penalty notices in 2012/13 is 2000.

Council	Litter Fines Issued 2011/12	Extracts/summaries of key points made by Councils
Carrickfergus	19	<p>...recently undergone a number of staff changes within the Pollution Control Team which has impacted on ability to undertake litter patrols.</p> <p>Additional action: Developing a litter and dog fouling strategy aimed at looking at how the Council can better target its resources in order to address this type of low level environmental crime. The Council recently committed to recruiting a second Enforcement Officer to educate the public in order to improve the environmental quality of the Borough and to increase the number of fixed penalties issued by Council. Targets are to be set for the issuing of fixed penalty notices. Enforcement Officers will undertake a wide range of duties including litter enforcement. Litter enforcement is being taken seriously by the Council and it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in litter and fouling complaints and resultant improvements in environmental quality through greater numbers of fixed penalty notices being issued in 2013.</p>
Coleraine	16	<p>Employs 2 enforcement wardens undertaking a wide range of duties including litter enforcement. Zero tolerance policy for litter offenders over the age of 18. Figures for 2011/12 were down due to long term sickness of one of the enforcement wardens. The Council's Environment Officer concentrates on education within schools, youth groups and community groups promoting anti litter and coastal awareness.</p> <p>Additional action: will be reviewing work procedures to adopt a more pro-active approach in taking enforcement action against litter offenders.</p>
Cookstown	12	<p>The Council does not have any dedicated litter wardens, however, all officers are authorised for the purposes of Clean Neighbourhoods legislation and the Litter Order. The Council takes a zero tolerance approach to all littering offences that are detected. Council is of the view that a proactive and robust enforcement mechanism must be in place to ensure that the regulatory message is clear and succinct. The Council has been proactive in taking forward its Clean Neighbourhoods Programme which focuses on education, community engagement and regulation.</p>
Craigavon	1046	<p>The Council takes a zero tolerance approach to litter throughout the Borough. It employs 4 environmental wardens to help to address the litter problem.</p> <p>Additional action: currently looking at the possibility of appointing another warden in the next financial year.</p>
Dungannon & South Tyrone	1	<p>The Council does not have a written litter strategy. All complaints received are investigated and action taken as appropriate in each individual case. The Council does not employ litter wardens and as a result any action in respect of litter is dependent on Environmental Health Officers being a witness to the offence. The pressures on current resources are also likely to have had an impact on the level of fixed penalties served.</p>

Council	Litter Fines Issued 2011/12	Extracts/summaries of key points made by Councils
Fermanagh	8	<p>The Council believes that a major contributory factor to the success in the cleanliness of our streets is the Council's initiative where orderlies have responsibility for a range of duties in all our towns, villages and hamlets. Each, generally living in his/her own area, develops a sense of pride and ownership, which is rarely adopted by those remote from their area. The issue of fixed penalties is not the only method of changing attitudes to litteringThe Council has adopted an approach whereby the natural environment is improved, good facilities provided and users educated in responsible behaviour.</p> <p>Additional action: will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the entire initiative going forward.</p>
Larne	23	<p>The Council takes a proactive and robust approach to enforcement and whilst the number of fixed penalty notices issued in 2011/12 reduced considerably from the previous 2 years, this was a result of the long-term absence of a member of staff.</p>
Limavady	4	<p>The Council employs one Enforcement Officer who is also responsible for a wide range of duties and therefore the resources to proactively patrol the Borough to detect litter offences is restricted. The Council has always taken a consistent approach in dealing with litter offences. Complaints are always investigated thoroughly and if there is sufficient evidence a fixed penalty notice will be issued.</p> <p>Additional action: the Council is in the process of developing a litter enforcement policy.</p>
Lisburn	42	<p>The Council does not have any litter wardens and instead it utilises staff that are authorised under the legislation to issue fixed penalty notices in addition to their other duties. Any comparison between councils is skewed by the scale of the resources dedicated to this area. Lisburn City Council has achieved a commendable performance with the resources available to us. While the increased level of fine may act as more of a deterrent against offending, the additional income generated is insignificant when compared to the cost of employing dedicated litter wardens...</p>
Magherafelt	40	<p>The Council administers the issuing of fixed penalty notices for litter through its enforcement officer whose duties cover a wide range of issues in addition to litter enforcement. The Council targets areas where litter has been reported as an issue and has been more proactive since the introduction of the Clean Neighbourhoods legislation.</p> <p>Additional action: during the 6 month period (April to September 2012) it issued 38 fixed penalty notices for litter which is a significant pro rata increase on previous years.</p>

Council	Litter Fines Issued 2011/12	Extracts/summaries of key points made by Councils
Moyle	5	The Council takes the issue of litter enforcement very seriously and regular patrols to detect littering offenders are carried out. Fixed penalty notices are issued in all cases where littering offences are detected. The Council has the smallest population in Northern Ireland and this is reflected in the number of fixed penalties issued.
Newtownabbey	150	The Council employs 2.5 full time employment enforcement officers. It carries out all enforcement activities in line with its Enforcement Policy. The Council believes in firm but fair regulation. The number of fixed penalty notices issued does not reflect the level of educational initiatives undertaken by the Council to curb littering. Additional action: the Enforcement Policy is reviewed every 2 years to ensure that it remains relevant to new legislation for which the Council has enforcement responsibilities.
North Down	4	While the actual number of fixed penalty fines issued is low, it does not necessarily indicate that this Borough is strewn with litter. The Council has a firm, responsible and fair approach to dealing with those who litter and approaches this through education, appropriate street cleaning and enforcement. The Council undertakes limited targeted patrols in the Borough to detect littering offences. The Council does not have the resources to employ specific litter wardens unlike other Councils such as Belfast and Craigavon. The Council Enforcement Officers have a demanding workload and deal with a wide range of issues, including littering.
Omagh	24	The Council employs 1 litter warden who patrols the district to enforce Council policy regarding litter abatement. The figures for 2011/12 are down from the previous year and this is attributed to a more rigorous awareness campaign. The litter warden also issues formal warnings and carries out an education programme with the local schools.
Ards	12	No response
Armagh City & District	14	No response
Banbridge	12	No response
Castlereagh	26	No response
Derry	41	No response
Down	60	No response
Newry & Mourne	89	No response
Strabane	22	No response

It is disappointing that 8 Councils did not respond to this exercise. However, the information received so far helps to put the figures from Councils into a local context, and factors such as the employment of dedicated litter wardens would appear to equate to a more proactive enforcement policy with higher numbers of fixed penalty notices issued for littering offences.

I am satisfied that Councils take their duties in respect of litter enforcement seriously and other initiatives such as education and awareness have an important role to play. However, evidence of robust enforcement of the anti-litter laws in local neighbourhoods across all of Northern Ireland is necessary in order to send out a clear and consistent message that littering will not be tolerated, it is an offence to drop litter and those who commit that offence are likely to be fined, and if fines are not paid offenders will face prosecution in the Courts. I am not satisfied that this is the message which has applied in some Council districts over recent years in view of the very small numbers of fines actually issued in those districts. Litter fines are a valuable and effective deterrent and there is clearly room for improvement in their use to tackle littering in some Council districts.

I will therefore be carrying out a further assessment of the overall Northern Ireland situation after the end of this financial year by which time I would expect to see some improvements.

There is already some evidence of a more proactive and focussed approach being adopted in some Council districts in view of the additional action highlighted in the above table. For example, the challenging targets set by Belfast City Council, interim results from Magherafelt for the first 6 months of this financial year, significant plans to take effect in Carrickfergus, the possibility of a dedicated resource in Ballymena and an additional enforcement officer in Craigavon and the development of a litter enforcement policy in Limavady. I also note that reviews are taking place in Coleraine, Newtownabbey and Fermanagh. These are all encouraging developments and I am hopeful that my next assessment of the situation after the end of this financial year will provide further evidence of more effective action against littering offenders.



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