

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 8 February 2013

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 8 February 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Irish Presidency of the European Council

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to explain how, during the Irish Presidency of the European Council, it is anticipated that joint participation by Northern Ireland Executive Ministers at EU Presidency-related events would operate.

(AQW 16456/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Irish Government will be hosting 'informal council' meetings during the EU Presidency on a range of issues that are impacted by EU policy which will be attended by Ministers and representatives from various EU governments.

The Irish Government has indicated that it is willing to invite Executive Ministers to those that are relevant to their portfolios. Possible attendance and participation at such meetings may provide our Ministers with the opportunity to access key European decision-makers that otherwise would not be the case.

Decisions whether to attend or participate in such events will be a matter for individual Ministers and departments.

Human Rights

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will raise the issue of human rights during their trade mission to the People's Republic of China; and whether in the interests of transparency and accountability, an independent observer or activist will accompany them during discussions relating to, or encompassing, Human Rights.

(AQW 16531/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We did not bring an independent observer or activist with us. We continue to take advice regarding raising human rights issues and will do so if or when appropriate.

U.S.A. and China Trips

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the investment resulting from the recent trips to the U.S.A. and China.

(AQW 16739/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Economic growth is at the heart of the Executive's Programme for Government and inward investment plays a key role in this. The Programme for Government sets an ambitious growth target of a 60% increase in exports to emerging economies, including China.

Securing new inward investment projects can take a considerable length of lead-in time and many meetings are of such a commercially sensitive nature that we are unable to publicly declare them. However, we have already seen some positive impacts of our two most recent trips to the USA and Canada in September 2011 and March 2012. Our attendance, as keynote speakers, at a major

creative industries promotional event at Sony studios in Los Angeles further consolidated relationships with Universal Studios and HBO, two of the most significant investors in the Paint Hall and the newly opened Titanic Studios in Belfast.

We met with Jeff Smisek, CEO of United Continental Airlines and his senior Board, and directly helped to address their concerns over UK Air Passenger Duty in Belfast. We secured the devolution of APD to the Assembly which will maintain the long-term commitment of UCA to its hugely important transatlantic flight, the only direct route from Belfast to the US.

Our meetings with the top management team of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and Senior Executives of Cowan International Ltd culminated in both companies committing significant investment packages in Northern Ireland.

In Canada we continued to develop the longstanding relationship with Bombardier when we met with senior Bombardier Corporate Office management. We were given an insightful demonstration on how the C Series wings, produced in Belfast, are being used in the overall construction of the aircraft. Bombardier remains our largest manufacturer and a major driver in the local economy, employing in excess of some 6,000 people.

We have just participated in our first trade mission to China, where we saw at first hand Invest NI's efforts to help local companies grow and develop their export sales in this massive market. Our involvement reinforced the message that we are pro-business and committed to growing the economy. We are optimistic that the initial contacts made at the Food Exhibition in Shanghai's New Expo Centre and at the Invest NI receptions in Shanghai and Hong Kong will result in real and tangible business for local companies.

As we go forward, developing our international relations can only help drive forward our export sales and the Executive is fully committed to proactively supporting our businesses to succeed on the international stage.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Byrne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQO 2968/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We remain committed to building a united and shared community by continuing to improve good relations across our society. Bringing forward a robust good relations strategy with a clear framework for action will be a critical part of achieving our vision of a better future for everyone.

We recognise the importance of translating the Executive's commitment into clear, meaningful action. Work is ongoing and a Strategy will be published on completion of discussions between parties.

China: Trade Missions

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their recent visit to China.
(AQO 2973/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Following the visit of Madam Liu to Northern Ireland in April, we were invited to visit China to further strengthen relationships in trade, investment, tourism and university links.

Focusing on high growth markets is an integral part of the Executive's strategy to reinvigorate the Northern Ireland economy. China, as the second largest economy in the world, offers huge potential for local businesses. The 37 organisations that made up the trade mission on the visit were very positive about the contacts they made and the potential for future collaboration with Chinese partners.

During the visit we announced orders worth £1 million for Carrickfergus company Yelo who design and manufacture automated test equipment for the electronics market. We also had the opportunity to

meet with Texthelp from Antrim and the Chinese Education Alliance to witness the signing of a major commercial contract between the two organisations. We are confident that this will lead to further orders for Texthelp in China. We also met with local businesses at the Food Hotel China Exhibition which is an established platform for international buyers and sellers to do business in the China market.

Another important area for economic potential is in education and our visit included a visit to Shanghai Jiaotong University, one of China's top five universities which has a strategic alliance with Queen's University Belfast. We were shown joint laboratories, established by the two universities and heard about the £2.3 million Science Bridge Project. This collaboration helps strengthen research links and technology transfer in the field of sustainable energy and the built environment and will lead to the development of many more commercial opportunities in the future.

In Hong Kong we met with John Tsang, the Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, and discussed a number of initiatives for opening up economic opportunities with the Hong Kong Government. We also attended an event hosted by Northern Irish Connections and met with over 100 of our diaspora who are supportive of helping us in our efforts in growing our economy in international markets. You will be aware of the positive news story from Wrightbus and we had the opportunity to meet with the Directors of one of its key customers, the Kowloon Bus Company. This provided us with the opportunity to support the company's business growth in Hong Kong.

On Saturday we accepted an invitation to the Hong Kong Open to meet with a number of our organisations and to promote our golf and tourism products. Our visit was very positively received and we will be maintaining contact with those organisations. We were also able to use the event to arrange meetings with some of the Chief Executives of Asia's leading financial and investment organisations. These were very useful contacts and our officials will be meeting with colleagues in DETI to discuss how we build on this relationship.

To fully evaluate the success of our visit will take time but initial feedback would indicate that it was warmly received by local businesses and by the Chinese business community.

China: Trade Missions

Mr Givan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of investment opportunities, following the trade mission to China.

(AQO 2974/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We visited Shanghai and Hong Kong last November following invitations from senior Chinese Government Ministers. The invitation was to help strengthen government relations with China, particularly in economic development, education research and technology.

During our visit we met with diplomatic representatives, business people and Diaspora who all stressed the tremendous economic benefits that exist for local businesses in China.

We led a trade mission of over thirty businesses, and the immediate feedback has been very positive. This was a unique opportunity for local businesses to build relationships, create partnerships and showcase what we have to offer. During the visit we announced orders worth £1 million for Carrickfergus company Yelo who design and manufacture automated test equipment for the electronics market. We facilitated the signing of an agreement between Texthelp from Co Antrim and the China Education Alliance. Texthelp designs and supplies literacy software for those with literacy difficulties, dyslexia, mild visual impairments or where English is a second language.

The Executive is committed to developing strong trade links with China and is ready to work alongside local companies to help them harness the very real business opportunities that are developing in one of the world's most dynamic markets.

China Visit

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) who else attended their recent visit to China alongside the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Minister for Agriculture and

Rural Development, including staff and officials; (ii) what accommodation they used; (iii) what travel class was used; and (iv) to detail the cost of the trip broken down by (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) other expenses.

(AQW 17445/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The trade mission to China was the first government led visit following invitations from Madame Liu Yandong and the now President Xi Jinping. The mission focused on establishing and maintaining economic contacts and partnerships and also included elements of education, research and agriculture. Ministers were supported by officials necessary to facilitate a successful visit, which included staff from Invest NI.

Also participating in the trade mission were representatives from some 40 businesses and organisations such as the CBI and Queen's University, Belfast.

The full costs of the visit are not yet available.

China Visit

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they became aware of the clash between their visit to China and the 18th national congress of the Communist Party of China, which meant that the country's top political representatives were in Beijing whilst the delegation from Northern Ireland was in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

(AQW 17446/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our original schedule included a series of political meetings in Beijing at the invitation of the Chinese Government. Once the date of the National Congress was confirmed, the Government had to postpone these meetings at a relatively late stage.

The businesses travelling on the parallel trade mission to China, along with Invest NI and DETI, presented compelling justification for us to travel and support the trade mission's objectives, despite the schedule of the Congress causing the postponement of the political element of the visit.

Subsequently, many of the businesses attending have indicated that our attendance was both necessary and useful in achieving their objectives.

China Visit

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether and when they will be making any return visit to China; (ii) what is the intention of a further visit; and (iii) who they would hope to meet during any further visit that they did not have an opportunity meet on the recent visit.

(AQW 17448/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our initial visit to China had a focus on trade, business and investment. We were aware of the scheduling of the people's congress; however the business community, along with Invest NI and DETI, remained keen for us to travel and support the trade mission.

Many of the businesses on the trip have indicated subsequently that our attendance was both necessary and useful. Having visited Shanghai and Hong Kong with a trade and investment focus, our intention is to return later this year for a series of political and investment engagements in Beijing.

We have been strongly advised that continuous engagement of this nature is required when building relationships and links with China.

China Visit

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for the itinerary of their recent visit to China.
(AQW 17449/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Information on the various meetings and events we attended during our recent visit to China is a matter of public record.

In Shanghai we visited the joint Queen's University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University Science Labs where we were briefed on developing projects there that could lead to commercialisation and provision of social care. We met with the University management regarding the potential for further collaboration and joint ventures.

We held discussions with a range of business and trade development organisations which, for commercial reasons, we are unable to elaborate on.

We visited the Food Hotel China Exhibition where we met with all the local exhibitors and hosted a "Meet the Buyer" evening reception during which we had the opportunity to meet local businesses and their potential Chinese partners.

We also met with the United Kingdom and Irish Consul Generals in Shanghai and Hong Kong and with United Kingdom Trade and Investment and Enterprise Ireland.

In Hong Kong we met with the Government's Secretary for Finance, and a number of potential initiatives were identified that we will be discussing with the Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment, Arlene Foster, over the coming weeks. We attended the NI Connections event in Hong Kong which attracted over 100 people with a local connection. We look forward to this network of people and businesses working for the benefit of our local economy over the coming months and years.

As part of our objective to promote the local economy, we followed up on the success of the Irish Open by meeting with the European Golf Tour decision-makers and the organisers, as well as the organisers of the Hong Kong Open.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Givan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the engagement of political parties on the development of the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQO 3000/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Working Group has substantively completed its work and we have received the draft document. We are seeking to engage with Party Leaders with a view to publishing the Strategy as soon as possible.

The Strategy will provide a clear framework in support of our vision to improve good relations and build a better future for all.

Community Relations Projects

Mr Sheehan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what was the total funding allocated to community relations projects in 2012.

(AQO 3112/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM currently supports community relations activity through a number of programmes including Contested Spaces, Summer Interventions, District Council Good Relations, Central Good Relations, North Belfast Strategic Good Relations and the Community Relations Council.

In this financial year to date, over £10m has been allocated to community relations projects.

Irish Presidency of the European Union

Mr Rogers asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their proposed involvement during the Irish Presidency of the European Union.

(AQO 3116/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We last updated Members on our involvement with the Irish Government during its Presidency of the Council of the European Union in November of last year. Since then, the Irish Government has finalised its detailed programme and priorities for its Presidency with a particular emphasis on stability, jobs and growth.

The focus of this Presidency will be to drive recovery in Europe and on securing agreement, including with the European Parliament on a comprehensive programme of policy and legislation. This will include advancing and concluding negotiations on the 67 or so regulations, including those covering Common Agricultural Policy Reform and Cohesion Policy which would follow an agreement on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework for the period 2014 to 2020.

Junior Ministers used the opportunity during their visit to Brussels in December to raise our interests in many of these issues with the Head of the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels. We also had the opportunity to receive an update on the progress of the Presidency from the Ambassador when we met him in Brussels on 31 January.

Final decisions, of course, do not rest with the Irish Government whose job it is to broker agreement between the Council and the European Parliament. For that reason, we also met with the President of the Parliament, Martin Schultz, with a view to promoting our interests during the Presidency.

Junior Ministers attended a Presidency Council Informal in Dublin on 20 and 21 January. We understand that invitations to attend Presidency events have been and will be extended to other Executive Ministers as the Presidency progresses. Again, this will give Executive colleagues a similar opportunity to share perspectives and promote our interests internationally.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from their 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 their departmental budget. **(AQW 18462/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Civil servants working in OFMDFM have flexible working arrangements that provide for flexitime to be utilised from 4pm. We do not hold central records of how many civil servants utilised this flexible arrangement due to civil unrest. There is no associated financial cost to the Departmental budget.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of a childcare strategy; and how the strategy will be rolled out. **(AQW 18678/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A public consultation on the proposed Childcare Strategy was launched on 5 December 2012. The consultation process will run until 5 March 2013. All comments received during the consultation process, and the findings of research being carried out in parallel, will then be reviewed to inform the detail of the Strategy, including the way in which it will be delivered.

Childcare Funding

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much funding for childcare is ringfenced within their current departmental budget. **(AQW 18679/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive Childcare Fund has ringfenced £12 million for actions to develop the Childcare Strategy. The Fund will operate until 2014/15.

Maritime Museum in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AWQ17800/11-15, for an update on the establishment of a Maritime Museum in Derry, including (i) funding requirements for the project; (ii) funding secured for the project; and (iii) an opening date for the Museum.

(AQW 18719/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The establishment of a Maritime Museum in Derry/Londonderry is a programme activity under the One Plan catalyst programme “Accelerating the Growth of the Tourism and Cultural Economy”. Derry City Council has assumed lead responsibility for the project. The project has been selected to proceed to Stage II of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board’s (NITB) Tourism Development Scheme 2011-13 application process and still under assessment.

Funding requirements for the project are still being finalised and it is too early to predict an opening date for the museum given that a full funding package is not yet in place for the project.

Ebrington 2020

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the Ebrington 2020 process.
(AQW 18978/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM is working closely with Ilex on the development of Ebrington. The process of initiating a Development Framework to secure outline planning permission for the legacy usage of the site is underway which will open up the site to full market potential.

In advance of the Development Framework, officials are working closely with Ilex to facilitate meanwhile uses on the site to maintain interest and momentum in the development of Ebrington. To that end, Ilex is currently working on “Ebrington 2020” an approach, in line with the Development Framework, to identify potential projects for the site which will make the most significant contribution to improving quality of place, attraction and experience for the regeneration of Ebrington and develop an integrated process for economic appraisal for potential projects.

Corporation Tax

Mr Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what recent discussions they have had with the Prime Minister on the devolution of Corporation Tax.

(AQO 3230/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Earlier this year the Government reiterated its commitment to consider the case for devolving Corporation Tax here. The work of the Joint Ministerial Working Group is complete. The Group met four times last year, with the final meeting held on 18 October. The report of the main findings was sent to the Prime Minister for his consideration in November.

The Government must now decide whether the Executive should be offered the opportunity of taking responsibility for Corporation Tax.

At our meeting with the Prime Minister during his visit in November, we discussed the general implications of devolving Corporation Tax and we agreed then we would have a further meeting in London. As we are anxious to progress this issue, we wrote to the Prime Minister on 29 November to request this meeting.

He responded to us on 9 January, indicating that he would be pleased to meet with us again to hear our views on Corporation Tax devolution in detail and his office would work with ours to identify a suitable date. We continue to press for this meeting to take place as soon as possible.

Minority Ethnic Development Fund

Ms Brown asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the provision of the Minority Ethnic Development Fund after 31 March 2013.

(AQO 3237/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials have consulted representatives of the minority ethnic sector in order to produce a revised funding scheme that takes full account of the NISRA evaluation of the Minority Ethnic Development Fund and that reflects our objectives for the Fund, the needs within the sector and the need for good governance.

Once finalised, the Fund will run from the beginning of the new financial year for two years. Calls for applications to the Fund are expected to be made in the near future.

National Crime Agency

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the Executive has not agreed to a Legislative Consent Motion to empower the National Crime Agency to operate in Northern Ireland; and how this position can be reconciled with the affirmations which accompanied the agreement to devolve police and justice powers.

(AQW 19052/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: All aspects of Executive business, including the processes by which the Executive reached a decision on any matter, are confidential.

Civil Contingencies

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will introduce legislation on Civil Contingencies.

(AQW 19112/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Consideration is currently being given to recommendations made by the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) to the Executive following the flooding events of 27 and 28 June 2012. One of the PEDU recommendations relates to “formalising the role of Local Government in Northern Ireland in civil contingencies matters”. It would not be appropriate to pre-empt the outcome of this ongoing work, and the subsequent consideration of it by the Executive.

Civil Contingencies Legislation

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether he has any plans to introduce civil contingencies legislation to bring Northern Ireland in line with the rest of the UK and to bring consistency to the structures and delivery of the emergency response.

(AQW 19131/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There are no plans at present to bring civil contingencies legislation here into line with the rest of the UK.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Tuberculosis

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 8787/11-15, to detail why high numbers of cattle were unnecessarily slaughtered due to a misdiagnosis of tuberculosis.

(AQW 18644/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The answer to AQW 8787/11-15 referred to a number of animals removed as reactors to the skin test but which did not have TB confirmed at slaughter or subsequent laboratory tests.

The TB skin test is the specified test in EU Directive 64/432, the Trade Directive, that must be complied with to meet intra-community trading and EU Commission co-funding requirements. Under this Directive it is a legal requirement to slaughter all cattle that are reactors to the skin test. This test has a very high specificity (99.96%) and therefore a positive skin test result is very highly indicative of exposure to TB.

To put this in perspective, of the 1.5 million animals which are TB tested here each year, a relatively small number, estimated at some 600, may not have been exposed to infection, yet react to the test. These so called "false positives" are indistinguishable from infected reactors that also may show no disease signs post mortem, and so they must be removed.

I hope that this reassures you that the considerable majority of TB reactors are correctly diagnosed as being infected.

Rural Development Fund

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she sought legal advice prior to taking the decision to claw back underspend from Axis 3 of the Rural Development Fund.
(AQW 18654/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that my officials took legal advice prior to taking the decision to claw back underspend from Axis3.

Joint Council Committee and Local Action Groups

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total legal costs incurred in setting up Joint Council Committee and Local Action Groups.
(AQW 18655/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department incurred no direct legal costs in setting up the Joint Council Committees or Local Action Groups.

Rural Development Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how delivery of the Rural Development Programme will change as a result of the Review of Public Administration?
(AQW 18658/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: It is still too early in the process of developing the next Rural Development Programme to know how the delivery will change as a result of the current Review of Public Administration. The delivery model for the next Programme is still to be decided. However the draft proposals do require that 5% of the EU contribution should be delivered through the Leader approach. In preparation for the next programme a review of Leader was commissioned to help inform the delivery structures for the new funding period. However, I will continue to look at the potential role local government can play in delivery of all elements of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme.

Single Farm Payments

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 14156/11-15, for an update on the review of the 600 inspection cases.
(AQW 18666/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has reviewed 623 inspection cases that were paid their 2011 Single Farm Payments after 30 June 2012. Of these, 34 were eligible for and paid interest totalling £3,486.74.

Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total amount of funding allocated to (i) Gaelic Athletic Association clubs; and (ii) soccer clubs through the current Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 18672/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Rural Development Programme does not provide funding to sports clubs for direct sporting activities. However, where such an organisation wishes to promote a project that benefits the wider rural community and which is separate from their primary activity, this may be considered for funding.

To date:-

- (i) GAA/GAC community projects have been allocated funding worth £1.4m;
- (ii) Soccer clubs community projects have been allocated funding worth £400k .

The Local Action Groups depend on applications being received for each of the 6 Measures under Axis 3 which are then assessed competitively, and do not seek applications from any organisations. Axis 3 is a demand led Programme.

Dogs Destroyed

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many dogs have been destroyed in each of the last three years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 18770/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Dog control is legislated for here by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011. The Councils enforce this legislation and provide statistics to my Department regarding its operation on a quarterly basis. We are currently awaiting Council returns for the final quarter of 2012 and so do not as yet have complete statistics for that year.

The figures set out in the table below include the total number of stray and unwanted dogs destroyed by Councils and destruction orders issued by Courts following dog attacks on people or animals for the three complete calendar years 2009 – 2011 and for the period running from 1 January – 30 September 2012.

	2009	2010	2011	1 January – 30 September 2012
Antrim Borough Council	23	24	17	10
Ards Borough Council	41	26	47	24
Armagh City And District Council	56	46	97	25
Ballymena Borough Council	71	86	82	21
Ballymoney Borough Council	9	10	7	6
Banbridge District Council	30	21	31	12
Belfast City Council	307	102	27	30
Carrickfergus Borough Council	24	31	36	19
Castlereagh Borough Council	40	26	19	7
Coleraine Borough Council	72	47	31	14

	2009	2010	2011	1 January – 30 September 2012
Cookstown District Council	23	17	15	14
Craigavon Borough Council	143	181	14	3
Derry City Council	170	178	150	79
Down District Council	178	158	153	91
Dungannon And South Tyrone Borough Council	97	121	113	56
Fermanagh District Council	195	155	124	71
Larne Borough Council	13	16	12	5
Limavady Borough Council	57	53	43	35
Lisburn City Council	134	188	171	76
Magherafelt District Council	36	11	19	12
Moyle District Council	26	17	20	18
Newry and Mourne District Council	291	259	196	135
Newtownabbey Borough Council	63	45	31	32
North Down Borough Council	18	12	34	9
Omagh District Council	115	72	35	14
Strabane District Council	91	69	96	27
Total	2323	1971	1620	845

Changes implemented by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 necessitated a review of the statistical information my Department required from the Councils. From April 2012 Councils have been collating statistics on the number of dogs of a banned type (e.g. pit-bull terriers) that have been humanely destroyed. So, in addition to the figures set out in the tables above I can advise that two dogs of a banned type have been humanely destroyed by Coleraine Borough Council and one by Lisburn City Council between 1 April 2012 and 30 September 2012.

Regeneration Scheme in Millisle

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans there are for a regeneration scheme in Millisle.

(AQW 18820/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not have a specific budget for regeneration schemes; these are the responsibility of the Department for Social Development.

The current work on village renewal, which is being taken forward by my Department through Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme (RDP), is within the broader context of assessing the need for funding within rural villages, which will impact on communities, not just environmentally but also socially and economically.

Axis 3 of the RDP, as you will be aware, is being delivered on behalf of my Department by Council clusters that have formed into Joint Council Committees and Local Action Groups.

The Joint Council Committee that covers the Millisle area is the Down Rural Area Partnership (DRAP). An application for a Youth and Community Facility in Millisle has been awarded funding through Axis 3, Village Renewal. In addition, a Letter of Offer for funding through the tourism measure has been issued to Ards Borough Council for a Coastal Route Car Parks Branding project to upgrade 6 sites within the Ards Borough Council area, one of which is the Lagoon, Millisle.

DRAP intend to open a further call for applications to Village Renewal later this year, providing a further opportunity to support villages like Millisle.

Farm Inspections

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18219/11-15, whether her officials operate on a target-basis when they aim to action and complete queries within 15 working days.

(AQW 18853/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department aims to action and complete queries within 15 working days whilst operating according to the targets in the DARD's Customer Service Standards outlined in AQW 18219/11-15.

Review of Public Administration

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

(AQW 18867/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The transfer of 'rural development' has historically featured as the main area of DARD work considered for potential transfer to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

The EU has published its rural development proposals for the 2014-2020 funding period as part of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Negotiations continue on the EU proposals and I am continuing to consider all policy needs for the agricultural sector and the wider rural community in the preparation and implementation of a future rural development programme.

It is still too early in this process to make any firm commitment in relation to the rural development aspect of the Review of Public Administration. However, it remains the case that I will continue to look at the potential role local government can play in delivery of elements of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme.

Crossmaglen Heritage Committee

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why a member of the Crossmaglen Heritage Committee, which is promoting the Rural Development Programme funding application for the refurbishment of the republican monument in Crossmaglen, sits on the Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas joint committee, and participates in its decision making processes in respect of this application.

(AQW 18884/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has provided clusters with very specific rules on conflict of interest. Members of the Joint Council Committee who have an interest in any project being considered for funding must declare their interests. In such cases they must absent themselves from the assessment procedure and discussion of the project. DARD has provided a Conflict of Interest Declaration and a Register of Interests Declaration. These must be completed for all those involved in the delivery of the programme and retained for inspection. The chairperson of the JCC has the right to rule on issues of

conflict of interest and where guidance is required should consult DARD. No representation has been received from SOAR.

Farm Salmon

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farm salmon have escaped from commercial sites in each of the last eight years, broken down by site.

(AQW 18920/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The north of Ireland only has 1 commercial salmon farm, covering 2 sites at Glenarm and Red Bay and there has been no report of salmon escapes within the last 8 years. It should be noted that salmon farms authorised by Scottish or Southern authorities are not required to report to DARD.

There is, however, an escape monitoring programme in operation at the River Bush Salmon Station which will highlight any significant escape that might impact wild populations here. This can be reported to the relevant authorities for consideration of remedial actions.

Commercial Farms

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what responsibility commercial farms have in relation to escaped salmon and the impact on fish stocks.

(AQW 18921/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A commercial operator must hold an Aquatic Animal Health Authorisation and a Fish Culture Licence, granted by DARD. The Licence and Authorisation are granted subject to conditions including specific conditions relating to bio-security, risk based surveillance and escape reporting. These conditions are checked as part of an annual inspection programme.

The commercial operator must notify DARD of all salmon smolt imports and DARD Fish Health Inspectorate attend smolt import sites to verify there are no fish spillages or escapes. DARD also monitor harvest operations monthly to verify that fish escapes or spillages do not occur.

Current site operators also have a policy of no cage towing between sites, specifically to minimise risks of fish escapes.

In addition the operators employ commercial divers regularly to inspect and report on the structural integrity of fish holding units.

Forest Service's Woodland Scheme

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to explain the reason for the delay in payments to participants in the Forest Service's Woodland Scheme.

(AQW 18922/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: 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 whereas in previous years these payments were made in October and November.

Forest Service paid 96% of 2012 Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS) claims by the end of December 2012. The remaining claims were received after the requested return date and could not be validated in time for the December payments. All remaining claims will be validated and payments made by the end of February 2013, including payments for the archived Farm Woodland Scheme.

Waterlogged Agricultural Land

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the acreage of agricultural land that has become waterlogged in the last twelve months broken down by (i) constituency; and (ii) council area.

(AQW 19005/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not hold this information. All soils become waterlogged at points throughout the year, every year. The timing and duration of water logging will vary from year to year, from season to season and from locality to locality. This is dictated by the interaction of soil characteristics, rainfall and evapo-transpiration (i.e. the sum of evaporation and transpiration, meaning the movement of water from sources such as soil into the atmosphere).

Solar Energy Infrastructure

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) how many applications for the installation of solar energy infrastructure have been received in each of the Rural Development Programme Local Action Group areas; and (ii) the monetary value of each application.

(AQW 19010/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme grant assistance may be provided for standalone renewable initiatives including the installation of Photovoltaic panels or for projects where renewable energy technology is planned as part of the larger project. None of the energy produced may be used to reduce farm business or farm home domestic running costs.

Private promoters which include farmers and farm family members and rural micro businesses (less than 10 employees) may be offered financial assistance at a rate of up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant amount of £50,000. Social Economy Enterprises and Community Groups seeking to introduce renewable technologies can be funded at a rate of 75% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant amount of £170,000 depending on the measure applied to. A feasibility study is a Programme requirement and as an eligible cost may be supported through technical assistance at similar grant rates up to a maximum grant amount of £5,000.

The Axis 3 clusters have received applications for funding for solar installations as follows:

Cluster	No of applications	Grant requested £
ARC	2	150,000
DRAP	1	47,360
LRP	4	139,455
NER	1	30,000
SOAR	1	50,000
SWARD	12	326,050
GROW	0	

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any chemical or herbicidal method has been developed to counter the effects of Ash Dieback disease.

(AQW 19048/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are no effective chemical treatments available for trees which already have ash dieback; trees infected by *Chalara fraxinea* are likely to die and may act as a source of further infection, but it may be possible to reduce spread of the disease by the use of chemicals. DARD are currently commissioning AFBI to conduct a desk study which will assess the possible role of disinfectants, biocides, antifungal agents and physical methods to prevent transfer of the fungus in plant debris and to stop it sporulating on leaf litter.

Deer in Ballypatrick Forest

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the species of deer in Ballypatrick Forest (ii) their numbers; and (iii) who controls the numbers.

(AQW 19070/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Ballypatrick forest contains sika deer. Numbers are estimated at 70 to 100 deer. The sporting rights of this forest are privately owned and deer culling is primarily carried out by private individuals exercising these rights.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Amateur Rugby Clubs: Funding

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the level of funding that amateur rugby clubs have received over the past five years compared with football and the Gaelic Athletic Association.

(AQW 17883/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The table below outlines the exchequer and Lottery funding provided by Sport NI to amateur rugby clubs, football clubs and GAA clubs in each of the last five financial years.

Year	Rugby		Football		GAA	
	Exchequer	Lottery	Exchequer	Lottery	Exchequer	Lottery
2007/08	0	0	807,163	0	590,000	981,342
2008/09	410,403	0	976,217	1,642,000	3,754,228	1,299,358
2009/10	204,680	0	2,968,015	245,000	6,569,878	10,000
2010/11	89,104	0	2,303,384	0	610,092	0
2011/12	9,880	0	1,204,126	0	537,108	0
Totals	714,067	0	8,258,905	1,887,000	12,061,306	2,290,700
Grand Total	£714,067		£10,145,905		£14,352,006	

Lough Erne: Netting of Pike

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the terms of commercial licences that are issued to allow the netting of pike from Lough Erne including (i) the initial cost to the licensee; (ii) any additional revenue her Department is entitled to from fish that are sold as a result of commercial operations; (iii) the number of current valid licences; (iv) the maximum number of licences that can be issued; and (v) the names of the current commercial licence holders.

(AQW 18486/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The terms of commercial licences that are issued to allow the netting of pike from Lough Erne are outlined in the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 and in Byelaws made under that Act and these are outlined on the licence.

- (i) A licence for a single wall set net or trammel net for the taking of freshwater fish other than trout or rainbow trout, per 91 metres (100 yards) is £17.00.

A licence for a bait net for the taking of freshwater fish other than trout or rainbow trout for use as bait – per net is £5.00

- (ii) DCAL receives no additional revenue generated from fish sold as a result of commercial operations.
- (iii) A commercial licence allows the fishermen to fish on any water in the DCAL jurisdiction with the fishery owner's permission. Currently there are 7 commercial licences issued for the 2013 season on Lough Erne.
- (iv) There is no maximum limit to the number of commercial licences issued. As fishery owner, DCAL controls the number of commercial fishermen on Lough Erne through the issue of permits.
- (v) Under data protection legislation, Section 40 (2), the Department cannot disclose the identity of commercial licence holders.

Lough Erne: Netting of Pike

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the limits of the commercial licences currently issued to allow the netting of pike from Lough Erne including (i) maximum catch limits; (ii) size of fish allowed to be removed; (iii) species of fish allowed to be removed; (iv) type of nets that can be used for the process; (v) when nets are allowed to be used; (vi) where exactly can nets be used; and (vii) how often nets are checked by the operators.

(AQW 18487/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Regulations regarding all aspects of commercial fishing on Lough Erne are outlined in the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 as amended. There are currently no limits to the number of commercial licences issued, which are not restricted to Lough Erne. However, the Department restricts the number of commercial fishermen through the issue of permits for Lough Erne.

- (i) There are no maximum catch limits.
- (ii) The minimum size of pike and perch allowed to be taken are defined under Regulation 83 of the Fisheries Byelaws 2003. ie pike less than 60 cm and perch less than 16.5 cm.
- (iii) Pike are currently the only species that DCAL issue a commercial permit for Lough Erne. (a)
- (iv) The type of permitted nets are defined under Regulation 49 and 50 of the Fisheries Byelaws 2003
- (v) Commercial fishing for coarse fish (except pollen) on Lough Erne is restricted from 1st December until the last day in February.
- (vi) Details of where nets can be used on Lough Erne are defined under Regulation 48 of the Fisheries Byelaws 2003.
- (vii) There are no defined regulations regarding how often commercial nets are checked by operators.
 - (a) All other species caught must be returned to water unharmed

2013 World Championships for Predator Boat Fishing with Lures

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has spoken to the organisers of the 2013 World Championships for Predator Boat Fishing with Lures in Lough Erne regarding the competition being in jeopardy as a result of the operation of commercial nets on the lough.

(AQW 18488/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL Fisheries Officers for the Southern and Western area are in contact with the organisers to offer their support in the management of the competition.

Commercial fishermen operating on Lough Erne are regulated by DCAL and do not pose any threat to this competition which attracts anglers from across Europe.

Lough Erne: Commercial Net Operators

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number and mass of (i) pike; and (ii) all other species taken out of Lough Erne by commercial net operators, in each of the last 26 months.

(AQW 18489/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Regulations regarding all aspects of commercial fishing on Lough Erne are outlined in the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 as amended. There are currently no limits to the number of commercial licences issued, which are not restricted to Lough Erne. However, the Department restricts the number of commercial fishermen through the issue of permits for Lough Erne.

(viii) There are no maximum catch limits.

(ix) The minimum size of pike and perch allowed to be taken are defined under Regulation 83 of the Fisheries Byelaws 2003. ie pike less than 60 cm and perch less than 16.5 cm.

(x) Pike are currently the only species that DCAL issue a commercial permit for Lough Erne. (a)

(xi) The type of permitted nets are defined under Regulation 49 and 50 of the Fisheries Byelaws 2003

(xii) Commercial fishing for coarse fish (except pollen) on Lough Erne is restricted from 1st December until the last day in February.

(xiii) Details of where nets can be used on Lough Erne are defined under Regulation 48 of the Fisheries Byelaws 2003.

(xiv) There are no defined regulations regarding how often commercial nets are checked by operators.

(b) All other species caught must be returned to water unharmed

Lough Erne: Pike Net Fishing

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the scientific evidence that has been sought to assist in awarding commercial licences for pike net fishing on Lough Erne.

(AQW 18490/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL has commissioned the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to undertake net surveys of fish, which provide information on existing fish stocks on Lough Erne. The last survey dates from 2010 and the next survey is scheduled for 2013.

The scientific evidence from these surveys informs DCAL policy on the management of the stock on Lough Erne, including pike.

Lough Erne: Commercial Nets

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the dates in the last 3 years when (i) announced; and (ii) unannounced checks have been made by her departmental officials on the operation of commercial nets on Lough Erne.

(AQW 18494/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

(i) Inland Fisheries enforcement staff do not announce when they are undertaking visits.

(ii) In 2010, Twenty four unannounced checks were undertaken

In 2011, Thirteen unannounced checks were undertaken

In 2012 , Eleven unannounced checks were undertaken up until 18 January 2013

2010	2011	2012 *
19/01/2010	26/01/2011	12/01/2012
20/01/2010	08/02/2011	07/02/2012
22/01/2010	22/02/2011	14/02/2012
28/01/2010	24/02/2011	16/02/2012
08/02/2010	01/03/2011	01/03/2012
04/02/2010	09/03/2011	08/03/2012
08/02/2010	16/03/2011	13/03/2012
16/02/2010	24/03/2011	23/03/2012
23/02/2010	26/03/2011	27/03/2012
25/02/2010	28/03/2011	29/03/2012
01/03/2010	30/03/2011	06/12/2012
06/03/2010	20/12/2011	
09/03/2010	22/12/2011	
09/03/2010		
11/03/2010		
18/03/2010		
18/03/2010		
18/03/2010		
22/03/2010		
25/03/2010		
30/03/2010		
11/11/2010		
22/11/2010		
25/11/2010		

* up until 18 January 2013

Lough Erne: Female Pike

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the impact that removing a significant quantity of large female pike from Lough Erne through commercial netting would have on the predicted balance of fish stocks in the lough.

(AQW 18496/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL monitors pike stocks based on scientific evidence from AFBI. There is no scientific evidence to demonstrate that pike numbers are adversely impacted by commercial operations.

Scientific evidence confirms that pike take disproportionate numbers of trout in relation to the balance of other species available to them. Removing a proportion of the pike above 60 cm (likely to be females) through the commercial fishery, will lead to a pike population with lower overall numbers but as the spawning stock includes young females and males less than 60 cm the existence of the pike is not threatened.

Lough Erne Commercial Licence Holders

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any funds or equipment that have been provided to commercial licence holders on Lough Erne in the last five years.

(AQW 18497/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL has provided no financial funding or equipment to commercial fishermen on Lough Erne in the last five years.

Lough Erne

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the impact of her Department's efforts to increase the number of angling tourists while at the same time allowing the removal of a significant number of fish from Lough Erne through commercial licences.

(AQW 18498/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL's overall policy for Lough Erne is primarily focused on developing the Lough as a recreational facility to support the angling tourist industry and in contributing to the economy of County Fermanagh, while respecting the traditional commercial fishery.

DCAL owns the fishing rights to Lough Erne and the management of fish stocks is informed by scientific analysis of fish stock surveys undertaken by the Agri Food and Biosciences Institute. DCAL implements changes to its management of the Lough to reflect this advice.

DCAL also controls the issue of commercial permits to ensure that commercial fishing on the Lough Erne is managed. DCAL enforcement officers also undertake regular patrols both on land and water to ensure only those fishermen with the appropriate commercial licence and permit are operating.

Pike Catching

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether nets which were previously used to catch or conserve eels are permitted to be used to catch pike commercially.

(AQW 18564/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Nets which are used to catch or conserve eels are not suitable for catching pike commercially.

Senior Fisheries Officer

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether a Senior Fisheries Officer for the southern and western areas has been recently appointed.

(AQW 18565/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL is currently undertaking a recruitment competition to appoint a new Senior Fisheries Officer (SFO) promotion competition.

Lough Erne: Commercial Nets

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) for how long have commercial nets been in operation on Lough Erne; and (ii) the rationale behind permitting commercial nets in the Lough.

(AQW 18566/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) Families have been commercially fishing Lough Erne for generations. Regulations regarding fishing engines which relate to commercial fishing were introduced in the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966.
- (ii) DCAL's overall policy for Lough Erne recognises and respects the rights of the traditional commercial fisheries but is primarily interested in developing the Lough as a recreational fishery to support the local economy.

- (iii) Fish stock surveys on Lough Erne undertaken by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) have indicated there is a sustainable population to permit commercial fishing. The term sustainable population is applied to a fishery where the populations have safe biological limits and/or reproductive capacity and can be exploited to provide a yield. DCAL controls the number of commercial fishermen on Lough Erne through the issue of permits.

Physical Activity at School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of whether creating a joint approach between her Department, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Education to increase physical activity at schools, would help to improve the health of the population.

(AQW 18642/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I fully agree that increased physical activity at schools can help to improve the health of the population. For that reason, my Department is already working jointly with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Education (DE), along with a number of other Departments and stakeholders, to increase participation levels in sport and physical activity across the north of Ireland including within schools. This is one of the key aims of my Department's 10-year strategy for sport, Sport Matters, which contains a number of targets to increase participation across the population including among school aged children. As part of this process, a Sport Matters Action Plan has been developed and published which sets out detailed actions that are now being taken forward to ensure these targets are achieved within the life of the strategy.

Public Coarse Angling Venues

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the locations of all public coarse angling venues.

(AQW 18674/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Details of the locations of all DCAL Public Angling Estate waters, including coarse angling venues, can be found on the NI Direct angling website at www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling

Coarse Angling Venues

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has any plans to increase coarse angling venues in North Down and Ards.

(AQW 18675/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are few coarse fisheries in the North Down and Ards areas and as such there are limited opportunities for the Department to increase coarse angling venues in the Public Angling Estate.

The fishing rights to many waters in these areas are already secured by angling clubs, but the Department would give consideration to any new waters that may become available.

Angling Stands on Waters in County Down

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if her Department has any plans to increase the number of angling stands on waters in County Down.

(AQW 18722/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL Inland Fisheries Staff in the South East Area, which includes Co Down, are at present delivering on a five year plan for the development of Public Angling Estate. Subject to funding constraints, this plan will include the provision of improved access for anglers, new angling stands and the repair and maintenance of existing angling stands.

In 2012 DCAL added four additional fishing stands at the Quoile and three additional fishing stands at Lough Money.

Boxing Club: Funding

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail which boxing clubs, as currently constituted, in the East Londonderry constituency will be eligible for funding in the next financial year. **(AQW 18728/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: The eligibility of any sports organisation, including boxing clubs, for funding in the next financial year will depend on the eligibility criteria that is applied to individual funding programmes.

In relation to the Boxing Investment Programme, however, I understand that five boxing clubs based in the east of Co. Derry constituency have submitted expressions of interest forms to Sport NI. These are The Skerries Amateur Boxing Club (ABC) in Coleraine, Coleraine ABC, Errigal ABC in Garvagh, Chrchlands ABC in Coleraine and St Canices ABC in Dungiven.

Sport Ni has confirmed that all five of these clubs currently meet the eligibility criteria for assistance under the programme, which is presently out to consultation until 8 February 2013. Final decisions on funding will be taken once this process has been completed.

50th Anniversary of the Death of C.S. Lewis

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans are in place to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis. **(AQW 18738/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: To commemorate the 50th anniversary of C.S Lewis's death on 22nd November 2013, Libraries NI is organising a programme of events including exhibitions, talks, readings and workshops. These will be centred around Holywood Arches library and Belfast Central library both of which are close to the areas in which CS Lewis lived and worked. The Linen Hall library will also mark the anniversary with a series of events.

The Arts Council NI, which administers funding for cultural events, is likely to receive applications for funding for a range of events in the next financial year.

Arts Group Grants

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail what grants are available to arts groups. **(AQW 18773/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: When open to applications, arts groups can apply to the Arts Council for financial support from the following funding programmes:

- Annual Funding Programme;
- Lottery Project Funding;
- Artists' International Development Fund;
- Professional Arts Abroad;
- Musical Instruments for Bands;
- Building Peace Through The Arts – Re-imagining Communities;
- Equipment;
- Public Art;
- Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF);
- Arts & Older People's Programme; and
- Small Grants Programme (rolling programme).

Sports Stadium Projects

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what are the completion dates for each of the sports stadium projects. **(AQW 18895/11-15)**

- Ms Ní Chuilín: Construction work for the UBIRFU Stadium Project is on target to be completed by September 2014.
- Construction work for the IFA Stadium Project is on target to be completed by June 2015.
- Construction work for the UCGAA Stadium Project is on target to be completed by September 2015.

Nets used on Lough Erne

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what is the total length of the nets being used by the seven licensees on Lough Erne.

(AQW 18916/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The total length of nets licensed for the 2012/13 season on Lough Erne is 2,800 yards.

Lough Erne: Net Sizes

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what is the mesh size of the nets being used by the licensees on Lough Erne.

(AQW 18917/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A single wall set net or trammel net for the taking of coarse fish, except pollen, on Upper or Lower Lough Erne must have a mesh of 63 millimetres or more from knot to knot or 252 millimetres to be measured all round each mesh.

Lough Erne Netsmen

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there is any evidence of by-catch, other than pike, being caught by the licensed netsmen on Lough Erne.

(AQW 18918/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department has no evidence of by-catch other than pike being caught by licensed netsmen on Lough Erne.

It is a condition of the DCAL permit that all fish other than pike over 60cm should be returned to the water without avoidable injury.

Lough Erne Netsmen

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants have been awarded to Lough Erne netsmen in each of the last three years.

(AQW 18919/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL has not awarded any grant funding to Lough Erne commercial fishermen in the last three years.

Salmon Fishing

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether salmon were taken from nets off the North Antrim coast in the 2012 season, when licences were withheld by her Department.

(AQW 19296/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department is not aware of any salmon being taken by any nets off the North Antrim coast in the 2012 season.

Department of Education

Schools Estate in East Antrim

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to outline the issues facing the schools estate in East Antrim; and the steps that his Department, in conjunction with the North Eastern Education and Library Board, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, are taking to address the concerns of school principals and Boards of Governors.

(AQW 18821/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): I understand that you have provided clarification in relation to your question and that you are seeking information in relation to the maintenance of schools. The maintenance of schools in the maintained and controlled sectors in the East Antrim area is the responsibility of the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). The NI Council for Integrated Education and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have no responsibility for maintenance of the schools estate. Maintenance of Voluntary Grammar, and Grant Maintained Integrated schools is the direct responsibility of the schools, with the cost being met from within the schools' recurrent budget.

I am advised by the NEELB that expenditure in relation to maintenance in each of the last three years up to 31 January 2013 is as follows:

2010/11 (£000s)	1,267,241
2011/12 (£000s)	1,207,015
1 April 2012 to 31 January 2013 (£000s)	1,174,430
Total (£000s)	3,648,686

It is anticipated that a further £727,000 approx will be spent on maintenance from 1 February 2013 – 31 March 2013.

The need for maintenance works across the schools estate is well documented. I have made certain that monies for maintenance have been ring fenced to ensure that the significant backlog is tackled effectively. According to the Education and Library Boards' estate management system, the current maintenance backlog in schools in the East Antrim area is as shown in the table below:

School Name	School	Management type	Backlog at 30 Jan 2013 £
Ballycarry Primary School	Primary	Controlled	125,785
Cairncastle Primary School	Primary	Controlled	76,075
Carnalbanagh Primary School	Primary	Controlled	60,925
Carrickfergus Central Primary School	Primary	Controlled	58,372
Carrickfergus Model Primary School	Primary	Controlled	88,751
Eden Primary School	Primary	Controlled	51,348
Glynn Primary School	Primary	Controlled	46,800
Greenisland Primary School	Primary	Controlled	401,634
Hollybank Primary School	Primary	Controlled	348,551
King's Park Primary School	Primary	Controlled	210,713
Larne And Inver Primary School	Primary	Controlled	45,619

School Name	School	Management type	Backlog at 30 Jan 2013 £
Linn Primary School	Primary	Controlled	319,807
Moyle Primary School	Primary	Controlled	113,468
Mullaghdubh Primary School	Primary	Controlled	64,244
Oakfield Primary School	Primary	Controlled	239,055
Olderfleet Primary School	Primary	Controlled	37,047
Silverstream Primary School	Primary	Controlled	155,967
Sunnylands Primary School	Primary	Controlled	174,819
Toreagh Primary School	Primary	Controlled	12,225
Upper Ballyboley Primary School	Primary	Controlled	34,462
Victoria Primary School	Primary	Controlled	163,436
Whiteabbey Primary School	Primary	Controlled	286,019
Whitehead Primary School	Primary	Controlled	143,700
Woodburn Primary School	Primary	Controlled	27,050
Woodlawn Primary School	Primary	Controlled	227,945
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School	Primary	Controlled Integrated	13,888
Glenann Primary School	Primary	Maintained	25,567
Seaview Primary School	Primary	Maintained	175,408
St Anthony's Primary School	Primary	Maintained	200,931
St James' Primary School	Primary	Maintained	428,782
St John's Primary School	Primary	Maintained	34,093
St Macnissi's Primary School	Primary	Maintained	3,632
St Marys Primary School	Primary	Maintained	153,979
St Nicholas' Primary School	Primary	Maintained	14,783
St Patrick's Primary School	Primary	Maintained	62,275
St Ciaran's Primary School	Primary	Maintained	112,744
Kilcoan Primary School	Primary	Other Maintained	47,284
Acorn Integrated Primary School	Primary	GMI	11,975
Corran Integrated Primary School	Primary	GMI	20,943
Carrickfergus College	Post-Primary	Controlled	527,501
Carrickfergus Grammar School	Post-Primary	Controlled	1,138,331
Downshire School	Post-Primary	Controlled	1,139,872
Larne High School	Post-Primary	Controlled	324,565

School Name	School	Management type	Backlog at 30 Jan 2013 £
Monkstown Community School	Post-Primary	Controlled	1,080,068
Monkstown Nursery School	Nursery	Controlled	1,670
Roddens Vale Special School	Special	Controlled	4,200
Rosstulla Special School	Special	Controlled	78,393
Sunnylands Nursery School	Nursery	Controlled	850
Thornfield Special School	Special	Controlled	40,348
St Anthony's Nursery School	Nursery	Maintained	61,633
St Killians College	Post-Primary	Maintained	1,509,388
Jordanstown Special School	Special	Other Maintained	450
Belfast High School	Post-Primary	VGS	1,113,577
Larne Grammar School	Post-Primary	VGS	168,010
Ulidia Integrated College	Post-Primary	GMI	43,391
		Total	12,052,348

The backlog for the whole schools estate is currently £307m (excluding schools that have been closed). There is a programme of planned maintenance across the schools' estate that influences the overall maintenance backlog. In addition reactive maintenance is required to address unexpected emergency issues such as a heating system failure. The cost of emergency work is not reflected in the maintenance backlog.

School Enhancement Programme

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether his Department received any submissions for the School Enhancement Programme.

(AQW 18822/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I do not expect to receive proposals for the Schools Enhancement Programme until April, as reflected below in the timetable for the scheme:

- 22 January 2013 –Capital Investment Statement to Assembly –announcing the Schools Enhancement Programme call for projects to school authorities;
- 28 January 2013 - Department issued letters to school authorities setting out process, copying the approved protocol, programme application form and confirming the programme timetable;
- 12 April 2013 – deadline for submission of proposals by School Managing Authorities;
- Mid May 2013 - conclusion of assessment process and submission of proposals to Minister;
- Mid June 2013 – Minister's announcement of successful projects; selected proposals advised to proceed in planning, including securing professional team as required.

School Enhancement Programme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to outline the timescale for the bidding and funding processes of the Schools Enhancement Programme.

(AQW 18865/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The timescale for the new Schools Enhancement Programme is shown below:

- 22 January 2013 –Capital Investment Statement to Assembly –announcing the Schools Enhancement Programme call for projects to school authorities;
- 28 January 2013 - Department issued letters to school authorities setting out process, copying the approved protocol, programme application form and confirming the programme timetable;
- 12 April 2013 – deadline for submission of proposals by School Managing Authorities;
- Mid May 2013 - conclusion of assessment process and submission of proposals to Minister;
- Mid June 2013 – Minister’s announcement of successful projects; selected proposals advised to proceed in planning, including securing professional team as required.

Irish Language Posters

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18500/11-15, to detail the source of the poster placed on a phone booth, in Ann Street in Ballycastle, that only contains the Irish phrase Mar eiríonn leis an oideachas, and bears the Department of Education logo.

(AQW 18910/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The poster currently on display on the phone kiosk in Ann Street, Ballycastle is part of my ongoing “Education Works” advertising campaign. The campaign is of vital importance and aims to raise the value we, as a society, place on education. It aims to inform and engage all parents, in particular those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more involved in their child’s education. It is also intended to impact upon home/family and attitudinal factors by providing parents with consistent, authoritative information on the importance of education and the steps they can take to support their child in achieving good educational outcomes.

This is a multi-media campaign comprising television, radio, outdoor posters, local press and various online sites. It is also being taken forward in English and in Irish in line with my Department’s language policy and is consistent with my duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education.

The Irish poster to which you refer is a replica of the English poster which was displayed during the first two weeks in October on the phone kiosk in Ann Street, Ballycastle.

The wording on the poster Bí páirteach ann, Labhair le do pháiste faoi cad é a d’fhoghlaim siad inniu ar scoil, Mar éiríonn leis an oideachas translates as Get involved, Talk to your child about what they learnt at school today, Because Education Works.

Education and Library Board

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18192/11-15, (i) how many cases went to tribunal; and (ii) how many cases went to court; and to detail the differences in a tribunal case and a court case and the rationale for choosing one over the other.

(AQW 18955/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Number of Cases in last five years by ELB Area

	(i) Tribunal Cases	(ii) Court Cases
BELB	17	1
NEELB	27	0
SEELB	39	2
SELB	11	0
WELB	35	1
Total	129	4

The nature of the cause of action will determine which court has jurisdiction to hear the case. Claims which fall within the jurisdiction of the Fair Employment Tribunal or an Industrial Tribunal must be lodged with the Office of Industrial Tribunal and the Fair Employment Tribunal.

The Industrial Tribunal is the principal forum for adjudicating disputes between employees, prospective and former employees and employers covering a wide range of matters, by way of example only

- Unfair Dismissal
- Redundancy Payment
- Sex Discrimination
- Deduction from wages
- Equal Pay
- Less favourable treatment as an agency worker, than a directly recruited employee
- Age Discrimination

The Fair Employment Tribunal deals with employment discrimination claims arising from alleged complaints arising on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion.

There are a very small number of employment associated matters where there is an overlap between the jurisdiction of the main civil courts here (the county court and the High Court) and the Industrial Tribunal and Employment Tribunal.

A claim for breach of contract up to a value of £25,000 can be brought in either the Fair Employment Tribunal or an Industrial Tribunal. Alternatively, if the value is £15,000 or less it can be brought in the county court. The figure of £15,000 is currently subject to review.

Normally, there is not a rationale for choosing one court over the other, since in the vast majority of employment cases the cause of action will determine whether it is the Industrial Tribunal and Fair Employment Tribunal that has jurisdiction to hear the complaint or the civil court. This is determined by legislation and is normally not in the gift of the complainant.

In the very limited cases where there is a choice, e.g. breach of contract case the different court costs are likely to be an influencing factor.

Disadvantaged Children

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to ensure that disadvantaged children who live outside urban areas are given similar help to those who have access to Sure Start. **(AQW 18963/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: Sure Start is not restricted to urban areas. The Sure Start programme provides services to approximately 34,000 children aged 0-4 and their families who live in at least the top 20% most disadvantaged wards and Super Output Areas in the north of Ireland.

Sure start currently operates 35 projects across 207 wards, of which 33% of the wards are classified as either rural or mixed.

I plan to expand Sure Start provision to an additional 21 wards, of which 10% of the wards are classified as either rural or mixed. The expansion of Sure Start will be on a phased approach commencing in this budget period, subject to available resources.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what level of engagement he has had with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Childcare Strategy. **(AQW 19036/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: My officials have engaged with OFMDFM officials on the development of a childcare strategy and latterly on early drafts of 'Towards a Childcare Strategy'. DE officials regularly attended meetings to discuss the Childcare Strategy and provided information to inform the development of the published document. My Department has written to OFMDFM on a number of occasions in relation to the development of a childcare strategy setting out the context of the Department of Education contribution.

The Department will continue to participate in the Childcare Strategy Project Board and I will continue to work with OFMDFM through the Executive to support the development of the Childcare Strategy.

Consultancy Firms

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to (i) list the consultancy firms his Department has engaged with in each of the last three years; (ii) the purpose of each engagement; and (iii) the total amount paid to each firm.

(AQW 19038/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A list of firms engaged by my Department in relation to external consultancy assignments, as classified in accordance with guidelines set out by the Department of Finance of Personnel (DFP), is set out below. The tables below set out, in alphabetical order, the firms, the purpose of each engagement and the amount of spend incurred on external consultancy in the last three financial years. Clearly, such firms may also be engaged on other areas of work, which are not classified as external consultancy in accordance with DFP guidelines. Spend in relation to such activities is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

2009-2010

Consultant	Purpose of external consultancy assignment	£
Addleshaw Goddard	Schools Modernisation Programme	8,698
Barnardos	Consultation with Children and Young People on draft Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) Regulations	6,000
Class Consultancy	Security validation of new system	4,163
Deloitte	ESA delivery models and location options	44,926
Donal Rogan	Speaker's Fee Autism Conference	100
EMQC	Chartermark Re-assessment	801
Frank	Education Skills Authority (ESA) Corporate Identity and Education Brand	3,750
FSG McClure Watters	Diversity training needs in early years sector, schools and youth	3,678
Goteborg University	Speaker's Fee Autism Conference	1,931
Hamill Bosket	ESA Corporate Identity and Education Brand	2,750
Hays Group	Determination of terms and conditions of ESA directors	12,315
Kings College	Speaker's Fee Autism Conference	974
Marcella Leonard	Child Protection Training	672
McCadden	ESA Corporate Identity and Education Brand	3,960
Millward Brown	Readiness Change	2,015

Consultant	Purpose of external consultancy assignment	£
Papermouse Design	Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing (PEHAW) Homework diary inserts	2,275
Parents' Advice Centre	Parenting Forum	1,250
Parents' Advice Centre	Consultation on Transfer	2,300
Parity Solutions	Programme Manager ESA	65,745
Patricia Daly	Speaker's Fee Autism Conference	221
Price Waterhouse Coopers	Provision of an assessment centre ESA	60,855
Prof Fiona McNicholas	Speaker's Fee Autism Conference	225
QBM	Implementation of Review of Public Administration Programme	7,400
Richard Black	Discretionary cases relating to working with children	5,646
Robert Savage	Speaker's Fee Autism Conference	193
Tandem Design	ESA Corporate Identity and Education Brand	3,755
The Connectives	Design preparation and delivery of workshops at Governors' conference	3,413
Vivienne Walker	Strategic Human Resources/Workforce Issues	10,113
Total 2009-10		260,124

2010-11

Consultant	Purpose of external consultancy assignment	£
Arthur Cox	Lisanelly Project	7,027
Brian Whalley	Governance & Accountability Training Seminars	11,742
Chambre of Public Affairs	Controlled Schools Sectoral Body Working Group	2,807
EMQC Ltd	Customer Service Excellence Model	2,014
FGS MCCIure Watters	Needs assessment and Feasibility Study	16,500
Goldblatt McGuigan	CESG Listed Advisor Scheme (CLAS) – system security validation	2,813
Jacqui Simpson	Turbaries Barrister Costs	3,500
KPMG	Lisanelly Project	24,287
Martin Sykes	Appointment of Independent Procurement Expert to SEELB	4,450
Papermouse Design & Advertising	Homework diary inserts	1,860
Parity Solutions	Programme Manager ESA	275
Participation Network	Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Public Consultation	6,705

Consultant	Purpose of external consultancy assignment	£
Total 2010-11		83,980

2011-12

Consultant	Purpose of external consultancy assignment	£
Arthur Cox	Lisanelly Project	2,377
Early Years	Early Years Consultation with Children	4,390
EMQC Ltd	Customer Service Excellence Model	3,335
Encription IT Security & Forensic Services	Independent IT Health Check	4,840
KPMG	Lisanelly Project	20,271
Martin Sykes	Independent Procurement Expert for SEELB	9,102
Moore Stephens	St. MacNissi's Pension Provision advice	1,819
Papermouse Design	Revision to Homework Diary inserts	720
Pierce Communications	Branding of PEHAW	1,360
Sean Madden	Restoration of Legal Documents	11,500
Smalltown America Limited	Speaker's fee	361
Total 2011-12		60,075

Early Childhood Environment and Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the (i) Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale; and (ii) Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale inspection tool; and whether he intends to introduce these tools.

(AQW 19039/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) recognises the diverse needs of children and the wide variety of ways in which settings address identified needs. Early Years practitioners use a wide range of observations which help to identify needs, interests and ability and they use the outcomes of such observations to inform their planning for the next stage of that child's pre-school education. The ETI does not advocate the use of only one method. The ETI evaluates the outcomes for the children and the method of observation/assessment which is employed, in the context of the individual setting.

The ETI has no plans to implement the use of the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale inspection tool.

'Have Your Say on Education' Report

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the 'Have Your Say on Education' report produced by Youth Action NI, Rural Community Network, Spirit of Enniskillen and Integrated Education Fund; and what he is doing to increase access to integrated education within the remit of Area Based Planning. [R]

(AQW 19042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I welcome all contributions, including the 'Have Your Say on Education' report, to the wider debate on how we might ensure that our education system meets the needs of all our children and young people.

The need for places across the various sectors, including the integrated sector, will be identified through the area planning process being taken forward by the statutory planning authorities, namely the Education & Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. The Terms of Reference for area planning state explicitly that it should take account of commitments outlined in the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent legislation in relation to integrated provision.

The Boards have adopted a model to project future need for places across broad sectors, including integrated, to be used in area planning. However, this does not mean that growth in any management type is capped by the projections. Rather, the breakdown of the projected need for places across broad sectors reflects the current pattern and as such is the starting point for planning. Particular sectors in an area may grow beyond the projections provided there is a consequent reduction in numbers elsewhere.

You may also be aware that I gave approval for NICIE to engage external professionals to form a Panel of associates to act on behalf of and represent the views of NICIE during the Area Planning process. I understand that this work is continuing.

Board of the Education and Skills Authority

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to outline the rationale for having a maximum of eight political representatives on the Board of the Education and Skills Authority.[R]
(AQW 19044/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Schedule 1, 2(1)b of the Education Bill, provides that 8 members of the ESA Board shall be political members. It does this to reflect the Heads of Agreement published by OFMDFM on 16 November, 2011. This was the approach agreed by the Executive in order to bring balanced local democratic accountability to the delivery of a key public service.

Teachers: Redundancy Packages

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have accepted a redundancy package in each year since 2010; and how many of these teachers took up part-time teaching posts in schools.
(AQW 19066/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the number of teachers who received discretionary compensation for redundancy in each year since 2010 and the number of these who have subsequently taken up part-time i.e. temporary teaching days in schools.

Financial Year	Number of teachers who received discretionary compensation for redundancy	Number of these teachers subsequently re-employed on a temporary/substitute day basis
2010-2011	163	41
2011-2012	252	39
2012- Jan 2013	527	42
Totals	942	122

*Figures do not include Voluntary Grammar Schools

School Development Plans

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education to list the school development plans submitted since 1 January 2012; and which of these plans remain outstanding.
(AQW 19069/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A list of the thirty-seven development proposals published since 1 January 2012 is provided below. Sixteen of the proposals are currently under consideration.

DP no.	School / ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
220	Gaelscoil Neachtain 201-6700	Establish a new grant-aided, Controlled Irish medium Primary School in Dungiven, from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	11/01/12	Approved 25/05/12
272	Bronte PS 501-6612	Establish a Nursery Unit to provide 26 full time places with effect from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	16/02/12	Approved 15/05/12
273	Iveagh PS 501-1611	Establish a Nursery Unit to provide 26 full time places with effect from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	16/02/12	Not Approved 15/05/12
274	Brackenagh West PS 501-6098	To extend the capacity from 6 to 7 class base primary school from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	16/02/12	Not approved 22/05/12
212	Colaiste Feirste 124-0291	To establish, a post primary satellite of Colaiste Feirste in Maghera	28/02/12	Decision Pending
222	Altnagelvin Hospital School 231-0029	Proposed closure of Altnagelvin Hospital School and Tuition Service	06/03/12	Approved 03/07/12
221	St Canice's PS 203-6045	Proposed closure of the Irish Medium Stream from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	07/03/12	Approved 25/05/12
223	Knockavoe School 231-6528 Sion Mills PS 201-6442	Proposed relocation of the Speech & Language Support Classes from Knockavoe School Resource Centre to Sion Mills PS	08/03/12	Approved 03/07/12
225	Ardstraw PS 201-6376 Drumlegagh PS 201-2392	Proposal that Ardstraw and Drumlegagh amalgamate on the site of the existing Ardstraw Primary School with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	09/04/12	Approved 26/06/12

DP no.	School / ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
261	Dalriada School Prep Dept 362-0012	Phased closure commencing with effect from 31/08/12 followed by full closure with effect from 31/08/14 or as soon as possible thereafter	15/05/12	Approved 16/08/12
262	Carlane PS 303-0713	Proposed closure of Carlane PS with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Approved 27/07/12
226	Drumragh College 226-0283	Proposal to increase the Enrolment of Drumragh College from 580 to 750 pupils over a period of 5 years.	15/05/12	Not Approved 12/10/12
227	Gaelscoil na Daroige 204-6687	Establish a new Irish Medium Nursery Unit on the site of Gaelscoil na Daróige from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Not Approved 15/08/12
228	St Eugene's HS 223-0111	Phased closure with effect from 31/08/12. Full closure of the school with effect from 31/08/13 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Approved 16/08/12
229	St Peter's HS 223-0181	Phased closure with effect from 31/08/12. Full closure of the school with effect from 31/08/13, or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Approved 08/08/12
230	St Davog's PS 203-2664	Proposed closure from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	04/06/12	Approved 21/08/12
275	Dungannon NS 511-6236	Establish a third full-time unit be with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/06/12	Not Approved 06/12/12
263	Garvagh HS 321-0013	Proposed closure with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	27/06/12	Approved 27/09/12

DP no.	School / ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
230	St Malachy's PS 403-6454	Proposal that the 3 Moderate Learning Difficulty Units should be changed to Learning Support Units. The modified Units will accommodate 30 P1 to P7 pupils and will be operational from 31 August 2013. (Units from Knockmore PS)	03/09/12	Approved 14/12/12
231	Carryduff PS 401-3044	Proposal that a Learning Support Unit is created. Unit will accommodate 6 to 8 P1 to P7 pupils and will be operational from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. (Unit From Knockmore PS)	03/09/12	Approved 13/12/12
213	St Gemma's HS 123-0173	Proposal closure with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/09/12	Approved 07/01/13
276	Orchard County PS 501-6658	To extend the capacity from a 5 to a 6 class base from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/09/12	Decision Pending
277	Fair Hill PS 501-6599	To extend the capacity of Fair Hill Primary School from a 10 to an 11 class base from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/09/12	Decision Pending
231	Ballycolman NS 211-6333	Proposed closure from 31 December 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter. Predicated upon prior Ministerial approval being given to DP232	11/10/12	Decision Pending
232	St Mary's PS 203-6696	Proposal that St Mary's PS establish an additional double nursery unit (52 full time places) using the existing site of Ballycolman NS from 1 Jan 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	11/10/12	Decision Pending
278	New-Bridge Integrated College 526-0285	To increase the admission number from 80 to 100 and sixth form from 100 to 120 pupils from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/10/12	Decision Pending

DP no.	School / ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
279	Donacloney PS 501-6178	To extend the capacity I from an 8 to a 9 class base from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/10/12	Decision Pending
232	Ballymagee PS 401-6430	Establish a 26 place part time nursery unit with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/11/12	Approved 17/01/13
214	Ballygolan PS 101-0296	To cease education provision with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/11/12	Decision Pending
264	Gaelscoil Éanna 304-6685	To increase approved total enrolment numbers of 140 to 176 - 205 from September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/12/12	Decision Pending
233	Belmont House School 231-0015	Relocation of speech and language provision in the North West area, the Woodlands Unit, located at Belmont House School to close with effect from 31 August 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter. This proposal is predicated upon prior Ministerial approval being given DPs 234, 235 and 236.	21/01/13	Decision Pending
234	Ebrington PS 201-0382	The relocation of two speech and language classes from Woodlands Unit to Ebrington Primary School with effect from 1 September 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/01/13	Decision Pending
235	St Anne's PS, Derry 203-6069	The relocation of two speech and language classes from Woodlands Unit to St Anne's Primary School, Derry with effect from 1 September 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter	21/01/13	Decision Pending

DP no.	School / ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
236	Ballykelly PS 201-2298	Speech and Language Provision in the North West Area be expanded by two additional classes being established in Ballykelly PS from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/01/13	Decision Pending
237	St Eugene's PS 203-1888	To close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	21/01/13	Decision Pending
280	Fivemiletown PS 501-6088	To extend the approved enrolment for Fivemiletown Primary School from a 6 class base primary school to a 7 class base primary school with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	22/01/13	Decision Pending
238	St Dymphna's PS 203-6186	Increase capacity from 145 to 210, with increase in admissions number from 21 to 30 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	04/02/13	Decision Pending

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has held with the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and other stakeholders in the integrated sector; and what were the outcomes of these meetings.

(AQW 19127/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since taking office in May 2011 I have had several meetings with the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and the Integrated Education Fund (IEF).

Matters discussed included integrated education in the context of the Programme for Government; Cross Border Planning; governance and accountability issues; and Shared Education.

The outcomes of all of these meetings were constructive and beneficial.

Integrated Education

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education, since 2011, what his Department has done to fulfil the obligation given in the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989 to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education.

(AQW 19129/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I take the Department of Education's statutory duty, to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, very seriously.

The integrated sector continues to grow. In 2011, the schools' census statistics indicated that there were 21,170 pupils attending 42 primary, and 20 post-primary integrated schools here. This has increased to 21,301 pupils according to the 2012/13 census figures.

To comply with the statutory duty, my Department provides funding to the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to assist the development of integrated schools for public benefit. Funding of £613k was allocated in 2011/13 and this increased to £628k in 2012/13.

In addition, DE also provides funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This assists schools in the initial stages of the transformation process, and with the employment of a teacher from the minority community in the school to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2011/12 was £255k, which increased to £261k in 2012/13.

I recognise the vital and valuable contribution that the integrated sector, together with all sectors of education, makes to building a peaceful and stable future for our children.

However, as is the case for all of the other education sectors, my Department responds to parental demand for integrated education. It funds integrated schools that are robust, do not involve unreasonable public expenditure and meet the specified criteria. It does not favour one education sector over another.

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what are the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) implications for the staff involved in procurement sections of Education and Library Boards, in light of the recent policy change in this area.

(AQW 19134/11-15)

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, which 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 engage 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 procurement spend per annum.

Procurement staff within ESA will continue to be responsible for a range of functions including, annual procurement planning, contract management, liaising with the Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE), ongoing review of its performance and the dissemination and promotion of procurement awareness to education sector staff. The proposals are, therefore, unlikely to lead to any reduction in professional procurement staff within the sector.

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 19135/11-15)

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, which 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 engage CPD will ensure that the education sector is at the heart of pan government collaboration. Consequently, the decision has

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Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what are the anticipated savings that will be achieved by the decision to transfer the procurement of goods and services to the Central Procurement Directorate.
(AQW 19136/11-15)

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, which 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 engage 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 procurement spend per annum.

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Pupils who do not have English as a First Language

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what additional funding or pupil premium is available to schools for pupils whose first language is not English.
(AQW 19157/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Children who need additional support to learn the language of instruction or who do not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, may be designated as "Newcomer" pupils, in accordance with the Newcomer Guidelines for schools policy.

As set out in paragraphs 3.60 to 3.63 of the Common Funding Scheme, Newcomer pupils receive an additional 0.5 of the basic Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) cash value for each full-time pupil. This equates to £1,012 in the current 2012/13 financial year. Part-time pupils are weighted at 0.25 of the AWPU cash value.

GCSEs

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what steps he will take to increase the rate of school leavers in North Down currently achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C.
(AQW 19165/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have in place a coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for all our young people and to address the root causes when pupils are not achieving to their full potential. These policies include the school improvement policy, "Every School a Good School" and the strategy for improving literacy and numeracy, "Count, read: succeed". I remain committed to tackling educational underachievement wherever it exists.

The most recent statistics available show that these policies are working, with continued improvements in pupil attainment at GCSE level for all school leavers in the north of Ireland as well as for pupils resident in the North Down constituency.

	School leavers resident in the North Down Constituency* ¹		School leavers in the north of Ireland	
	2006/07	2010/11	2006/07	2010/11
Percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalentents)	69.0	74.8	64.7	73.2
Percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalentents) inc. GCSE English and maths.	61.3	67.0	54.2	59.5

*1 Please note the data are based on the residential postcode of each pupil and not on the location of the school.

The challenge now is to ensure the effective implementation of these policies by all schools so that the improvement in educational outcomes continues, with particular emphasis on how they contribute to raising standards for those pupils entitled to free school meals.

Indeed, the Programme for Government 2011-2015 has a stretching target to raise the percentage of school leavers, entitled to free school meals, achieving five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths by 2015.

In addition to these policies I launched an advertising campaign in September last year which aims to inform and engage all parents, but in particular those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more engaged in their child's education. The campaign provides parents with consistent, authoritative information on schooling and the steps they can take to support their child in achieving good educational outcomes.

£12million will also be invested to improve literacy and numeracy levels in schools over the next two years. This will result in 230 unemployed teachers being appointed as part of a programme to ensure extra support for children in primary schools who are struggling with reading and maths. It will also direct support to pupils in post-primary schools who are not predicted to get at least a 'C' grade in English and/or maths.

Both the advertising campaign and intervention to support the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in schools complement the policies I have in place to support raising standards and to achieve improved outcomes for all our young people.

Southern Education and Library Board Area Plans

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education when he will publish the Area Plans for the Southern Education and Library Board.

(AQW 19171/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have submitted a report on their post-primary area plan consultation and a revised draft area plan. It is my intention that the Education and Library Boards will make these reports and revised plans publicly available, in the near future, to ensure all interested parties are fully informed on the issues and actions.

The draft primary area plans have been finalised, taking into account lessons learned from the post-primary consultation and forwarded to the Department.

I will address the House regarding the post primary area plans in the coming weeks and will also outline how the primary area planning process will progress.

Nursery Units

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many reception classes have applied to become nursery units in each of the last 3 years; and (ii) what was the decision in each case.

(AQW 19184/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There have been (i) 4 Development Proposals (DP) published for conversion of a reception class to a nursery unit of which (ii) 3 were approved and 1 turned down.

In addition to this, 2 proposals to establish a nursery unit were also published and were approved subject to the condition that the schools ceased the reception class. There were also 2 proposals to establish a nursery unit, with the intention to cease reception provision if the DP was approved.

Details as follows:

Year DP Published	DP No.	School	Proposal	Decision
2010	252 (SELB)	St Anthony's PS, Craigavon	To establish an additional nursery unit to replace existing reception provision	Approved
2011	257 (NEELB)	Randalstown Central PS, Randalstown	To convert existing reception class to a nursery unit	Not Approved
2011	256 (SELB)	Drumadonnell PS, Ballyroney	To establish a nursery unit	Approved - subject to the condition that the school ceases the reception class
2011	257 (SELB)	Orchard County PS, Portadown	To establish a nursery unit	Approved – subject to the condition that the school ceases the reception class
2011	261 (SELB)	St Patrick's PS, Mayobridge	To convert existing reception class to a nursery unit	Approved
2011	222 (SEELB)	Tonagh PS, Lisburn	To convert existing reception class to a nursery unit	Approved
2011	264 (SELB)	St Francis of Assisi, Keady	To establish a nursery unit [It was intended to cease reception if the DP was approved]	Not Approved

Year DP Published	DP No.	School	Proposal	Decision
2012	273 (SELB)	Iveagh PS, Rathfriland	To establish a nursery unit [It was intended to cease reception if the DP was approved]	Not Approved

Primary Schools: Reception Classes

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the reception classes which are currently operating, broken down by (i) school type and (ii) Education and Library board.

(AQW 19185/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following table provides details of the number of reception classes comprising only reception pupils, broken down by management type and Education and Library Board:

Management type	ELB	Nos of schools/ classes	Reception pupils
Controlled	NEELB	3	35
Catholic maintained	NEELB	2	32
	SEELB	2	37
	WELB	1	14
Total		8	118

The following table provides details of the number of reception pupils in classes with pupils of compulsory school age, broken down by management type and Education and Library Board:

Management type	ELB	Nos of schools/ classes	Reception pupils
Controlled	NEELB	7	36
	SEELB	4	22
	SELB	10	34
	WELB	8	23
Controlled Integrated	NEELB	1	4
	SEELB	3	6
Other Maintained	SELB	1	1
Catholic maintained	NEELB	5	25
	SEELB	9	44
	SELB	22	57
	WELB	15	52
Total		85	304

Data is from the 2012/13 school census. These figures may be subject to minor revision once the Education and Library Boards' auditing process is completed. Finalised figures will be available at the end of February 2013.

Projected Capital Spend

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 16943/11-15, how much finance had been expended by 31 December 2012 on each of the projects listed.

(AQW 19188/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Finances expended against the 18 capital build projects announced in June 2012 up to 31 December 2012 are shown in the table below.

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/2012 £000's	2012/13 Expenditure up to 31/12/2012 £000's	Total Spend to Date £000's
Coláiste Feirste, Belfast	Post-Primary	2,645	0	2,645
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Primary	739	58	797
St Colman's Abbey Primary School, Newry				
St Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	Primary	93	45	138
Dromore Central Primary School	Primary	244	7	251
Eglinton Primary School	Primary	154	1	155
Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	209	0	209
Ebrington Controlled PS, Derry	Primary	113	0	113
Foyle & Londonderry College	Post-Primary	15,071	2	15073
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	144	8	152
Victoria Park Primary School, Belfast	Primary	408	210	618
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Primary	138	4	142
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	Primary	69	0	69
Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast	Primary	52	0	52
Belmont House Special School, Derry	Special	10	0	10
Rossmar Special School, Limavady	Special	10	0	10
Castletower Ballymena	Special	0	2	2

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/2012 £000's	2012/13 Expenditure up to 31/12/2012 £000's	Total Spend to Date £000's
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	Special	0	0	0
St Gerards Education Resource Centre	Special	0	0	0
		20,099	337	20,436

It should be noted that the figure for Coláiste Feirste, Belfast and Foyle & Londonderry College include site purchases of £2,325k and £14,500k respectively.

Expenditure for the current financial year reflects payments against invoices presented as at 31 December 2012.

Children with Special Needs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the delays caused by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to the return of paperwork required by schools completing annual reviews for children with special needs.

(AQW 19194/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Neither the Department of Education nor the Education and Library Boards have been made aware of significant issues regarding the return of paperwork by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) in relation to requests by schools for paperwork required for annual reviews of statements of special educational needs.

Pre-School Pupils Attendance

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what research his Department has conducted into the effect that the mode of attendance (either part time or full time) of pre-school pupils has on society and parental career choices.

(AQW 19197/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department provided funding, along with the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and the Social Steering Group for a longitudinal study which looked at the educational and developmental impact on children of a pre-school education and one of the aspects considered by the study was length of session. The 'Effective Pre-school Provision (EPPNI) Summary Report 2006' found, inter alia, that full time attendance had no benefits for cognitive development at the start of primary school compared to part-time provision.

In December 2012 I launched Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Education and Learning which sets out the Department of Education's proposed overall policy for early years education and learning. A key action proposed in the Framework is that the Department will over time standardise patterns of attendance as part of the pre-school programme. In finalising the actions I will consider the responses to the consultation in order to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for the child.

Education and Skills Authority: Operating Budget

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the estimated operating budget for the Education and Skills Authority, broken down by the area and amount of the projected spend.

(AQW 19209/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The budgets for 2013/14 have not yet been finalised. Until the commencement date for the Education and Skills Authority has been determined, its operating budget for 2013/14 cannot be established. Work is currently ongoing to establish both structures and budgets.

Area Learning Communities

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on each of the Area Learning Communities, detailing their work and cost to date.

(AQW 19210/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Schools individually, and on an area basis, undertake a review of their curricular offer at 14+ and 16+ and set SMART targets to ensure the offer is of high quality, broad and balanced, coherent and sustainable and relevant to the needs of all young people and the economy. Based around 4 strategic priorities set by the department, each ALC submits an annual implementation plan. All Area Learning Community implementation plans will be available to view on www.efaudit.org by the end of February 2013.

The monies allocated to the schools as a contribution to the costs of expanding the curricular offer in each of the 30 Area Learning Communities in the last year are set out below:

Area Learning Community	No. of schools	Total Allocation 2013/14
Antrim ALC	4	£220,120
Armagh ALC	9	£338,120
Ballyclare ALC	2	£53,552
Ballymena ALC	10	£401,439
Ballymoney ALC	3	£90,811
Ballynahinch ALC	5	£207,924
Banbridge ALC	7	£617,456
Carrickfergus ALC	4	£108,984
Castlereagh ALC	6	£216,854
Coleraine ALC	12	£526,890
Craigavon ALC	13	£413,049
Derg Mourne ALC	5	£280,800
Dungannon & Cookstown ALC	13	£540,779
East Belfast ALC	9	£319,190
Fermanagh ALC	16	£582,649
Foyle ALC	15	£685,266
Larne ALC	4	£134,830
Lecale ALC	8	£335,312
Lisburn ALC	9	£289,310
Magherafelt ALC	6	£223,060
NEELB Rural ALC	4	£228,367
Newry & Mourne ALC	15	£1,081,181

Area Learning Community	No. of schools	Total Allocation 2013/14
Newtownabbey ALC	9	£419,917
North Belfast ALC	11	£390,191
North Down & Ards ALC	15	£706,376
Omagh ALC	9	£228,670
Roe Valley ALC	5	£331,288
South Belfast ALC	11	£192,179
South West Belfast ALC	2	£90,535
West Belfast ALC	9	£517,429

Bi-Lateral Selection System

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education how many post-primary schools work a bi-lateral selection system for pupils; and what percentage of (i) pupils of all ability; and (ii) pupils academically selected attend each of these schools.

(AQW 19212/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are five post-primary schools that operate a bi-lateral selection process for entry to Year 8 – that is they use a mixture of academic and non-academic criteria to select pupils for admission. The table below sets out, for each of these schools, the percentage of pupils that will be selected for admission to Year 8 using academic criteria and the percentage that will be admitted using non-academic criteria in the Transfer 2013 process.

School	% pupils admitted using academic criteria	% pupils admitted using non-academic criteria
Lagan College	35	65
Slemish Integrated College	35	65
Strabane Academy	50	50
Coleraine High School	90	10
Coleraine Academical Institution	92	8

The admissions criteria used by any school are a matter for the Board of Governors: there are currently no Regulations that either prescribe or prohibit criteria, or set down the order in which criteria should be applied. However, all post-primary schools are obliged by law to have regard to the guidance published by the Department which recommends a number of criteria that schools should use, and also recommends that schools should not use criteria referenced to academic ability.

The Board of Governors of a school, as the legal admissions authority, has responsibility for setting the admissions criteria for that school in line with DE legislation and policies. For schools currently operating a bi-lateral process this includes determining the percentage of applicants to be selected with reference to academic ability.

Bi-Lateral Selection System

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education, where a Board of Governors is against a bi-lateral selection system and wants to retain academic selection, what measures are in place in Education and Library Boards or his Department, to require a school to work a bi-lateral system of selecting pupils.

(AQW 19213/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are five post-primary schools that operate a bi-lateral selection process for entry to Year 8 – that is they use a mixture of academic and non-academic criteria to select pupils for admission. The table below sets out, for each of these schools, the percentage of pupils that will be selected for admission to Year 8 using academic criteria and the percentage that will be admitted using non-academic criteria in the Transfer 2013 process.

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The Board of Governors of a school, as the legal admissions authority, has responsibility for setting the admissions criteria for that school in line with DE legislation and policies. For schools currently operating a bi-lateral process this includes determining the percentage of applicants to be selected with reference to academic ability.

Bi-Lateral Selection System

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education what mechanisms are in place in Education and Library Boards or his Department, to determine the percentage of pupils that are selected by academic selection in a post-primary school that has a bi-lateral selection process.

(AQW 19214/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are five post-primary schools that operate a bi-lateral selection process for entry to Year 8 – that is they use a mixture of academic and non-academic criteria to select pupils for admission. The table below sets out, for each of these schools, the percentage of pupils that will be selected for admission to Year 8 using academic criteria and the percentage that will be admitted using non-academic criteria in the Transfer 2013 process.

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The Board of Governors of a school, as the legal admissions authority, has responsibility for setting the admissions criteria for that school in line with DE legislation and policies. For schools currently operating a bi-lateral process this includes determining the percentage of applicants to be selected with reference to academic ability.

New School Builds

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education what provisions are in place to provide each of the new school builds announced in January 2013 with renewable energy resources and water recycling facilities. **(AQW 19223/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: All major works projects must include measures to achieve a Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of 'excellent' for new schemes or 'very good' for refurbishment schemes. The BREEAM assessment uses recognised measures of performance set against established benchmarks to evaluate a building's specification, design, construction and use. These measures include aspects related to energy and water use, the internal environment (health and well-being), pollution, transport, materials, waste, ecology and management processes.

In addition, design proposals for a new school must include consideration of renewable energy as part of the business case submitted to the Department for approval.

My Department is committed to the promotion of sustainability and the new school builds that I announced last month will have to comply with the requirements outlined above.

Extended Schools Concept

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether he will re-affirm his commitment to the extended schools concept; and to detail the physical capacity in the new school builds, announced in January 2013, to cope with an extended provision of services. **(AQW 19224/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: I remain committed to the Extended Schools concept. In recognition of this I provided £11.8m for the Extended Schools programme in 2012/13. Over 450 schools across the north of Ireland currently benefit from additional funding provided through the programme.

The focus of my capital investment announcement of 22 January has been on providing a first class educational experience for pupils to help our young people fulfil their potential.

The schools to be advanced in planning are core to emerging area plans, which will ensure a strategic approach covering all children's needs is adopted. They will be brought forward in discussion with Managing Authorities and schools to ensure they fully address the needs of pupils. The need for extended services will form part of these discussions.

Continuing Professional Development

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the budget available for Continuing Professional Development across the school sectors in this financial year; and whether he will affirm his commitment to the importance of improving the teaching body through access to training and development in the workplace. **(AQW 19225/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: I have made some £11.5 million available for Continuing Professional Development across the school sectors in this financial year.

Well trained and motivated teachers are essential in the drive to raise standards in our schools. The proposed Education and Skills Authority will therefore have a professional support service of the highest quality. It will be responsive to the needs of teachers, modern in its outlook and dedicated in its commitment to helping teachers support pupils. In the interim, I have tasked my officials with taking action to ensure that the current structures continue to deliver effectively for teachers.

I will also ensure support for the continuing professional development of teachers through a new strategy for teacher education that will focus on developing and supporting teachers throughout their career.

Children Taught in Composite Classes

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education whether any research has been carried out on the attainment levels of children who have been taught in composite classes.

(AQW 19233/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has not carried out any specific research on the attainment levels of children who have been taught in composite classes.

The Department is aware that research has been carried out in other countries and this evidence suggests there is little correlation between pupil achievement and composite classes.

Furthermore, there is no evidence from inspections to suggest that the teaching of children in composite classes is any less competent than that received by children in classes with only 1 year group.

School Boards of Governors have a degree of flexibility afforded to them under the Local Management of Schools arrangements. It is the Board of Governors that has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget.

Therefore, any decision on the use of a composite class approach is a matter for the Board of Governors.

Staff to Pupil Ratio

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has conducted any pilot projects to research the optimum staff to pupil ratio needed for nursery schools; and whether these findings were published.

(AQW 19234/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In December 2012 I launched Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Education and Learning. A proposed action in the Framework is piloting the deployment of additional assistants in nursery schools and nursery units to increase the staff to child ratios across statutory pre-school settings. In taking this action forward I proposed that the Department would work directly with nursery school and primary school principals to develop the pilot.

In developing 'Learning to Learn' my officials worked with a Stakeholder Advisory Group, which brought together a wide cross-section of interests in the early years field, including the statutory nursery and primary education sectors.

The focused consultation concluded 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. Before implementing any changes, officials will engage with nursery teachers and principals to discuss the optimum staff to pupil ratio needed for nursery schools and units.

Nursery School Education

Mrs Hale asked Minister of Education, given that Early Years progress will be maintained by inspections, how he will ensure that external providers of nursery school education will be adequately inspected.

(AQW 19235/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All pre-school providers which are in receipt of funding from the Department of Education are expected to deliver the same pre-school curriculum which follows the Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education (which was produced by CCEA). All DE funded pre-school providers, whether they are a nursery school, nursery unit, voluntary or private playgroup, are inspected in the exactly the same way, to the same standard, by early years specialist inspectors from the Education and Training Inspectorate. A comparative summary of the latest findings relating to inspections across the range of pre-school providers during the period of 2010-12 can be found in the latest Chief Inspector's Report.

Staff to Pupil Ratio

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education whether there has been any engagement with nursery teachers and principals to discuss the optimum staff to pupil ratio needed for nursery schools and units. **(AQW 19236/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: In December 2012 I launched Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Education and Learning. A proposed action in the Framework is piloting the deployment of additional assistants in nursery schools and nursery units to increase the staff to child ratios across statutory pre-school settings. In taking this action forward I proposed that the Department would work directly with nursery school and primary school principals to develop the pilot.

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Shadow Year Evaluation Report

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education whether there has been any engagement with schools to address the concerns set out in the Shadow Year Evaluation Report. **(AQW 19237/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: CCEA held an evaluation event on 3 December 2012 for all Shadow Year schools to report the findings of the Shadow Year Evaluation report, to outline actions taken in response to the recommendations of the report and to provide an opportunity for participants to discuss the findings, recommendations and subsequent developments. Findings from the report were also shared and discussed with the Post Primary Principals' Forum on 23 October and the Primary Principals' Forum on 14 November 2012.

I am assured that CCEA continues to engage with schools on an ongoing basis in relation to assessment and moderation arrangements. Engagement to date has included telephone contact with all Shadow Year schools, to ascertain their intention regarding moderation this year and engagement with two Primary principals' cluster groups regarding the new arrangements. In addition, CCEA has delivered 11 Post Primary Agreement Trial Events since 19th November and has provided support visits to both primary and post primary schools. CCEA also continues to provide ongoing email and telephone support for schools on all aspects of the new assessment arrangements.

Board Buses for School Transport Needs

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Education how Education and Library Boards promote the use of Board buses instead of private hire buses for school transport needs outside of normal school hours. **(AQW 19284/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information:

The Belfast Education and Library Board caters almost exclusively for the transport requirements of statemented pupils who attend special schools. Many of the vehicles are adapted for wheelchair provision and special schools are supported for after school clubs and summer schemes.

The North Eastern and South Eastern Education and Library Boards actively seek to promote the use of their buses outside of the normal home to school transport hours. Both Boards encourage schools to apply to use their vehicles throughout the year. During the school day and once pupils are transported into school each morning, buses move to operate an extensive transport programme bringing pupils to swimming pools, library visits and on other school trips as requested. Using Board buses for

these trips is more cost effective than using private hire as the Boards only charge for expenses incurred. Additionally, both Boards' special needs buses are based at special needs schools where they are used to provide transport throughout the school day as required. Also, both Boards' buses provide transport for their Youth Departments in the evenings and weekends, and there is provision on Saturday mornings for the Boards' Music Departments to transport pupils to and from orchestra practice and concerts.

The Southern Education and Library Board writes to schools on a yearly basis, detailing the availability of Board buses for hire. In addition, area transport management staff network with local schools/principals on a regular basis.

The Western Education and Library Board has for many years provided transport on a regular basis to schools and registered youth groups. However, it is a matter for the school management or youth club to decide as to the form of transport acquired; whether Board bus or private hire.

It should be noted that Boards work under domestic driving regulations and are unable to operate for 'hire and reward', as to do so would be to compete against the interests of the private sector. The regulations cover all scheduled / timetabled (ie. regular) bus services within a 30 mile radius from a vehicle's base. Therefore, Boards are restricted by the availability of time on drivers' schedules, the distance/times schools need to travel.

Preschool Places

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education how his Department defines part-time and full-time preschool places; and what is the legal basis for these definitions.

(AQW 19288/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education (NI) Order 1998, Article 22, Paragraph 4, Sub-paragraph (b) provides the following definitions.

"Any reference to full-time pre-school education is a reference to pre-school education normally provided for at least 4 hour and 30 minutes on each school day, and any reference to part-time pre-school education is a reference to pre-school education normally provided for less than that amount of time but for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes on each school day."

DE: North Down Visits

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many visits he has made to North Down since coming into office.

(AQW 19309/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have visited 7 schools in North Down since coming into office. The schools visited are listed below.

- St Columbanus' College, Bangor;
- Regent House School, Newtownards;
- Ballyholme Primary School, Bangor;
- Bangor Central Integrated Primary School, Bangor;
- Holywood Primary School, Holywood;
- Holywood Nursery School, Holywood; and
- Priory College, Holywood.

Pupil Absentee Level

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the pupil absentee level for each school in North Down, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19348/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: School level absence statistics for 2011/12 will be available from 28th February 2013.

The tables below provide the overall absence rates for primary, post-primary and special schools in the North Down Parliamentary Constituency between 2008/09 and 2010/11.

Overall absence rates (% of total half days) in North Down primary schools, 2008/09 – 2010/11

School Name	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Ballyholme PS	3.6	3.4	4.3
Ballymagee PS	4.0	4.1	4.3
Ballyvester PS	5.2	5.2	4.4
Bangor Central PS	5.5	5.5	5.4
Bangor Grammar School Prep. Dept.	3.5	3.7	N/A
Bloomfield PS	7.8	7.6	7.5
Clandeboye PS	7.7	6.8	7.8
Crawfordsburn PS	4.9	5.0	4.4
Donaghadee Ps	5.1	5.3	4.6
Glencraig Integrated PS	3.6	4.0	3.5
Glenlola Collegiate Prep. Dept.	5.4	4.2	3.6
Grange Park PS	3.7	4.3	3.5
Hollywood PS	4.7	4.6	4.4
Kilcooley PS	9.3	7.2	8.4
Kilmaine PS	3.8	3.6	3.5
Millisle PS	4.9	4.8	5.4
Rathmore PS	3.7	4.0	3.6
Redburn PS	10.0	8.8	7.6
St Anne's PS Donaghadee	6.2	8.6	6.2
St Comgall's PS Bangor	4.2	4.3	4.2
St Malachy's PS Bangor	6.0	4.8	5.0
St Patrick's PS Hollywood	3.5	4.5	3.8
Sullivan Upper School Prep. Dept.	2.7	3.0	3.6
Towerview Ps	4.8	4.6	3.7

Overall absence rates (% of total half days) in North Down post-primary schools, 2008/09 – 2010/11

School name	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Bangor Academy And 6Th Form College	12.2	12.0	11.4
Bangor Gs	4.1	4.4	3.9
Glenlola Collegiate	4.9	5.3	5.6
Priory College	11.8	11.5	11.5
St Columbanus' College	8.5	9.4	9.0
Sullivan Upper School	4.0	3.7	3.3

Overall absence rates (% of total half days) in North Down special schools, 2008/09 – 2010/11

School name	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Clifton Special School	10.2	10.7	8.7
Lakewood Special School	22.7	29.9	13.4

Notes to tables:

- Figures for primary schools include pupils in Years 1-7, post-primary schools include Years 8-12 and special schools include all pupils.

Teacher Sickness Absenteeism Level

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the overall teacher sickness absenteeism level, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19349/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Average teacher sickness absence* in each of the last three financial years is as follows:

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
7.6 days	6.3 days	7.2 days

* Excludes Voluntary Grammar Schools

Teacher Qualifications

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what qualifications are required by teachers who wish to work in each year group, including nursery and reception classes, in the (i) Controlled; (ii) Maintained; (iii) Integrated; (iv) Voluntary; and (v) Irish Medium Sectors.

(AQW 19362/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The qualifications required to enable teachers to work in grant aided schools are set out in the Department's Circular 2007/22. Individuals who have completed one of the following courses of study at an approved university or school of education will be eligible to teach here. The courses are:

- A Bachelor of Education Degree;
- Other degree courses with an approved teacher education element;
- An approved degree course together with an approved Post Graduate Certificate in Education qualification;
- An approved degree course together with a Post Graduate Diploma in Further and Higher education obtained while serving as a teacher in a further education setting.

Teachers who have gained recognised qualifications and teaching status in Britain will also be eligible. In addition teachers from within the EC or beyond can apply to the General Teaching Council (GTC) to have their qualification recognised.

Responsibility for the approval of qualifications lies with the GTC, and, in general, teachers registered with the Council are eligible to teach in grant-aided schools here regardless of the sector or phase of education.

However, responsibility for making teaching appointments rests with employers. Although a teacher may be registered as eligible to teach in any school, an employer should ensure that, where required, a teacher's qualifications, training and skills are appropriate to the needs of the school. This could include, but would not be exclusive to, the Irish Medium sector where an Irish language qualification may be desirable.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools requires individuals appointed to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school to hold a recognised Certificate of Religious Education. The onus is therefore on teachers to acquire the Certificate if they wish to seek employment in those schools.

It is not a requirement to possess the Certificate to work in post-primary schools. However, I understand that individual schools may seek the Certificate as a job-related criterion.

Department for Employment and Learning

Number of Students Enrolled in Universities

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of students, domiciled in Northern Ireland, who enrolled in university courses in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) Great Britain; (iii) the Republic of Ireland; and (iv) other EU countries, in each of the last five years, broken down by religion. **(AQW 18752/11-15)**

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):

- (i) The table below details the number Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions broken down by religion for each of the last five years.

Academic year	Protestant	Catholic	Other	Not known/ available	Total
2007/08	14,200	19,820	1,345	6,720	42,085
2008/09	13,570	19,380	1,395	7,355	41,700
2009/10	14,415	20,995	2,270	5,990	43,670
2010/11	14,740	21,380	2,765	5,070	43,960
2011/12	14,505	21,275	3,510	3,970	43,260

- (ii) and (iii) The table below details the number of (ii) Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at Higher Education Institutions in Great Britain and (iii) Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled on Higher Education courses in the Republic of Ireland for each of the last five years. Information on religion is not collected for these students however total enrolments have been included for information.

Academic year	Great Britain	Republic of Ireland
2007/08	20,210	1,060
2008/09	20,560	1,040
2009/10	20,965	1,165
2010/11	21,595	1,035
2011/12	22,330	965

(iv) There is no known source of information which collects data for other EU countries which the Department can access to answer this aspect of the question on Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled in university courses in other EU Countries.

Sources: Higher Education Statistics Agency and Higher Education Authority (ROI)

Notes:

- 1) Latest available data are for the 2011/12 academic year.
- 2) Religious affiliation is only collected for Northern Ireland domiciled students at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions, however it is not a mandatory question.
- 3) Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and therefore may not sum to totals.
- 4) Figures for enrolments in Higher Education Institutions in Great Britain include enrolments at the Open University.

Number of Students Enrolled in Universities

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of students, domiciled in Northern Ireland, who enrolled in university courses in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) Great Britain; (iii) the Republic of Ireland; and (iv) other EU countries in each of the last five years, broken down by the post-primary sector they attended.

(AQW 18753/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on university students broken down by the post-primary sector they attended is not available from my Department.

Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) provides information on NI domiciled students at UK Higher Education Institutions and although some limited information is available on the previous institution which students have attended, HESA has advised that the information is not complete or robust, and therefore cannot be provided.

In addition, although data from the Higher Education Authority in the ROI provides information on NI domiciled students at ROI institutions, this does not include details of the post-primary sector they attended. There is no known source of information which collects data for other EU countries which the Department can access.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning 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 18786/11-15)

Dr Farry: The NICS 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.

Business continuity and staff safety are the key issues to be assessed when considering office closure. My Department has a process in place outlining the appropriate steps to take when considering office

closure. Managers monitor the situation locally and if they foresee any security, safety or transport related difficulties for staff, decide on the appropriate action to take in light of the information available within the rules of the Flexible Working Time - Code of Practice.

Since 3rd December all DEL Headquarter buildings have been closed at 5pm on a small number of occasions. Under the NICS Flexible Working Time scheme, staff are able to vary times of arrival and departure from work, the length and timing of lunch breaks and to take time off if extra hours are worked. As staff were able to avail of flexible working to leave at 4 p.m. on the days where DEL Headquarter buildings were closed at 5 p.m., there is no associated financial cost to my departmental budget.

Recruitment Agencies

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) what checks are made by recruitment agencies to ensure that applicants are providing the correct information, particularly in relation to the disclosure of convictions; (ii) whether this is a legal requirement; and (iii) how this requirement is enforced.

(AQW 18879/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (NI) 2005 (“the Regulations”) set out the information which must be obtained by an employment agency or employment business from hirers and workseekers, before a post can be filled.

There is no specific requirement in the regulations to compel a workseeker to disclose a criminal conviction. However, a requirement to do so may arise if the hirer makes it a specification of the post they are seeking to fill, or if such a disclosure is required by law in connection with a particular post.

The information to be obtained from the hirer about the position to be filled should include details of any experience, training, qualifications and authorisations required by the hirer, by law or by any professional body. If the hirer wishes a worker to have a criminal record check, or if one must be obtained because of the nature of the post, it would be at this stage that it would be identified.

There are some circumstances in which criminal records checks or Enhanced Access NI checks, must be carried out prior to placing workers. Article 13 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order (NI) 2007 requires employment businesses and agencies to ensure that workers who are to engage in “regulated activity” (i.e. with vulnerable adults and children) are not on a barred list. This is done by obtaining an Enhanced Access NI Disclosure certificate. These are required in the case of workers who take up positions in which they will be in contact with vulnerable adults or children.

Where the position to be filled involves working with vulnerable people, or if a specific qualification is required by law or a professional body, the Regulations oblige employment agencies and businesses to obtain copies of any relevant qualifications or authorisations (including Access NI disclosures), and to offer to provide copies of these to the hirer.

In short, if a role to be filled does not involve working with vulnerable adults or children, and if a hirer does not make it a stipulation that a clear criminal record was a condition for the role, then a Northern Ireland based recruitment agency/business has no reason and no legal obligation to seek to obtain a criminal record history for the worker.

My Department enforces the Regulations through its Employment Agency Inspectorate (EAI) and its programmes of inspections. During an inspection, evidence will be sought of any experience, training, qualifications and authorisations required by the hirer, by law or by any professional body, including Enhanced Access NI disclosures, where these must be obtained. Provision is included in the Regulations as to measures that may be taken if there are infringements of the Regulations.

The EAI programme is based on an ongoing identification and assessment of risks in the recruitment sector, and workers who are to work with vulnerable adults or children are prioritised in this programme of work.

The EAI will be happy to investigate any complaint against a recruitment agency and to take whatever steps are necessary on foot of its findings.

Skill Shortages

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans his Department has to address skill shortages in the North and North West of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 18923/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, known as 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures', articulates the Department's overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. The Strategy, which is informed by forecasting work and labour market information, highlights a number of challenges that need to be addressed if we are to overcome current and forecast skills shortages and have a workforce equipped with the skills employers need to drive their businesses.

A key component of my Department's work is how we effectively engage with employers to help them up-skill their existing staff and recruit new staff with the skills they require.

My Department's Skills Solutions Service, targeted specifically at small and medium sized enterprises, helps employers across Northern Ireland and in all sectors to understand and access the Department's skills development provision. It is delivered on an area based basis, which includes a dedicated team in the North West. We are mindful of the One Plan, aimed at the regeneration of Londonderry, and my Department is represented on the Skills Directorate which was established in the city to take forward the relevant parts of the plan.

My Department also undertakes work on a sectoral basis. Last year, I identified the 'hotels and catering sector', which supports tourism, as a priority sector. Consequently, the Skills Solutions Service has worked in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and People 1st, the relevant Sector Skills Council, to introduce and fund the World Host Customer Service Programme as the primary customer service training programme for the hospitality and tourism sector. To date, some 4,500 sector employees across Northern Ireland have successfully completed it, with approximately 50% of this total based in the North and North West of Northern Ireland. The Department has brought forward further World Host programmes to build on this success.

To complement the WorldHost training, the Department's Skills Solutions Service, in conjunction with the Further Education Colleges, has also developed short, accredited training packages in key specific areas. There are numerous other types of training provisions across Northern Ireland which support the flow of qualified people into the hospitality sector, with high quality courses offered throughout the network of Further Education Colleges and Universities. This work builds on the successful Hospitality and Tourism Skills Action Plan, led by my Department.

As the aim of the Skills Strategy is focussed on improving the match between the demand and supply of skills to bring about increased productivity, the Strategy has deliberately focused on the private sector and the skills shortages and gaps within it. That said, a number of pilots based on the Apprenticeship scheme have been taken forward within the public sector including the recently initiated Public/Private Sector ICT Apprenticeship.

Skill Shortages

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans his Department has to address skill shortages in the (i) hospitality; and (ii) public administration sectors.

(AQW 18924/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, known as 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures', articulates the Department's overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. The Strategy, which is informed by forecasting work and labour market information, highlights a number of challenges that need to be addressed if we are to overcome current and forecast skills shortages and have a workforce equipped with the skills employers need to drive their businesses.

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Skill Shortages

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans his Department has to address skill shortages in small and medium sized enterprises.

(AQW 18925/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, known as 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures', articulates the Department's overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. The Strategy, which is informed by forecasting work and labour market information, highlights a number of challenges that need to be addressed if we are to overcome current and forecast skills shortages and have a workforce equipped with the skills employers need to drive their businesses.

A key component of my Department's work is how we effectively engage with employers to help them up-skill their existing staff and recruit new staff with the skills they require.

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University Students

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the religious breakdown of students attending (i) the University of Ulster; and (ii) Queen's University Belfast, broken down by (a) campus; and (ii) attendance type.

(AQW 18960/11-15)

Dr Farry: The tables below detail by religion the number of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast by campus and mode of study in 2011/12.

FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	Protestant	Catholic	Other	Not known/ available	Total
University of Ulster, Belfast	470	570	200	85	1,325
University of Ulster, Coleraine	1,760	1,415	455	230	3,860
University of Ulster, Jordanstown	2,340	4,445	530	295	7,615
University of Ulster, Magee	545	1,855	230	125	2,755
The Queen's University of Belfast	5,405	7,255	1,105	500	14,265
Total	10,525	15,535	2,520	1,235	29,815

PART-TIME STUDENTS

	Protestant	Catholic	Other	Not known/ available	Total
University of Ulster, Belfast	35	135	35	20	225
University of Ulster, Coleraine	170	195	70	55	490
University of Ulster, Jordanstown	1,410	1,825	375	520	4,130
University of Ulster, Magee	100	390	60	40	590
The Queen's University of Belfast	1,435	1,815	425	2,060	5,730
Total	3,155	4,360	960	2,695	11,170

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- 1) Latest available data are for the 2011/12 academic year.
- 2) Religious affiliation is only collected for Northern Ireland domiciled students at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions, however it is not a mandatory question.
- 3) Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and therefore may not sum to totals.

Skills and Vocational Training and Further Education

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what coordination exists between his Department and the Department of Education in relation to funding for skills and vocational training and further education.

(AQW 18961/11-15)

Dr Farry: Both the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Department of Education (DE) are committed to ensuring that every young person has the opportunity, through the education and training system, to fulfil their potential. Concurrent with this is a need to develop a highly skilled, flexible and innovative workforce which will contribute to the twin goals of economic success and social inclusion.

DEL and DE have been working closely on these issues since 2004. Initially through the Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP), and since 2008 through the Entitlement Framework (EF). The VEP was developed to progress the recommendations contained in the Further Education Strategy Review and the Post-primary Review (the Costello Report) to enhance the profile of 'vocational education' and promote the need for collaboration among schools, colleges and training providers in the interest of pupils. The VEP, which was funded by DEL, ended in June 2008, and from then funding was channelled through DE to schools through the EF funding formula. Collaborative arrangements between schools, colleges and training providers are continuing.

Senior officials from DEL and DE meet regularly to discuss how they will implement their respective policies and programmes for 14 to 19 year olds in a coherent manner, both to maximise the benefit to young people, and to make the best use of the resources that are available to both departments.

DEL seeks to guarantee that the education, training and skills provision it funds is of excellent quality, and that those who provide these services on its behalf commit to suitably high performance standards. We know that young people stand the best chance of succeeding and achieving if they can follow courses that interest and inspire them, and that can enable them to progress to training or to further and higher education, and on to fulfilling careers.

Learners who see their time at school or college as relevant to their interests and career choices are more likely to stay engaged with education, and are more likely to succeed and do well. This, in turn, contributes to improving standards, increasing retention and achievement rates, improving the life chances of individuals, and impacting positively on the performance of the economy.

Improving the levels of literacy, numeracy and, more recently, ICT in the population is a key priority for DEL and for the Executive, and in 2002 DEL launched its Essential Skills strategy. Currently, sixty-six post primary schools now deliver Essential Skills provision. However, my department is discussing with DE, and with Education and Training Inspectorate, how the use of Essential Skills in schools could be increased, as it has the potential to help those young people who are at risk of not attaining a grade C or better in GCSE English or mathematics.

Northern Regional College, Antrim

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the progress on the sale of the Northern Regional College, Antrim; and (ii) plans for the future of (a) the site at Antrim; and (b) the college.

(AQW 18964/11-15)

Dr Farry: Following a Public Sector Trawl, interest in acquiring a portion of the Antrim Campus site has been expressed by Fold Housing Association, for social housing. There is no public sector interest in the purchase of the remainder of the site which will be advertised on the open market when Fold Housing Association's exact requirements are finalised.

The Northern Regional College continues to work with Land and Property Services to achieve value for money for the entire site.

The College offers a range of part time and evening classes at various locations within the Antrim area. In the past two years, 200 courses have been offered, with 2446 participants. The College will continue to offer this type of provision in Antrim, subject to demand.

Northern Regional College, Antrim

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why fewer students from Antrim have taken up places at the Northern Regional College over the past two years,
(AQW 18965/11-15)

Dr Farry: Northern Regional College has informed me that there has been no decline in enrolment numbers from the BT41 Antrim postcode area over the past two full years for which complete figures are available.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.
(AQW 19097/11-15)

Dr Farry: No functions will be transferred from my Department to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

Pathways to Success Collaboration

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the Pathways to Success Collaboration and Innovation Fund programme will ensure that an innovative approach will be taken to developing, delivering and managing the approved programmes, in collaboration with partner organisations.
(AQW 19125/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF) is providing funding of over £9 million to address the issue of NEETs across Northern Ireland during the period December 2012 to March 2015.

A total of 18 organisations, drawn from the community, voluntary and educational sectors, have been chosen to engage with the most disadvantaged young people and help them into or move them towards education, training and employment.

Engaging NEETs will be achieved through a range of innovative approaches including assessment of individual need, bespoke training plans, identification of work placements, education and training courses, 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. The fund will also allow for greater collaboration with and between organisations working in this sector, particularly community and voluntary groups who are best placed to reach many young people who are in the NEET category.

A NEET Advisory Group has been established, with membership drawn from across the Executive Departments, business, the voluntary and community sectors, local Government, and from the NEET Strategy Forum. This group will monitor the effectiveness of the programme on a regular basis throughout the funding period and had its inaugural meeting on 22 January 2013.

The provision of a NEET Advisory Group will ensure innovative and collaborative best practice approaches are identified and shared with all project providers to ensure the most vulnerable and hard to reach young people's lives and prospects can be significantly enhanced. The Collaboration and Innovation Fund project managers will work closely to monitor the effectiveness of the CIF providers and provide ongoing help and support in the spirit of partnership.

As is the case with all public funding, projects that receive funding under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund will be subject to the financial guidance issued by DFP and endorsed by the Minister of Finance. This is set out in 'Managing Public Money' and is available for download at

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/finance/afmd/afmd-key-guidance/afmd-mpmni/managing_public_money-chapter_02.pdf

North West Regional College, Londonderry

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact that the delay in issuing the report into the North West Regional College may have on the college and its lecturers.

(AQW 19211/11-15)

Dr Farry: The publication of the report on industrial relations in North West Regional College has been delayed until 21st February 2013 to allow time for the Department to consider the responses of those individuals who were invited to comment on the report's references to them. The delay is not expected to have a significant impact on the college or its lecturers.

North West Regional College, Londonderry

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) why the report into the North West Regional College Londonderry, which was due to be published in October 2012, was postponed until 31 January 2013 and has been further delayed for publication until 21 February 2013; and (ii) whether he guarantees that it will be published on this date.

(AQW 19287/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department had intended to publish the report on 31st January 2013, following its original completion date of October 2012. Publication has been delayed until 21st February 2013 to allow an opportunity for individuals mentioned in the report to comment on its references to them and for the Department, in turn, to reflect on any comments made. The revised publication date remains 21st February 2013.

Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many applications were for the post of Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College and how this compares with the last time the post was advertised.

(AQW 19318/11-15)

Dr Farry: By the initial closing date, there were two applications for the post of Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College. When the post was last advertised in 2004, there was one application.

Due to the low number of applications returned, and before considering these applications, the panel decided to re-advertise the post in order to maximise the likelihood of at least one candidate successfully demonstrating the essential criteria at interview. I hope to be in a position to appoint the successful candidate by early May 2013.

Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the current position on filling the post of Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College; and when an appointment will be made.

(AQW 19322/11-15)

Dr Farry: By the initial closing date, there were two applications for the post of Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College. When the post was last advertised in 2004, there was one application.

Due to the low number of applications returned, and before considering these applications, the panel decided to re-advertise the post in order to maximise the likelihood of at least one candidate successfully demonstrating the essential criteria at interview. I hope to be in a position to appoint the successful candidate by early May 2013.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

InvestNI: Venture Capital Schemes

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the requirement that is placed on fund managers working on venture capital schemes with InvestNI to make or return a profit to taxpayers.

(AQW 18636/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The primary reason for Invest NI's intervention in the venture capital market is to achieve economic development impacts from the companies invested in. The achievement of a return of profits to taxpayers is therefore a secondary objective.

The best way of achieving sustainable economic impacts is by requiring the venture capital funds to operate on a wholly commercial basis.

All venture capital funds promoted by Invest NI require private capital to be raised alongside the public capital and that private capital can only be raised if there is a firm belief in making a commercial return on the capital. Whilst it is in the interest of government to make a commercial return from Funds in which it has an investment, government intervention must firstly demonstrate an economic development impact. For this reason, Invest NI is sometimes prepared to rank behind the suppliers of private capital in order to raise a Fund at all, thereby gaining a positive economic impact.

Rathlin Island: Broadband

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures are being put in place to improve broadband provision on Rathlin Island.

(AQW 18746/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Officials in my Department continue to engage with the industry and the Rathlin Community, to explore feasible and economic options to improve current broadband provision on the Island provided through wire line and satellite technologies. I can also advise that the Island has been identified as one of the areas that should be part of my plans to improve basic and superfast broadband services under the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project. Until the procurement phase of this project is completed I am unable to comment on the precise improvements that may occur.

Potential Visitors to Coleraine and Limavady

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of potential investors visiting (i) Coleraine; and (ii) Limavady, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 18750/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI reports on visits on a full financial year basis following a validation process with results published at year end. As a result, visits from April 2012 are not yet available.

In the last full financial year 2011/12 (1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012), Invest Northern Ireland facilitated 4 visits to the Coleraine District Council Area by potential inward investors. In the same period zero visits were facilitated to Limavady District Council Area.

It is important to note that Invest NI does not determine the location of an inward investment project. This decision is taken by the investor. Invest NI does work closely with the company when preparing a visit programme to ensure that the locations to be visited meet their requirements and also provide the best opportunity for Invest NI to sell the Northern Ireland proposition.

Titanic Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what are the consequences to her Department of the refusal of its bid for £18m in the January monitoring round in respect of EU refusal of support aid for the Titanic project.

(AQW 18784/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The bid remains under consideration by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on behalf of the Executive.

EU Regional Aid

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether applications for EU regional aid are project specific or generic; and how the EU funding sought for the Titanic project could be made available to other Departments.

(AQW 18835/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Titanic project was not a Regional aid project. Regional aid is a specific type of State aid for areas that are disadvantaged relative to the European or National average. The rules for Regional aid applications are set out in the Guidelines on National Regional Aid 2007 – 2013 at:

[http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006XC0304\(02\):EN:NOT](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006XC0304(02):EN:NOT)

In 2007, Northern Ireland was granted €306m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to be matched euro for euro by national resources resulting in a Programme worth €613m (£510 at a 1.2 exchange rate) This Programme is known as the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland (2007-2013) and the funding allocated must be spent by 31 December 2015.

DETI proposed to draw down £18.2m of the ERDF available via expenditure on the Titanic Signature Project. However, if the funding is not used for this project, it can be proactively reallocated to an alternative Northern Ireland project within the programme period. This would bring about a corresponding easement on the Northern Ireland block budget position. The project will need to meet the Programme objectives but could be brought forward and managed by any Northern Ireland Government Department.

Titanic Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the £18m EU funding anticipated for the Titanic project was received; and what happened to this money.

(AQW 18836/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The EU funding anticipated for the Titanic project has not yet been received. It remains available within the Northern Ireland Competitiveness Programme allocation.

Tourism Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what activities Tourism Ireland has planned to attract tourists from the Benelux countries to coincide with the World Cup Qualifier fixture between Luxembourg and Northern Ireland on 10 September 2013.

(AQW 18863/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Tourism Ireland maximises marketing opportunities around Northern Ireland matches which take place in, or involve teams from, key markets for inbound tourism.

The Benelux countries are not currently a priority market for tourism to Northern Ireland therefore no marketing activity is planned. I am however happy to discuss the issue with the member.

Titanic Signature Building

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps were taken to ensure that the tendering process surrounding the Titanic Signature Building was compliant with EU tendering requirements.

(AQW 18886/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department satisfied itself by reference to Central Procurement Directorate and legal advice that the processes for the award of both the contract to construct the Titanic Signature Building and the contract to operate and maintain the Titanic Signature Building were compliant with EU tendering requirements.

2023 Rugby World Cup

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on any discussions that her Department has been involved in regarding Ireland hosting the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

(AQW 18897/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I was due to meet with The Minister of Culture, Arts & Leisure on Tuesday 8 January 2013 to discuss this issue; however this was postponed by DCAL until the GAA make their position clear.

The Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) has requested a contribution of £25,000 (+VAT) from NITB to undertake a feasibility study. I granted approval for this expenditure in December 2012.

2022 Ryder Cup

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether any consideration has been given to submitting a bid to host the 2022 Ryder Cup.

(AQW 18898/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), is committed to identifying opportunities for Northern Ireland to host major events. However plans and discussions on major events always need to be kept confidential due to the risk of jeopardising negotiations.

Natural Gas Network

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Utility Regulator on the possible extension of the natural gas network to South Down.

(AQW 18933/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Natural gas is already available in some areas of South Down, in towns such as Banbridge, Newry and Warrenpoint. With input from the Utility Regulator, my Department has recently completed a detailed economic appraisal on gas network extension to additional towns in the West and North-West

and to towns in East Down such as Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, Saintfield and Crossgar. My Department will be considering the next steps in respect of East Down through further discussions with the Utility Regulator, including which towns should form part of any new or extended gas licensed areas.

Natural Gas Network

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail proposed timelines for the extension of natural gas networks to (i) Downpatrick and surrounding areas; and (ii) Rostrevor and surrounding areas.

(AQW 18934/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department recently completed an Outline Business Case on gas network extension to further towns in the West and North-West, and to towns in East Down including Hillsborough, Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, Crossgar and Saintfield. Gas network extension in East Down will be subject to further consideration by the Utility Regulator over coming months in relation to which towns may form part of any new or extended licence area. Gas extension to new areas is dependent on sufficient gas loads being available and the willingness of a gas company to construct and operate the new network.

No assessment has been made by the Department with regard to gas loads in Rostrevor. firmus energy has already extended the natural gas network to Warrenpoint and natural gas has been available in Newry for much longer.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18946/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive is expected to make a decision soon on the functions which will transfer to Local Government under Local Government Reform.

InvestNI

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the bids that InvestNI has won for foreign direct investment in the technology industry, from April 2009 to March 2012.

(AQW 18966/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The following table highlights the sectors, in accordance with Invest NI's internal sector structure, directly linked to the technology industry and illustrates the associated project and jobs promoted against each.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI INWARD INVESTMENT BY TECHNOLOGY SECTORS (2009-10 TO 2011/12)

Sector	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New Jobs	Safe Jobs
Computer Software & Services	95	24.85	122.57	1,299	0
Employment Related	31	19.84	103.22	1,299	0
Business Development	64	5.01	19.35	0	0
Electrical & Electronics	71	18.59	93.79	441	56
Employment Related	13	16.61	87.80	441	56
Business Development	58	1.98	5.99	0	0

Sector	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New Jobs	Safe Jobs
Telecoms	25	4.96	26.71	239	708
Employment Related	4	3.51	21.75	239	708
Business Development	21	1.45	4.95	0	0
Grand Total	191	48.40	243.07	1,979	764
Employment Related	48	39.96	212.77	1,979	764
Business Development	143	8.44	30.30	0	0

Notes:

- 1 Planned Investment includes Assistance Offered.
- 2 New Jobs represents the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 3 Safe Jobs represents the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.
- 4 Figures include both first-time inward investments and reinvestments by existing externally-owned clients.
- 5 Business development activities will underpin business competitiveness leading eventually to growth and employment opportunities.
- 6 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

In the last three full financial years 2011/12 (1st April 2009 to 31st March 2012), Invest Northern Ireland has assisted 191 technology related projects by externally owned companies, promoting 1,979 jobs and safeguarding 764 existing jobs and leveraging investment commitments of £243million.

However the table does not include potential investment projects which included some technology requirement but ultimately centred on skills required for other sectors, e.g. financial services, business services, creative services, renewable sectors, etc.

Corporation Tax

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of tax avoidance schemes and what difference the rate of Corporation Tax made to Google's decision to choose Dublin as an foreign direct investment base instead of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 18967/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Policy on tax avoidance is, and will remain, the responsibility of the UK Government and in particular HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). If corporation tax setting powers were to be devolved to Northern Ireland, HMRC would remain as the tax collection body and we would expect it to pursue the collection of taxation in Northern Ireland with the same vigour as any other part of the UK.

Invest NI will attempt to establish the reasons for companies locating outside Northern Ireland. However, such decisions are often commercially sensitive and, as a result, companies are not always willing to share their commercial reasoning for choosing one location over another. For some companies a low rate of Corporation Tax is indeed an important factor in the decision making process and a low Corporation Tax rate is often cited as one of the significant factors attracting large companies to locate in the Republic of Ireland.

InvestNI

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how InvestNI measures job creation compared to the Industrial Development Board measurement used during the last year of its operation.

(AQW 18968/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In its last published annual report, IDB presented figures for the number of jobs promoted and created by new inward-investment projects. In this, IDB reported that c.76% of jobs relating to new inward-investment projects assisted between 1995/96 and 1998/99 were created.

An updated analysis carried out by Invest NI covering the period 2002/03 to 2007-08, and scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), shows that 75% of those jobs promoted through new inward-investment projects were actually created. This figure was accepted by the NIAO as being 'the most reliable estimate available'. It was produced on the same basis as the IDB approach, and is almost identical to its 76% conversion rate.

Northern Ireland Trade Development Centre in Dusseldorf

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the performance and impact of the website of the Northern Ireland Trade Development Centre in Dusseldorf.

(AQW 18970/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI does not maintain an active or separate website for the Northern Ireland Trade Development Centre in Dusseldorf, therefore no web performance data is available for this office location. All web based trade enquiries are routed through the main investni.com website; in the past 12 months it has logged 1630 German visits.

Oil and Gas Wells

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many times organisations or public bodies under her Department's remit have inspected oil and gas wells since 1990, broken down by year and organisation or public body.

(AQW 18982/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department's Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) has carried out 9 inspections comprising 15 visits of oil and gas wells since 1990 as follows:

- 1990 – HSENI - one visit
- 1993 – HSENI - one visit.
- 1995 – HSENI - one visit
- 1999 – HSENI – one visit
- 2000 – HSENI – four visits
- 2001 – HSENI – four visits
- 2008 – HSENI – one visit.
- 2009 – HSENI – one visit.
- 2012 – HSENI – one visit.

Gas Transmission Pipeline

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration she has given to charging a levy on any gas extraction company that will make use of the proposed gas transmission pipeline to the west of Northern Ireland, to recoup any public expenditure.

(AQW 18983/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The economic appraisal undertaken by my Department on extending the natural gas network to further towns in the West and North-West based its assessment of new transmission infrastructure on connecting existing and future gas loads in the respective towns. Estimated pipeline sizes and costs were based only on projected gas demand in towns under consideration. The gas extension project is being taken forward independently from any consideration of potential usage of new pipelines by a company engaged in gas extraction.

EU Electricity and Gas Directives

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail all the outstanding actions required to fully comply with the EU Electricity and Gas Directives.

(AQW 19020/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The vast majority of the work to transpose the Directives was completed by the original deadline of March 2011. My Department is at an advanced stage in developing legislative measures to introduce the following new activities to Northern Ireland:

- Electricity distribution licensing exemptions and obligations on exempt distributors and suppliers;
- Provision in respect of Liquefied Natural Gas(LNG); and
- Provision for Gas exemption conditions.

In addition, the existing licence modification power under the 2011 Regulations will be extended, and certain provisions of the Energy and SEM Orders will be amended to reflect requirements of the Electricity Directive.

The Department is on track to complete the work by April 2013, in line with the timeframe already notified to the Commission.

Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the most up-to-date figures on visitors to the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre, broken down by visitors from Northern Ireland and outside Northern Ireland; and (ii) how this compares with projected figures.

(AQW 19045/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) From 3 July 2012 until 6 January 2013 The Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience welcomed 328,000 visitors. Of this, 29% of visitors were from Northern Ireland, 7% of visitors were from the Republic of Ireland and 64% of visitors were from Great Britain and overseas registered from 130 countries around the world.
- (ii) The figures projected for the Giants Causeway Visitor Experience for Year 1 are 645,000.

Tamboran's Petroleum Exploration Licence

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has agreed to a change in any of the licensing terms and conditions, including work items, in Tamboran's Petroleum Exploration licence and to provide details of any changes that were made and the date they were agreed.

(AQW 19123/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The only change agreed by the Department has been to the work programme. The details are contained in my answer to AQW No. 18021/11-15.

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assurances they have received from the British Government on covering the costs of the G8 summit which will take place in Fermanagh in June.

(AQW 19142/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The UK Government will meet the material costs of hosting the G8 Summit at the Lough Erne Resort in June. The Northern Ireland Executive and other Northern Ireland bodies will be engaging in promotional activities in and around the Summit that will capitalise on having an international audience focused on Northern Ireland during this exciting time and using the opportunity to tell the world that this is a great place to do business and to visit. We are working closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and No.10 on ways that we can maximise this great opportunity.

Natural Gas Network

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she will provide a map showing all areas that receive natural gas through the gas network.

(AQW 19148/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department has commissioned a map which shows the Phoenix Natural Gas and firmus energy gas licence areas, and the gas transmission and major distribution pipeline network in Northern Ireland. The map also highlights the key towns connected to natural gas, however it does not reflect every town/village connected or more recent developments, such as the Utility Regulator's November 2012 announcement of plans to extend the natural gas network to Bushmills. I will arrange for a copy of the map to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Gas Network

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the timetable for the extension of the gas network.

(AQO 3305/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On 10 January 2013, the Executive approved financial support of up to £32.5 million for the extension of the natural gas network to the main towns in the West and North-West of Northern Ireland. The Utility Regulator is planning to launch a public consultation exercise in early 2013 on the proposed method for conducting a competition for new gas licences in the West and North West area, with the award of new licences anticipated around the end of 2013.

I hope to see construction of the new gas transmission infrastructure commenced by the end of 2015 with the first customer connections shortly thereafter.

However I recognise that this timetable will be very challenging, as the new licensee will have to complete detailed scheme design, and obtain other approvals including planning consent, in advance of any construction works commencing.

Tourism: Street Disorder

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the damage caused to Northern Ireland's tourist brand by the recent unrest.

(AQO 3306/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The press coverage of Northern Ireland in recent weeks has portrayed a negative image of Northern Ireland which is unhelpful especially as this region has been so successful in attracting visitors in recent years.

The ni2012 campaign was hugely successful in enhancing the image of Northern Ireland and I want to ensure that a positive message continues to be delivered.

My Department, through NITB and TIL, remains fully committed to promoting Northern Ireland as a visitor destination; providing reassurance to potential visitors and emphasising that it is 'business as usual' in Northern Ireland.

Investment: Flag Protests

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assessment has been made of the impact of flag protests, disruptions, blockages and violence on investor confidence.

(AQO 3307/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's International Business team works with existing and potential investors in a wide range of overseas markets.

A very small number of those existing and potential investors have raised concerns about the current situation following some of the recent media coverage. Invest NI is working closely with these companies to reassure them that Northern Ireland remains a safe and competitive place to do business and to minimise the impact of any negative perceptions. No planned visits by potential investors have been cancelled and all recent scheduled visits have taken place without disruption.

Since the beginning of the year there have been a number of inward investment announcements such as Oxford Consulting Group promoting 33 new jobs and the expansion by Allen & Overy, who plan to create a further 67 jobs.

North/South Electricity Interconnector

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the proposed North South Interconnector.

(AQO 3308/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Minister for the Environment asked the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to conduct a public enquiry into Northern Ireland Electricity's (NIE) planning application to build a new 400 kilovolt electricity interconnector between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The PAC opened its public enquiry on 6 March 2011. It was adjourned on the 20 March 2011, with further information being sought from NIE in relation to the environmental impact statement. No date for resumption of the enquiry has been set, however it is unlikely that this will be before Autumn 2013.

Cross-Border Economic Development Zones

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration has been given to the development of cross border economic development zones in border areas.

(AQO 3309/11-15)

Mrs Foster: None.

Jobs Fund: Under-25s

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the number of jobs created to date through the jobs fund for under 25s compares with the target set by her Department.

(AQO 3310/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There is no separate Jobs Fund target for those aged under 25. That said, analysis of the jobs created by the Jobs Fund shows that 358 of the 2,200 jobs created to date have been filled by individuals under 25.

Young people have been particularly impacted by the economic downturn and the long term impacts of unemployment are greater for young people than other age groups. The unemployment rate for 18 – 24 year olds currently stands at 19.1% (Sept – Nov 2012) while the employment rate is 48.8%. My Department and Invest NI remain committed to doing all we can to ensure that all of our talented young people can maximize their potential.

Investment: Large Companies

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the reasons behind large companies, such as Google and Dropbox, choosing Dublin over Belfast as investment locations.

(AQO 3311/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The location of inward investment projects is determined by the company's operational needs, with a number of factors contributing to the decision, including skills availability, infrastructure and the cost and availability of property.

While Invest NI attempts to establish the reasons for companies locating outside Northern Ireland, these decisions are often commercially sensitive. As a result, companies are not always open about the reasons for choosing one location over another. However the low corporation tax rate is often commented upon as one of the significant factors influencing large companies to locate in the Republic of Ireland.

InvestNI: Vacant Land

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the action she is taking to utilise vacant land held by InvestNI.

(AQO 3312/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The policy remit under which Invest NI operates in relation to land holding is to acquire, develop and hold land for industrial use in locations where the private sector is unwilling or unable to do so.

This land is held in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses and is proactively marketed to both foreign and indigenous investors, although the final decision on location rests with the investor.

The Agency employs a long term strategy in respect of its land and property holdings and does not hold land or properties in reserve. However, where land is held for a period of time prior to development, it may be made available for other uses, such as agricultural, and a rental income obtained.

In accordance with Department of Finance and Personnel guidelines, Invest NI keeps its landholding under continual review.

Any lands deemed surplus to requirements are considered for disposal as per the 'Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property in Northern Ireland' guidelines issued by DFP Land & Property Services.

Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has plans to establish a risk assessment process for farms similar to that required by the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

(AQO 3395/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 apply to all workplaces in Northern Ireland, including farms. The Management Regulations require all employers to identify significant hazards arising from work activities, assess the risks arising from the hazards and to implement suitable measures to minimise these risks. These assessments must be recorded only where an employer, has five or more employees.

HSENI has developed, and promotes, a simplified risk assessment process specifically developed for farmers and endorsed by the other members of the Farm Safety Partnership.

The “Stop and think SAFE” approach provides a simple process for farmers to carry out risk assessments and implement a safe system of work to manage the risks based on the 4 main accident causes (Slurry, Animals, Falls and Equipment).

This approach has been embedded in guidance literature, press materials and training events and will feature in future media campaigns.

Department of the Environment

Environmental Impact Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AWQ 14244/11-15, (i) what is involved in this review to ensure compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations; (ii) who will carry out the review; (iii) whether the review will be independent; (iv) when it will be completed; and (v) how the results will be conveyed to the Assembly.

(AQW 17637/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The exercise involves checking that the screening for an Environmental Statement considered all the relevant issues.

The check is being carried out by staff in the Strategic Planning Division's Minerals Team with assistance from the Development Management Guidance Team where required.

Minerals planning applications along with other categories of application are subject to periodic review by the Compliance, Improvement and Review Team in Planning Policy Division.

This is an ongoing exercise and the review will be completed as soon as possible.

Non-Farming Rural Families

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what changes he intends to make to planning policies to support non-farming rural families.

(AQW 17671/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Whilst PPS21 ‘Sustainable Development in the Countryside’ does not include a bespoke policy for non-farming rural dwellers, almost all its policies are relevant to them. The policy already offers considerable opportunities for non-farming rural families wishing to live in the countryside by providing for:

- replacement dwellings;
- the conversion and reuse of non-residential buildings as dwellings;
- new dwellings within an existing cluster or ribbon of buildings;
- social and affordable housing schemes;
- development within designated Dispersed Rural Communities; and
- a dwelling to meet compelling personal or domestic circumstances.

I do however acknowledge the continued interest in this issue. As part of my operational review into PPS21 I met with former members of the Independent Working Group established by the previous Executive to examine this issue. Their views have been taken account of in the review.

The review into the operation of PPS21 is intended to ensure both consistency and increased flexibility of decision-making in line with the content and substance of the policy. This should benefit all those seeking to build in the countryside, including non-farming rural families.

By way of update, I can advise that I have been considering a draft report on the review recently, but have asked officials to consider a number of further matters before I bring this work to a close.

DOE: Professional Planners

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many professional planners are employed by his Department.

(AQW 17719/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department of Environment currently employs 415 professional planners.

Royal Town Planning Institute

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department pays the membership fees of the planners in the Department who are members of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

(AQW 17722/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department pays the membership fees of planners who are members of the Royal Town Planning Institute on the basis that the payment of professional fees to specialist planning staff recognises their professional status and their particular and unique contribution to the Planning function.

The payment of fees encourages and supports the continual professional development of individuals. In this way it contributes to organisational and individuals' competence, standing and credibility, as planning operates in an increasingly complex business environment.

Royal Town Planning Institute

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what is the annual cost to his Department of paying the membership fees of planners for the Royal Town Planning Institute.

(AQW 17723/11-15)

Mr Attwood: For the calendar year 2012, the Department has paid £44,588 to the Royal Town Planning Institute in relation to the membership fees of planners. I have enquired about the scale of this cost. There was a previous engagement with the Institute regarding "corporate" membership. This was not possible, but RTPI agreed to increase the number of professional events it would hold in NI. This is important, for example, given the need for training in the rundown to the transfer of planning to local councils.

Downpatrick Planning Office

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment whether he intends to review the enforcement caseload of the member of staff who was recently dismissed from the Downpatrick planning office.

(AQW 17765/11-15)

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 which included a review of numerous case files dealt with by this officer or in which he may have had an involvement.

I have requested advice on the review of caseload in this case.

Disposal of Tyres

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether facilities exist for the disposal of tyres; and if not, has he any plans to help create a solution for used tyres, for example through the use of the Small Business Research Initiative.

(AQW 18022/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are a number of waste management facilities which have been authorised by the Department to dispose of waste tyres. These facilities undertake processes such as:

- Retreading for re-use

- Shredding for use as leachate blankets in permitted landfills
- Crumbing for use at equestrian centres
- Baling and transporting on to Britain for recycling as carpet underlay, pathway construction, playground surfacing etc
- Baling and exporting on for heat recovery by incineration

I am fully aware and appreciate the serious risk to the environment and to human health posed by the inappropriate disposal of used waste tyres. The use of the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) is one option for helping to simulate solutions regarding used tyres, and my Department has made initial contact with the Technology Strategy Board which runs the SBRI. There are great opportunities for recycles on the island and I am working to create business options.

Road Tax Discs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the consultation paper issued by the Department of Transport in Whitehall, whether he has any plans to scrap the display of road tax discs on car windscreens.

(AQW 18029/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As you are aware, vehicle licensing is a matter for the Secretary of State for Transport. My Department, through the Driver & Vehicle Agency, undertakes vehicle licensing work in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

On 13 December 2012 the Department for Transport (DfT) issued a consultation on a number of proposals for the reform of motoring services delivered through its four executive agencies, including DVLA.

The document indicated that DfT was “considering the continuing need for the tax disc”. However, I am advised that the proposals outlined in the document are for consultation only at this stage and that no decisions will be made until DfT and DVLA have considered the views of motorists and other stakeholders.

Landscape Management Services

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what arrangements he is making, while considering National Parks, for the further development and enhancement of landscape management services in the areas he has identified as the most important landscapes.

(AQW 18037/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has long supported the development and enhancement of landscape management services in many areas including areas that could be candidates for national parks, if that is where matters go. Funding to sustain landscape management bodies for these areas is provided through the NIEA Natural Heritage Grant Programme.

NIEA currently provides financial support to the Mourne Heritage Trust and to the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust to co-ordinate the implementation of AONB management plans and to undertake projects in their areas. NIEA has awarded additional funding to the Mourne Heritage Trust to support the development of sustainable visitor access and matched funding for a Landscape Partnership Scheme funded by Heritage Lottery Fund.

NIEA also provides financial support to a number of other organisations that provide landscape management services including the Belfast Hills Partnership, the Lough Neagh Partnership, Down District Council for the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership and Castlereagh Borough Council for the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Landscape Partnership Scheme support for the Antrim Glens is currently under consideration by NIEA as is an application for support for a grassland project in Fermanagh.

As part of the Department's commitment to the Ulster Way, NIEA has recently provided financial support for a review of the Causeway Coastal Path and is providing funding toward the restoration of a path on Cuilcagh in the Fermanagh uplands.

Further project funding has been provided through partnerships with other funders such as the local authorities, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The critical issue is the need for a strategic shift in resources and policy to the advantage of our natural heritage. I have been making this argument, presenting two papers to the Executive last Autumn. That is what is needed and that is where all should direct attention.

Drink-Driving Limit

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to a reduction of the drink-drive limit from 80mg/100ml to 50mg/100ml, whether there is any evidence that a significant number of casualties are currently caused by people driving with a blood-alcohol level of between 50mg/100ml and 80mg/100ml.

(AQW 18038/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A collision will not be attributed to 'Impaired by alcohol - driver/rider' unless at least one driver has failed a preliminary breath test, or had a hospital procedure carried out where blood test results come back as above the legal limit or, in terms of fatalities, where the BAC result from forensics is returned where the level is above the legal limit.

The decision to reduce the drink drive limit fulfils a commitment in the Road Safety Strategy to 2020, published in March 2011. The case for reducing the limit on which that decision was taken is well established. The 2009 policy consultation that helped inform the decision assessed the impact of alcohol on the ability to drive safely and the impairing nature of low levels of alcohol below the current blood alcohol content (BAC) limit. A driver with between 50mg/100ml and 80mg/100ml alcohol is nearly three times more likely to be involved in a collision than someone with a zero BAC. In his report on the 'Review of Drink and Drug Driving Law' for the UK Government published in 2010, Sir Peter North CBE QC cited the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence which reported that drivers with a BAC between 50 mg/100 ml and 80 mg/100 ml have a risk of dying in a vehicle crash at least six times higher than those drivers who have no alcohol in their blood. In a Report published earlier this year called 'Drink Driving: Towards Zero Tolerance', the European Transport Safety Council said that driving with 50 mg/100 ml BAC increases the risk of being involved in a fatal crash by a factor of five.

Based on British projections, it was estimated that with a reduction to 50mg/100ml, at least one life could be saved and 13 serious injuries prevented each year in Northern Ireland. This assumed consistent levels of adherence to the new laws and enforcement of the new limits. There is no doubt therefore that reducing the main BAC limit to 50mg/100ml will reduce casualties and deliver significant road safety benefits.

Rathkeltair Planning Office in Downpatrick

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what measures he has taken to investigate the accusation of fraud in Rathkeltair Planning Office in Downpatrick; and whether previous applications will now have to be revisited.

(AQW 18087/11-15)

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.

Single Dwellings in the Countryside

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many applications for single dwellings in the countryside have been approved since Planning Policy Statement 21 was issued on 1 June 2010.
(AQW 18099/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement 21 was published on 1 June 2010. In the 2 year period from publication to end June 2012 a total of 6634 applications for single and replacement dwellings have been approved - 4806 applications for new single dwellings and 1828 applications for replacement dwellings.

Applications for Single Dwellings in the Countryside

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many of the applications for single dwellings in the countryside approved since 1 June 2010 were (i) replacement dwellings; (ii) infill dwellings; (iii) rounding of clusters of four or more dwellings; and (iv) renewals of a previous approval.
(AQW 18100/11-15)

Mr Attwood: From the 1st June 2010 to end of June 2012 a total of 6634 applications for single dwellings in the countryside have been approved.

It is not possible from the information held in the database to accurately categorise the number of applications which fall within infill, rounding of clusters or renewal of a previous approval and this would require a manual search of the 6634 applications.

However, the applications can be categorised as follows:

- (i) 1828 applications for replacement dwellings have been approved.
- (ii) 4806 applications for single dwellings have been approved.

I have asked Planning to upgrade the recording of planning details, to see if the system can capture in the future the particular information requested.

Planning Office in Downpatrick

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment whether the officer, who was dismissed from the Planning Office in Downpatrick, had been involved in enforcement action against Finnebrogue Venison.
(AQW 18103/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A number of staff from the Downpatrick Area Planning Office were involved in enforcement matters relating to the Finnebrogue site.

Senior officers, including a designated authorised officer, were involved in deciding the way forward on this particular case and all other cases.

Large Scale Planning Decisions

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the time-frame for large scale planning decisions; and for his assessment of the implications of missing the deadlines associated with the process.
(AQW 18145/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In 2012/2013 the Programme for Government (PfG) target is to process 60% economically significant planning applications within 6 months. In the case of Article 31 applications the 6 month period is from receipt to a final recommendation to the Minister.

Clearly, undue delay in meeting the target has financial implications for developers and investors and negatively impacts on the ability to create much needed new employment opportunities.

In an attempt to ensure these negative impacts are avoided as far as possible I continue to press officials to process all planning applications in an efficient and timely manner. Since becoming Minister I have dealt with 40 Article 31 planning applications. This represents a reduction of 67% on the number of live Article 31s when I came into office. I will be making further decisions very soon. I recently announced permission of the Joint Services Training College at Desertcreat, Cookstown and the RUAS Showground facility at the former Maze/Long Kesh Prison site. Both these Article 31 applications met the new 6 month target.

The Department will report on all relevant PfG targets at the end of the current financial year.

Senior Enforcement Staff Employed in the Planning Office in Downpatrick

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to to AQW 16908/11-15, as the individual concerned is no longer employed by his Department, why he stated that he cannot discuss internal disciplinary matters.

(AQW 18179/11-15)

Mr Attwood: While the individual has been dismissed from the Department an integral safeguard in the internal disciplinary process is the right of appeal. The individual has submitted an appeal to the Department.

When the disciplinary process is completed the name of the individual or any details of the case will not be disclosed as this would breach current Data Protection legislation.

Hydro-Electric Schemes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many applications have been received by each planning division for hydro-electric schemes in each of the last five years; (ii) how many of these applications were refused; (iii) what assessment is made of the impact of hydro-electric schemes on fish stocks and fish migration when considering planning applications; (iv) what mitigation measures are required; and (v) for his assessment of the sustainability of licences for hydro-electric schemes that allow 90 percent water extraction.

(AQW 18180/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I welcome the contribution that renewable energy applications make to the drive to reduce carbon emissions in line with international and national commitments. The Department supports such renewable energy applications unless it would generate unacceptable adverse effects, which are not outweighed by the local and wider environmental, economic and social benefits of the development.

The main policy context for the assessment of such proposals is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 'Renewable Energy' which was published in August 2009. The aim of the PPS is to facilitate the siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets, and to realise the benefits of renewable energy.

In the period from April 2008 to September 2012, the Department received 69 applications for hydro-electric schemes and reached a decision on 35 applications, all of which were approved.

In the assessment of applications for hydro-electric schemes the hydrological, ecological and fishery impacts are material planning considerations to be taken into account in reaching a balanced decision. Where necessary, this assessment may be informed by consultation with a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies such as NIEA, the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and Lough's Agency.

The applicant may be required to submit environmental information in order to assess the impact of the proposal and this may include, for example, surveys of the river corridor and river bed habitats, fish and other animals which may occupy the river habitat. The effects of changed flow regimes and water quality may also need to be assessed.

The risk to fish and other potential impacts can be minimised by careful design and adjustment of the seasonal operating schedule of the plant. The Department expects a high level of design for any proposed hydro-electric scheme utilising mitigation measures to protect the local ecology. Dams and weirs are designed to include structures allowing free passage of migratory fish, and afford fish and other freshwater animals protection from turbines while maintaining flows. Other mitigation measures may include the installation of an adequate fish pass; appropriate fish screens and restrictions on the maximum extraction daily volume of water. Some types of turbines potentially benefit the fish population by increased oxygenation of the river water.

Hydroelectric power applications made under The Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 are determined by a number of factors. Licences that permit the diversion of 90% of river flow to a hydroelectric power installation are only granted in very specific circumstances in waterways which are ecologically downgraded, and/or where a natural barrier prevents fish migration into the river reach, or where the fishery has been modified or downgraded as a result of other environmental pressures. In these cases due to the nature and variability of river flow the 90% flow diversion only occurs for a relatively short period within the year, as these short episodes are spread over several months.

I am content that this licensing practice reflects the accepted practice in the rest of the UK, and other EU countries and that PPS18 has a balanced approach in promoting renewable energy whilst protecting the environment in which we live.

Environmental Crime Unit

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 16395/11-15, whether the Environmental Crime Unit is investigating illegal dumping at Barrack Hill, Lisburn.

(AQW 18181/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Environmental Crime Unit has investigated this alleged incident. As the waste is site derived, as this material appears to be, it can legally remain onsite for up to 12 months. I will refer this matter to the DOE fly tipping team for further investigation.

Wind Turbine and Wind Farm Setback Distances

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to revise planning policy to mirror the position in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland and adjust wind turbine and wind farm setback distances from homes from the current minimum 500 metres to 1.5 - 2km, depending on turbine height.

(AQW 18216/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The jurisdictions referred to have not adopted as national planning policy a minimum separation distance of 1.5 – 2km between wind turbines and dwelling houses.

Policy RE1 of PPS 18 'Renewable Energy' states that, for wind farm development, a separation distance of 10 times rotor diameter to occupied property, with a minimum distance not less than 500m, will generally apply. This separation distance ensures that wind farm developments are sited appropriately whilst also supporting the achievement of Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets.

I therefore have no plans to revise planning policy in relation to the separation distance between wind energy development and dwellings.

Local Domestic Rates

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment by what percentage local domestic rates are likely to rise in order to meet the costs of local government reform.

(AQW 18244/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am aware of the concerns which have been expressed by elected representatives, the business sector, and others, about rates convergence and debt issues arising from the implementation of local government reform.

The Regional Transition Committee, which I chair, has commissioned the senior local and central government officers and officials in the Finance Working Group with examining the financial implications of rates and legacy debt convergence, developing plans and procedures for minimising any negative impact of change, and ensuring that those affected are treated as fairly and equitably as possible.

The group is currently developing detailed financial models to quantify the impact on rate levels, arising from local government reform, across each of the councils.

In parallel with this, the group is also examining a wide range of options for minimising the impact of these rate changes. The key options include:-

- transitional relief for individual ratepayers;
- transitional relief (i.e. grant) for councils;
- councils striking differential rates in each of the legacy council areas for a limited period; and
- councils borrowing to equalise the rate changes.

I have, of course, raised the issue of rates convergence with the Minister of Finance and Personnel and I can advise that a paper is being developed in relation to this matter to be considered by the Executive. In my strong view there will be a requirement to provide transitional rates assistance. As the member knows, be it through direct Executive support to the Councils, the provision of soft loans, the escalation of sharing and collaboration, the imperative for support for rates convergence (etc) demonstrating that my ambition and actions are to protect the ratepayer in the rundown to and after 2015.

Local Government Reform

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment by what percentage local business rates are likely to rise in order to meet the costs of local government reform.

(AQW 18245/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am very aware of the concerns which have been expressed by elected representatives, the business sector, and others, about rates convergence and debt issues arising from the implementation of local government reform. That is why I have made a big argument for upfront Executive support, soft loans and money for rates convergence.

The Regional Transition Committee, which I chair, has commissioned the senior local and central government officers and officials in the Finance Working Group with examining the financial implications of rates and legacy debt convergence, developing plans and ensuring that those affected are treated as fairly and equitably as possible.

The group is currently developing detailed financial models to quantify the impact on rate levels, arising from local government reform, across each of the councils.

In parallel with this, the group is also examining a wide range of options for the management of rates convergence, including:-

- transitional relief for individual ratepayers;
- transitional relief (i.e. grant) for councils;
- councils striking differential rates in each of the legacy council areas for a limited period; and
- councils borrowing to equalise the rate changes.

I have, of course, raised the issue of rates convergence with the Minister of Finance and Personnel and I can confirm that a paper is being developed in relation to this matter to be considered by the Executive. In my view, there is a requirement to provide transitional rates assistance.

In taking RPA forward I work to a number of principles including:-

- function's transfer with no financial impact on the Council and are rates neutral
- sharing and collaboration by Councils now can reduce burden on ratepayers later
- Executive support through a range of interventions to protect ratepayers.

I hope that there will be all party support for all of my proposed interventions.

Local Government Reform

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment how the councils on the North Coast that are due to merge under Local Government Reform are progressing with the transition.

(AQW 18247/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle Councils, which make up the Causeway Coast and Glens Cluster, are currently engaged in planning for the merger of their council grouping.

The Transition Management Team, which supports the Voluntary Transition Committee, has held workshops to commence the process of developing local project plans for presentation to the Committee in February.

The cluster has also developed a communication plan for introduction across the constituent councils, updated the cluster Capital Programme and begun work on a draft Corporate Plan and organisational structuring.

I last met the Voluntary Transition Committee on 8 November 2012 in Coleraine and welcome the positive steps the Causeway Coast and Glens cluster have taken towards reform.

I look forward to a further update from the Transition Committee Chair at the next meeting of the Regional Transition Committee on 30 January 2013. I note their recent decision in relation to RPA funding. I am arguing that RPA should be funded by central and local government. I hope that this argument prevails.

Expansion of the Boundaries of Belfast City Council

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the work completed relating to the expansion of the boundaries of Belfast City Council to incorporate parts of Castlereagh and Lisburn.

(AQW 18248/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee and the Lisburn and Castlereagh cluster have begun a process of ongoing constructive engagement in planning for the effects of the boundary changes and extension of services.

Joint meetings have already been held between political representatives and senior officers of the councils to commence addressing some of the critical transition issues including rates convergence, service convergence, assets and liabilities and staffing matters.

I welcome this positive approach by the councils to explore in detail some of the key challenges presented by the reform of local government and particularly the expansion of the Belfast boundary.

I look forward to an update at the next meeting of the Regional Transition Committee on 30 January 2013.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of new housing units planned under the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, broken down by council area.

(AQW 18266/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The adopted version of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan will set out the Department's conclusions on the number of new houses required for each council area. I am currently working closely

with officials to finalise the plan policies and proposals. The Department is currently assessing the recommendations contained within the Planning Appeals Commission's reports which were produced following the Public Inquiry.

It would be inappropriate to release the figures you requested ahead of the publication of the adopted plan, but I did publish the draft BMAP in 2012 as I believed it was necessary and reasonable for people to see its recommendations.

Planning Approvals

Mr Dallat asked Minister of the Environment to detail, for each planning district, (i) the number of outline planning approvals granted; and (ii) the number of outline planning approvals which have expired without development, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18272/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period from 1st April 2007 to end September 2012, 9,779 outline planning applications were decided by the Department of which 6,883 (70%) were approved. Table 1 below details the number of outline applications approved from 1 April 2007 to 30 September 2012 categorised by local government district.

TABLE 1 OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPROVED.

Local Government District	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Antrim	45	35	93	68	73	28
Ards	26	43	67	78	47	26
Armagh	269	76	59	54	63	32
Ballymena	58	45	106	67	79	37
Ballymoney	21	25	39	25	28	9
Banbridge	33	42	48	27	47	29
Belfast	36	36	24	13	11	9
Carrickfergus	12	17	20	15	13	2
Castlereagh	9	16	7	17	11	4
Coleraine	32	36	56	49	29	21
Cookstown	42	27	60	38	47	18
Craigavon	56	53	61	50	54	23
Derry	35	22	40	16	29	17
Down	35	30	116	50	66	37
Dungannon	90	43	63	35	46	21
Fermanagh	103	53	41	44	38	21
Larne	29	29	61	35	27	11
Limavady	33	20	38	43	41	12
Lisburn	53	37	98	74	60	55
Magherafelt	62	54	145	77	47	22

Local Government District	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Moyle	22	27	53	32	21	14
Newry and Mourne	147	94	166	72	101	48
Newtownabbey	11	10	38	21	29	6
North Down	37	39	30	17	19	6
Omagh	166	62	68	44	43	17
Strabane	39	47	39	27	36	10
Total	1,501	1,018	1,636	1,088	1,105	535

Notes: Information for 2012/13 is for Q1-Q2 ie April - September 2012 only

In terms of the number of outline planning approvals which have expired without development, the Department does not hold this information on its database. However, I can advise that over this same period 79,348 full planning applications were decided of which 94.5% were approved and 12,663 reserved matters applications of which 99.8% were approved.

Commercial Projects on Hold

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of commercial projects in each planning district that are currently on hold because of planning irregularities; and what steps are being taken to resolve these issues.

(AQW 18274/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department does not hold the processing of any planning application as they are validated on receipt and progressed through the various statutory processes as quickly as possible.

Applications do, however, differ in complexity and in quality of submission and attract varying levels of objection. Consultation with a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies is often required to inform the decision making process, and assessment of all material planning considerations can result in amendments being made to submitted plans. All of these issues may prolong the processing of an application. A project management approach is used by case officers and line managers in accordance with the Good Practice Guide which was published in June 2009. Instructions and guidance have also been issued to staff about prioritising applications which have economic and social benefits for the local community.

The number of commercial planning applications pending a decision in each of the local government districts at 14 January 2013 is as follows:

Government District	Number of Live Applications
Antrim	13
Ards	13
Armagh	20
Ballymena	10
Ballymoney	3
Banbridge	11
Belfast	95
Carrickfergus	0

Government District	Number of Live Applications
Castlereagh	13
Coleraine	13
Cookstown	9
Craigavon	14
Derry	58
Down	16
Dungannon	13
Fermanagh	21
Larne	8
Limavady	12
Lisburn	32
Magherafelt	12
Moyle	3
Newry and Mourne	56
Newtownabbey	19
North Down	12
Omagh	13
Strabane	10
Total	499

In order to improve and monitor performance across the Area Offices Area Planning Managers report monthly on how each area office is performing against the ambitious targets that I have set for 2012-13 for processing of planning applications.

A Performance Action Plan has also 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.

As a result of these initiatives I am pleased to report that performance in Q2 of this business year has improved when compared to the same period last year, with the targets for intermediate and minor applications exceeded.

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.

Wind Farm Locations

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the safety risks posed when wind farms are located where motorists need to pay particular attention, such as in the immediate vicinity of road junctions, sharp or unexpected bends and crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.

(AQW 18280/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 'Renewable Energy' Policy RE1 requires applications for wind energy development to demonstrate, inter alia, that no part of the development will have an unacceptable impact on road safety. The assessment of the road safety impacts of individual proposals for wind energy is provided on a case-by-case basis by the Department for Regional Development's (DRD) Roads Service in their role as a consultee to the planning process.

The Best Practice Guidance (BPG) that accompanies PPS18 advises that drivers are faced with a number of varied and competing distractions during any normal journey. Wind turbines should therefore not be treated any differently from other distractions a driver must face and should not be considered particularly hazardous.

I am satisfied that PPS18 and associated BPG along with the consultation arrangements with Roads Service adequately deal with any road safety concerns posed by wind energy developments.

Wind Turbine Policy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of Down District Council's attempt to put in place a policy on the provision of wind turbines; (ii) how this policy would impact on current planning policy; and (iii) what influence it will have on individual applications, before and following the implementation of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18282/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Currently the statutory authority to bring forward planning policy documents, development plan documents or make determinations on individual planning applications sits with my Department.

Any policy on wind turbines provided by Down District Council may be a material consideration in assessing wind turbine development within that council area. However applications for such development will continue to be assessed by the Department in accordance with the provisions of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 'Renewable Energy', other relevant planning policies and any other material considerations.

Following the implementation of RPA the majority of planning functions will transfer to local councils. As a result councils will have the opportunity to bring forward policies in relation to renewable energy within their district in local development plan documents in line with regional policy prepared by my Department.

Smoke Free Zones

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether there is a map or register of smoke free zones; (ii) what advice his Department gives to residents in smoke free zones; (iii) what enforcement action is taken against people who breach regulations in smoke free zones; (iv) what is the process for designating smoke free zones; and (v) whether there are any plans to increase the number of smoke free zones.

(AQW 18295/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There is a dedicated website showing smoke control areas across the UK including Northern Ireland. http://www.airqualityni.co.uk/laqm_sca.php?a=s&la_id

(i) [//www.airqualityni.co.uk/laqm_sca.php?a=s&la_id](http://www.airqualityni.co.uk/laqm_sca.php?a=s&la_id)

Each district council is also responsible for local air quality in their area and will have more specific details of individual streets and roads that are within a smoke control area designated by that council.

(ii) The Department makes regulations under the Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 which set out in detail the fuels that can be used, and the appliances that can be installed, in smoke control areas. When new regulations are made a notice is printed in the Belfast Gazette. Information about smoke control areas, including information on the relevant legislation, is available on the Department's website and on the nidirect website. Both websites have links to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website which provides further general information

and details on smoke control areas in the United Kingdom, including current NI regulations on authorised fuels and exempted fireplaces.

District councils, as the enforcing authority under the 1981 Order, and subsequent regulations, would be responsible in the first instance for providing information to residents within designated smoke control areas.

- (iii) District councils are responsible for taking action against those who breach the smoke control legislation and they have enforcement powers under Article 39 of the Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. A person found guilty of an offence shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £100.

A district council may, by order confirmed by the Department, declare the whole or any part of its district to be a smoke control area. The Department has issued guidance to district councils to assist them in the preparation of Smoke Control Orders and in the declaration of Smoke Control Areas. A link to the Policy Guidance on Smoke Control Areas is attached. [http:](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/local_air_quality_management_policy_guidance_on_smoke_control_areas_pdf_format.pdf)

- (iv) [//www.doeni.gov.uk/local_air_quality_management_policy_guidance_on_smoke_control_areas_pdf_format.pdf](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/local_air_quality_management_policy_guidance_on_smoke_control_areas_pdf_format.pdf)
- (v) It is a matter for each district council to keep under review whether it is necessary for all or any part of its council area to be declared a smoke control area.

Applications for Single Dwellings in the Countryside

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many applications for single dwellings in the countryside in North Down have been (i) approved; and (ii) rejected since 1 June 2010.

(AQW 18312/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Statistics relating to planning applications for single dwellings (including single replacement dwellings) in the North Down Countryside are presently available up to 30th June 2012.

A total of 53 applications for single dwellings in the North Down countryside were determined between 1 June 2010 and 30 June 2012. Of these, 43 were granted planning permission and 10 were refused.

Single Dwelling Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many applications for single dwellings in the countryside have been rejected since 1 June 2010.

(AQW 18313/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement 21 was published on 1 June 2010. In the period 1 June 2010 to 30 June 2012 8148 decisions were issued on single dwellings, including replacement dwellings in the countryside. Of these 1514 (18.6%) applications were refused.

Planning Service

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many staff in the Planning Service are trained (i) economists; and (ii) in economic cost benefit analysis.

(AQW 18791/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are currently 11 economists in the DOE. Planning, like other parts of the Department, can access the advice and support of these staff.

The Department also has access to economic advice from the pool of economists employed across the wider NICS.

Electricity-Generating Tidal Developments

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the arrangements by which planning applications for electricity-generating tidal developments off the North Antrim coast will be handled and determined.

(AQW 18941/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The consenting bodies concerned with the proposed electricity-generating tidal developments, off County Antrim are the Crown Estate (TCE), Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI), Department of Environment (DoE) Planning and DoE Marine Division.

In October 2012 TCE awarded conditional development rights to Fair Head Tidal Ltd (Fair Head site) and Tidal Ventures Ltd (Torr Head site) to develop the sites up to 100 Mega Watts each. TCE developments rights are conditional on the developers obtaining all the necessary consents and approvals from DoE Marine Division, DoE Planning, Department of Trade and Investment.

The DoE, through its Marine Division, is the appropriate licensing authority under section 113 (6) (b) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA), Part 4 Marine Licensing. All Marine renewable projects will require a Marine Licence under MCAA.

The Marine Licence application and determination process is the key mechanism whereby marine renewable projects will be assessed in terms of protecting the environment, human health, preventing interference with legitimate uses of the sea and other matters as this authority thinks relevant. The determination of offshore renewable projects through the MCAA licensing process will include widespread statutory and stakeholder consultation.

DoE Planning has responsibility for planning permission above the low water mark. All marine renewable licences will have a landfall area for cabling and some will require large onshore electricity substations.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) requires any marine renewable installation to obtain a licence from DETI under the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order, 1992 to generate electric and lay electricity cables. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to support these licences.

Environmental Impact Assessments are required for the onshore and offshore aspects of these proposals, but officials from Marine Division and Planning are working closely with DETI officials to enable developers to submit one single EIA, thus streamlining the process.

With regard to existing projects, both DOE and the developers have engaged very closely with the fishing communities of Ballycastle and Rathlin Island establishing working groups to ensure their valuable input is included in the consultation and assessment processes for the projects.

They recently presented to Moyle District council on the proposed projects, outlining the processes and timelines for the projects and how the local community and stakeholders will be given the opportunity to be involved throughout the projects evaluations.

Wind Turbines

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether planning service has kept the permitted radius between the development of wind turbines and residential areas up to date and in line with improvements in wind turbine technology.

(AQW 18985/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18, Policy RE1 states that for wind farm development a separation distance of 10 times rotor diameter to occupied property (with a minimum distance not less than 500m) will generally apply. For individual wind turbines, the Best Practice Guidance that accompanies PPS18 recommends fall-over distance (i.e. the height of the turbine to the tip of the blade) plus 10% as a safe separation distance to occupied property.

The safeguards within PPS18 prevent development that would cause significant harm to the safety or amenity of any sensitive receptors, defined as habitable residential accommodation (although not necessarily occupied), hospitals, schools and churches.

Taking account of recent improvements in turbine technology, I am satisfied that the recommended separation distances remain valid for safety and amenity purposes, without unduly restricting the development of the infrastructure required to meet our renewable energy and carbon reduction targets.

Biodiversity

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, given the fact that his Department missed the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss, what steps he is taking to ensure that the 2020 target is met.

(AQW 19046/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It was recognised that, globally, the commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 was not going to be achieved. To that end there has been a renewed commitment, both internationally and from a European perspective, for further action to halt global declines of biodiversity over a longer period with an interim target of 2020. For example the renewed commitment of the 192 parties (including the UK) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Autumn 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

Within the EC there are also many initiatives geared to halting biodiversity loss by 2020, including the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and also the reform of CAP and fisheries policies.

In Northern Ireland, I am responding to this renewed challenge to take action to halt biodiversity loss. I have initiated a review of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and, given the importance that I attach to this, have included this as a commitment in the Programme for Government. The review will take account of international and European commitments and new thinking.

Currently, my officials are liaising with the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group on the development of objectives and actions on which we can consult in the next few months. From this a new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy will be developed to include a range of actions that will help contribute to a reduction in biodiversity loss for the period up to 2020. This strategy will be cross cutting and it is intended to include actions from central and local government, as well as other sectors.

From a governance perspective, it is intended that my Department will monitor progress annually with a view to identifying any potential difficulties and provide appropriate resolutions where required.

Shared Gritting Arrangements

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment what action he will take to ensure that all councils come to an arrangement with Roads Service for shared gritting responsibility on footways and pedestrian areas.

(AQW 19166/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I keep the situation under regular review and have written recently to councils, where necessary, to encourage them to collaborate with Roads Service in the interests of their ratepayers and the wider community. All councils now have formal or informal working arrangements or understandings in respect of gritting footways and pedestrian areas in periods of severe winter weather.

Malone Conservation Area

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the enforcement actions taken in the past 12 months in relation to "To Let" signs in the Malone Conservation Area.

(AQO 3288/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has opened 6 new enforcement cases in the past 12 months in relation to "to let" signs in the Malone Conservation Area. Three cases have now been closed because the signs have been removed. As regards the other three cases warning letters have been issued

requesting the removal of the signs. The cases were opened in November 2012 and no formal enforcement action has taken place as yet.

On a general note, I am very aware of the proliferation of estate agents "to let" signs in areas such as Lower Malone and Stranmillis. Under the Advertisement Regulations, advertisements relating to the sale or letting of property may be displayed with deemed consent on condition that the advertisement is removed within 14 days after the sale is completed or the tenancy is granted. In areas such as Lower Malone and Stranmillis, "to let" signs very often remain on properties long after the property has been sold or let.

When a complaint is received the Department will normally issue a warning letter seeking the removal of the unauthorised sign. There are, however, difficulties in relation to enforcement. It is often difficult to establish the precise date that the tenancy of a property has been granted. Properties may be partially let with only one room remaining unlet, thus allowing the "to let" sign to remain in place. The seasonal nature of letting in these areas very often means that signs may be removed in winter only to reappear again in the summer months prior to the start of the new university term.

In recognition of these difficulties the Department maintains regular contact with local estate agents seeking their co-operation in the control of "to let" signs

Metal Theft Legislation

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to strengthen the current legislation to deal with metal theft.

(AQO 3291/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am keen to assist in combating the problem of metal theft. However, environmental legislation will not address fully metal theft as it can only deal with waste management activities but it can be helpful to wider efforts by other agencies.

Therefore, with effect from 4th March 2013, the Department is commencing the powers contained in Articles 5, 9, 14, 15 and 16 of the Waste (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and Sections 1 and 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Amendment) Act (NI) 2011. When commenced these provisions will:

- Allow the Department to issue fixed penalty notices for certain offences;
- Allow authorised officers (and in some cases constables) to stop, search and seize vehicles and to detain seized property; and
- Provide the Department with powers to make subordinate legislation in relation to waste carriers, including the power to impose certain conditions on waste carriers and to inspect vehicles to ensure compliance with such conditions.

Other proposals being looked at by the Department include amending the Duty of Care Regulations to remove the 7-days' grace for waste carriers or holders to produce documentation to the Department upon request. The intention of this amendment is to make it a requirement to carry or hold the appropriate documentation with the waste to which it refers and make it an offence not to do so. This will allow authorised officers or the police to identify illegal transfer of wastes, including metal. I hope to introduce this legislation by early Summer this year.

Controls on the Use of Snares

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment why his Department has not brought forward proposals for the control of the use of snares.

(AQO 3294/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Preparation of the proposals to further regulate the use of snares in Northern Ireland has been delayed due to other priorities. However, work to finalise a consultation paper is on-going and the Department is committed to issuing this by late February/early March 2013.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment to outline how the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan was used to restrict retail development at Sprucefield to bulky goods only.

(AQO 3295/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan published for consultation in November 2004 contained a policy which stated that within the designated Sprucefield Regional Shopping centre planning permission will only be granted for retail development which meets a number of listed criteria, one of which was that the type of goods to be sold is restricted to bulky comparison goods. This policy was informed by a retail study carried out during the plan preparation by retail consultants, Colliers CRE. This followed on from a commitment contained in the Lisburn Area Plan adoption statement in which the Department accepted the PAC recommendation that development proposals should be drawn up for Sprucefield but considered that this would be more appropriately achieved through BMAP

Following the holding of a Public Inquiry in 2007 and 2008 to consider objections to the draft Plan, the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) reported its findings on retailing to the Department in January 2009.

The Department after consideration of the objections made, the report of the Planning Appeals Commission and all other material considerations, has decided to confirm the draft Plan policy. The material considerations include a changed regional planning policy context since the PAC reported to the Department in 2009 and the economic circumstances currently facing retailing in our city and town centres.

A new Regional Development Strategy (RDS) was published in March 2012 following approval by the NI Executive. Two of the 8 key aims of the revised RDS are to strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and to support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential. In light of ongoing legal challenge I have previously stated that the Department is giving no weight to draft PPS 5. The PAC in its recommendations to the Department had made a number of references to draft PPS 5 and the role of revised regional planning policy.

PPS 5 – Retailing and Town Centres, remains the relevant policy for determining planning applications for retail development. The draft BMAP and the BMAP decisions on retailing are material considerations. With regard to the latter the PAC specifically requested the early release of the BMAP position to assist all parties to the Public Inquiry currently being held under Article 31 of the Planning Order into a major planning application for a proposed retail, restaurant and associated infrastructural development at Sprucefield (Ref S/2009/1045/F) made by Sprucefield Centre Ltd.

Planning Policy Statement

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the timeframe for the development of a single Planning Policy Statement to replace the existing statements.

(AQO 3296/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Single Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) is required to be in place prior to the transfer of planning powers to Councils in 2015. It is my intention therefore to consult on a draft version of the SPPS later this year, with a view to publishing in final form in 2014.

Department of Finance and Personnel

North Down Constituency: Redundancy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people have been made redundant in the North Down constituency, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18740/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The table below details the number of confirmed redundancies in the North Down Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and Northern Ireland as a whole in each of the last 5 years.

Please note that under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Also, redundancies do not necessarily equate to job losses, for example, employees who do not qualify for a redundancy package, those on temporary contracts, will not be incorporated into the redundancy figures.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*
North Down PCA	20	130	103	33	64
NI Total	2,782	4,596	2,096	1,808	3,297

* Total Confirmed redundancies notified to DFP Economic and Labour Market Statistics

Research Branch to 31st December 2012 and this figure may be revised at a future date.

Peace Bridge in Londonderry

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the EU funding (i) received for; and (ii) spent on the Peace Bridge in Londonderry.

(AQW 18837/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The River Foyle Foot and Cycle Bridge (also known as the Peace Bridge) was awarded funding of £14,497,723 under the PEACE III Programme. Of this, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution is £9,792,220.34 (approximately 67.5 per cent).

To date, verified expenditure for this project is £12,463,887.55, with an additional £1,177,542.14 of submitted claims yet to be verified. SEUPB expects further expenditure claims for this project to be submitted in the near future.

Rate Relief Scheme

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the success of each rate relief scheme, including (i) any proposed changes to these schemes; (ii) the effectiveness of the use of bankruptcy proceedings; and (iii) the impact on struggling businesses.

(AQW 18842/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As you may be aware there are several rate relief schemes currently in place to help the struggling business sector.

This extensive range includes the small business rate relief, small business rate relief for post offices, empty shops rates concession, empty property relief, charitable exemptions, sport and recreation rate relief, residential homes rate relief, industrial derating, non-domestic vacant rating, hardship relief, ATMs in rural areas and shop windows displays.

My Department has carried out, or plans to carry out, evaluations on a number of these schemes. The details of the main ones are outlined overleaf.

A full policy review was carried out in 2008 on industrial derating and freight transport relief by my Department, informed by a study undertaken by the Economic Research Institute for NI. Both reliefs are unique to Northern Ireland. As a result of its findings the Executive agreed to hold the two reliefs at their existing levels for the remainder of that mandate. This policy was taken forward into this current mandate as part of the budget review and no change in policy is planned. For this reason the matter will not be revisited during the life of this Assembly.

An evaluation of empty property relief was carried out by my Department in 2009 and the Executive decided to follow its recommendation to retain it at 50% until the economy recovers (which is in contrast to the full rate liability that applies in England and Wales).

My Department also undertook an in year review of recent changes made to small business rate relief. Following that Review the Executive agreed to significantly increase the upper threshold for entitlement as part of the Economy and Jobs Initiative. I also took the opportunity to extend the life of the empty shops concession as it was my assessment that it has already proved to be a relative success; which has been borne out by the decision of the Scottish Government to copy our scheme this year.

The case for an extension to these reliefs was made in my statement and I attach a link to this for the Member's reference:-

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/statement-261112-non-domestic-rating.pdf>

The Department also plans to carry out a full evaluation of small business rate relief in late 2014, in advance of the business rates revaluation in 2015. This will naturally look at other business reliefs as part of that process

On the second part of your question, Land & Property Services(LPS) have advised me that it is difficult to provide information on the effectiveness of the use of bankruptcy proceedings.

The majority of bankruptcy proceedings in which LPS is involved have been instigated by other organisations. In 2011–12, there were a total of 1,569 bankruptcy orders of which LPS was the petitioner in 189 cases. Of the 219 company insolvencies, LPS was the petitioner in 17 cases and HMRC was the petitioner in nearly half of the cases (104). When an individual or company becomes bankrupt or insolvent, LPS is required to write-off any outstanding rating debt. I would also like to add that bankruptcy proceedings are just one of the options available to LPS in order to facilitate collection of debt.

As for the impact of struggling businesses, rating liability is one of a number of issues which affects businesses. It is worth noting in this context that in a recent speech to the CBI in Belfast, the Governor of the Bank of England advised that a number of factors are affecting the recovery, including the squeeze on many people's take home pay, the rising cost of food and energy as well as tax changes which have resulted in an unusually weak recovery in consumer spending therefore contributing to number of closures on our high streets.

I believe that the range of measures described above are the right mix of policies that put business needs first, recognising that there are limits to the concessions we can make while still raising enough money to help pay for essential public services.

Project Managers: Random Checks

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQO 3126/11-15, to outline the number and detail of the random checks made by project managers since July 2012 to ensure that sub-contractors had been paid the money due to them by the main contractors.

(AQW 18942/11-15)

Mr Wilson: All main contractors on contracts let by Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) since July 2012 are required to provide a monthly report on subcontractor payments. Project Managers are then required to follow this up through random checks with subcontractors to confirm that payments have been received on time.

As a result of this policy, random checks have been undertaken by CPD on seven construction works contracts to date. Feedback from industry has indicated that this process is making an impact on the poor payment practices that are widespread across the industry.

However, I recognise that more needs to be done and this is why I announced that Project Bank Accounts will be included as part of the contract conditions for all construction works contracts greater than £1m with a significant subcontract element.

I have asked CPD to monitor the application and effect of this process across government and will be happy to share this information with you when it is available.

Prompt Payment of Subcontractors

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQO 3126/11-15, to list the contractors which have been excluded from tender opportunities due to a failure to comply with prompt payment of sub-contractors.

(AQW 18943/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There have been no instances where a contractor has been excluded from tender opportunities due to a failure to comply with prompt payment of subcontractors. Central Procurement Directorate has not been advised of any payment irregularities which would result in such action having to be taken.

Project Bank Accounts

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQO 2934/11-15, what progress has been made on the introduction of project bank accounts; and when he expects these to be in place, given the urgency and problems of late payment to sub-contractors.

(AQW 18944/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has introduced a requirement to include Project Bank Accounts (PBA) on all contracts over £1m that have a significant subcontract element. Initially this will apply to those contracts where subcontractors are assessed as part of the tender submission. This typically includes Mechanical and Electrical subcontracts.

Once Government departments and the construction industry have had an opportunity to trial PBAs on this basis, the intention is to extend coverage to the wider supply chain. In CPD PBAs have now been included in two contracts where the tender process commenced in January 2013. It may be up to six months before PBAs are actually brought into operation, after allowing time for the tender and award processes. It is anticipated it may take a further six months to test the application of the process before extending it to greater numbers of subcontracts.

CPD has also asked the Centres of Procurement Expertise to pilot the PBA process. This will provide an opportunity to test its suitability in a number of different situations and make any adjustments which may be necessary to suit the Northern Ireland construction sector.

Public Procurement Building Contracts

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the Executive's policy on retention within public procurement building contracts, including the level of retention and the checks undertaken to ensure that main contractors pay sub-contractors retention on time.

(AQW 18945/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The use of retentions is standard practice throughout the construction industry. They help ensure contractors complete works in accordance with contract requirements and specifications. This is particularly relevant to making good any defects after completion of the work and during the maintenance period, usually a period of 12 months after completion of work on site.

Retentions will remain an important measure in government construction contracts for the foreseeable future.

The release and payment of subcontract retentions is dealt with in the same manner as any other aspect of the payment process. They must be claimed, legitimately, in accordance with the terms of the subcontract and the main contractor invoiced. The project manager would then monitor reimbursement of them in line with the subcontractor payment progress arrangements.

Capital Spend

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the capital spend since May 2011, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 19031/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Unfortunately departmental capital expenditure is not held centrally by my department at the level requested.

Within each Northern Ireland department capital expenditure is recorded to facilitate analysis from many perspectives from the highest level of gross investment and receipts to analysis by individual economic category. The detail recorded also enables analysis in line with the sub pillars of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, but not to the level of electoral constituency.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount of (i) Departmental Expenditure Limits; and (ii) Annually Managed Expenditure administered by the Executive in each financial year from 2006-07 to 2011-12.

(AQW 19077/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) for each of the years requested were set as part of successive HM Treasury Spending Reviews. Changes to DEL are determined using the Barnett Formula and my department agrees a Final Budget Plan position for each year with HM Treasury.

Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) by its nature is more volatile and forecasts are provided by the Northern Ireland departments twice a year reflecting the most up to date position. My department submits Final AME Budget forecasts to HM Treasury each year. While AME expenditure is administered by the Northern Ireland departments, the nature of this expenditure means that it is outside of the direct control of the Executive.

Table 1 below shows the Final Budget Plan position for each of the years requested in respect of both DEL and AME as reported at that time.

TABLE 1:

	£million					
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
DEL	8,175.7	8,892.3	9,253.9	10,234.4	11,330.0	11,010.2
AME	10,742.0	7,894.1	8,558.2	8,137.9	7,955.5	8,096.7

Departmental Expenditure Limit

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the relationship between the Barnett formula and the allocation of Departmental Expenditure Limit.

(AQW 19078/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Changes to the Northern Ireland Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) Budget are determined through the Barnett Formula, which allocates a population-based share of changes to comparable Whitehall department public expenditure allocations.

Barnett allocations to Northern Ireland are, in most circumstances, unhypothecated, meaning that they are available for allocation locally in line with the Executive's priorities. There is therefore no direct relationship between the operation of the Barnett Formula and the allocation of resources as determined by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Public Spending and Geographical Location

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the relationship between public spending and geographical location.

(AQW 19081/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The main source of funding for public spending within Northern Ireland remains the Block grant from HM Treasury. Barnett Allocations made to the Executive are unhypothecated meaning that the Executive can allocate funding locally in line with its priorities.

The allocation of public expenditure in Northern Ireland at the last Budget settlement in March 2011 was determined in line with the Executive's key priorities but also took into account issues raised during the Budget consultation process. Allocations were not made with specific regard to geographical location.

Reserve Fund

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many times the Reserve Fund has been accessed by Departments since 2006/07; and for what reason the fund was accessed in each instance.

(AQW 19082/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The HM Treasury Statement of Funding Policy (SFP), first published in 1999, sets out the arrangements which apply when setting budgets for the devolved administrations.

While devolved administrations are expected to contain budget pressures by re-allocating resources internally, the SFP provides for access to the HM Treasury DEL Reserve in certain circumstances.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury granted the Northern Ireland Executive access to the HM Treasury Reserve in 2010-11, 2011-12 and in 2012-13. This was for two specific reasons.

Firstly the financial package accompanying the devolution of policing and justice provided for access to the HM Treasury Reserve, principally to address exceptional security costs. Access was granted in each of the three years for this purpose.

Secondly to meet the cost of increased Student Loan Subsidy Impairment within the Department for Employment and Learning (in line with similar pressures being experienced by Department for Business Innovation and Skills) in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how spending pressures associated with the Departmental Expenditure Limit are addressed.

(AQW 19083/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Departmental Expenditure Limit budget is managed by the Executive and is allocated in line with the Executive's priorities as set out in the Programme for Government.

Any spending pressures emerging after the Budget has been set, which cannot be addressed through internal departmental reallocations, can be considered by the Executive as part of its monitoring round process.

Department Spending Pressures

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to identify the manner in which spending pressures are addressed by Departments.

(AQW 19084/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Long term departmental spending pressures are addressed through the Executive's budget process.

Any departmental pressures emerging after the Budget has been set can be addressed through the Executive's in-year monitoring process. Departments should also try and address budget pressures through internal reallocations.

Family Law

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the review on Family Law. (AQW 19141/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am, at present, reflecting on the terms of the review.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the departmental functions that are currently proposed to be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 19163/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No powers or functions within my department have been identified for transfer to local government under the Review of Public Administration either at the current time or previously.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

South West Acute Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why it was necessary to bid for a further £2.5m resource funding for the South West Acute Hospital in the January monitoring round; and, in light of the refusal of the request, how the shortfall will be met. (AQW 18781/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): It was necessary to bid for a further £2.5m resource funding because the Western Trust has incurred additional one-off costs associated with the move from the Erne Hospital to the new South West Acute Hospital, including:

- Nurse training in new equipment and hospital orientation;
- Nurse backfill to enable increased staffing levels before, during and in the immediate aftermath of the transfer to the new hospital;
- Additional technical staff input for set-up of new equipment in ICT and Facilities Management; and
- Running costs of both sites during the handover period.

As this bid was not met, the impact will be considered alongside all other pressures as part of the ongoing financial management of the Department and its Arms Length Bodies.

Cystic Fibrosis

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are diagnosed with cystic fibrosis; and what proportion of these people have the faulty G551D gene. (AQW 18800/11-15)

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland there are a total of 470 patients diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, of these 34 or 7.25% carry the G551D gene.

Children in Foster Care

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children were in foster care in each of the last five years. (AQW 18825/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The number of children in foster care in each of the last five years can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2011/12' available at the following link on the Department's website:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

- (ii) Figures for the average number of children in foster care at any one time are not available. However, of the 2,644 Looked After Children at 31 March 2012 1,946 (74%) were in Foster Care Placements. This was an increase of fifteen percentage points since 31 March 2007 when 1,389 children (59% of the total number of Looked After Children) were in Foster Care Placements.
- (iii) Table 1 below details the number of Foster Carers in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2012.

TABLE 1: THE NUMBER OF FOSTER CARERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND AT 31 MARCH 2012

Type of Foster Carers	No. of Foster Carers
Foster Carers Registered with Trusts	2,010
Other Foster Carers	270
Total	2,280

- These figures have been sourced from HSC Board Delegated Statutory Functions/Corporate Parenting Returns and have not been validated by DHSSPS.
 - Other Foster Carers includes carer's registered with Independent Foster Care Providers & Carers providing care to disabled children and are not able to care for Looked After Children
 - Independent Foster Care Providers place children into foster placements on behalf of the Health and Social Care Trust. Some are profit making companies while others are charities or not for profit companies. Organisations working in Northern Ireland include Barnardos, Action for Children and Kindercare Fostering.
- (iv) Figures for the average length of time of a foster care placement are not centrally available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Children in Foster Care

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children, on average, are in foster care at any one time.

(AQW 18826/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The number of children in foster care in each of the last five years can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2011/12' available at the following link on the Department's website:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

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- (iv) Figures for the average length of time of a foster care placement are not centrally available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Registered Foster Carers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of current registered foster carers.

(AQW 18827/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The number of children in foster care in each of the last five years can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2011/12' available at the following link on the Department's website:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm
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Total	2,280

1. These figures have been sourced from HSC Board Delegated Statutory Functions/Corporate Parenting Returns and have not been validated by DHSSPS.
2. Other Foster Carers includes carer's registered with Independent Foster Care Providers & Carers providing care to disabled children and are not able to care for Looked After Children
3. Independent Foster Care Providers place children into foster placements on behalf of the Health and Social Care Trust. Some are profit making companies while others are charities or not for profit companies. Organisations working in Northern Ireland include Barnardos, Action for Children and Kindercare Fostering.

- (iv) Figures for the average length of time of a foster care placement are not centrally available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Foster Care Placement

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average length of time foster care placement.

(AQW 18828/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The number of children in foster care in each of the last five years can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2011/12' available at the following link on the Department's website:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

- (ii) Figures for the average number of children in foster care at any one time are not available. However, of the 2,644 Looked After Children at 31 March 2012 1,946 (74%) were in Foster Care Placements. This was an increase of fifteen percentage points since 31 March 2007 when 1,389 children (59% of the total number of Looked After Children) were in Foster Care Placements.
- (iii) Table 1 below details the number of Foster Carers in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2012.

TABLE 1: THE NUMBER OF FOSTER CARERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND AT 31 MARCH 2012

Type of Foster Carers	No. of Foster Carers
Foster Carers Registered with Trusts	2,010
Other Foster Carers	270
Total	2,280

- These figures have been sourced from HSC Board Delegated Statutory Functions/Corporate Parenting Returns and have not been validated by DHSSPS.
 - Other Foster Carers includes carer's registered with Independent Foster Care Providers & Carers providing care to disabled children and are not able to care for Looked After Children
 - Independent Foster Care Providers place children into foster placements on behalf of the Health and Social Care Trust. Some are profit making companies while others are charities or not for profit companies. Organisations working in Northern Ireland include Barnardos, Action for Children and Kindercare Fostering.
- (iv) Figures for the average length of time of a foster care placement are not centrally available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Dental Practices: New Health Service Patients

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which dental practices in North Down are currently accepting new Health Service patients.

(AQW 18829/11-15)

Mr Poots: As General Dental Practitioners are independent contractors neither my Department nor the Health and Social Care Board maintains a list of dentists or practices that are accepting patients for Health Service treatment and care. However, between February 2012 and January 2013, 52 of the 60 dentists in North Down registered at least one new patient for Health Service treatment and care. The addresses of the surgeries these dentists practise in are set out in the table below.

32 Abbey Street	Bangor	BT20 4JA
29A Hamilton Road	Bangor	BT20 4LF
109G Clandeboye Road	Bangor	BT20 3JW
38 Brunswick Road	Bangor	BT20 3DU
4 Hamilton Road	Bangor	BT20 4LE
107 Hamilton Road	Bangor	BT20 4LN
16 Hamilton Road	Bangor	BT20 4LE
2 Bingham Lane	Bangor	BT20 5DR
32 Shore Road	Hollywood	BT18 9HX
38 Hamilton Road	Bangor	BT20 4LE
Springhill Surgery, 4A Killeen Avenue	Bangor	BT19 1NB
97 Brunswick Road	Bangor	BT20 3DW
1 Moira Drive	Bangor	BT20 4RN
22A Groomsport Road	Bangor	BT20 5LN
64 Donaghadee Rd	Bangor	BT20 4QX
Castlebawn Dental Practice, 32-34 Victoria Road	Bangor	BT20 5EX
Balloo Dental Practice, Office D2, Balloo Office Park, Balloo Drive	Bangor	BT19 7QY
32 Abbey Street	Bangor	BT20 4JA
116 High Street	Hollywood	BT18 9HW
128 High Street	Hollywood	BT18 9HW
The Maypole Dental Practice, 94-96 High Street	Hollywood	BT18 9HW
1A Station Road	Helens Bay	BT19 1TN

Health and Social Care Trusts: Prompt Payments

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to explain the reasons for the Health and Social Care Trusts performance in making prompt payments to their suppliers; and what measures are in place to address this issue.

(AQW 18839/11-15)

Mr Poots: The main reasons why HSC Trusts have paid invoices late are:-

- The constraints of the IT systems on which the trusts' payment function depends and the consequent reliance on manual processes;
- The wide geographical spread of sites within the organisations which can lead to delays in receiving invoices or obtaining approval for payment;
- Delays in receiving appropriate or complete information from suppliers; and

- Staff resources have been temporarily directed towards the implementation of the new finance payments system as part of the Business Services Transformation Programme (BSTP) which has had a direct effect on the prompt payment performance over recent months.

My Department and the HSC Trusts are committed to ensuring that all suppliers are paid as quickly as possible and have a range of measures in place, including:

- Issuing guidance to Trusts which sets out their duty in relation to prompt payment (including requirements of Managing Public Money NI and the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Act);
- Monitoring the monthly prompt payment performance of the Trusts;
- Reporting monthly performance to the Departmental Board, raising formally at Trust accountability meetings and reporting overall performance for the year in the annual statutory accounts;
- Targeted interventions, such as Finance staff providing awareness sessions to other staff to improve the payments process and providing clearer instructions to managers and suppliers on submission of invoices;
- The introduction of new financial systems as part of the BSTP is now under way. When these systems are fully embedded across all of the Trusts, they are expected to have a positive impact on the prompt payment performance by eliminating some of the manual interventions and problems related to the wide geographical spread of sites.

Adoption

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many freeing for adoption proceedings have been brought within the court system in each of the last five years; and what was the outcome in each case.

(AQW 18882/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of Freeing Order applications made by Health and Social Care Trusts in each of the last 5 years, and their outcomes, are set out in Table 1 below;

TABLE 1: NO OF FREEING ORDER PROCEEDINGS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS AND THE OUTCOME.

Year	No of freeing order proceedings	Outcome
2007/2008	47	Freeing Order granted in 46 cases 1 application withdrawn
2008/2009	49	Freeing Order granted in 46 cases 2 applications refused 1 application withdrawn
2009/2010	59	Freeing Order granted in all cases
2010/2011	71	Freeing Order granted in 70 cases 1 ongoing appeal
2011/2012	75	Freeing Order granted in 72 cases 2 have not yet concluded 1 ongoing appeal
Total	301	293 Freeing Orders granted 2 applications refused 2 applications withdrawn 2 applications under appeal 2 applications not yet concluded

Vulnerable Young People

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to address the needs of vulnerable young people in the Upper Bann constituency. **(AQW 18890/11-15)**

Mr Poots: One of my key priorities for Health and Social Care is to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are looked after effectively across all our services. Within the Health and Social Care sector, there are a number of key initiatives underway to address the needs of vulnerable young people throughout Northern Ireland; these are being taken forward by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Public Health Agency. They include the development of Family Support Hubs under the family and parenting strategy, Families Matter and a range of universal and specialist Child Mental Health Services (CAHMS) for vulnerable young people within the stepped care model framework. In addition, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust has developed specific initiatives to meet the needs of young people with physical and sensory disabilities and young people with alcohol and substance misuse issues.

The extent of vulnerability in some young people may require them to become 'looked after' by the statutory authorities. In line with the recommendations of the Care Matters Strategy for Northern Ireland, a range of initiatives are being taken forward for looked after children. Responsibility for those initiatives lies with my Department, the Health and Social Care Board and Trusts, working in partnership with other Departments and the voluntary sector. They include policy initiatives aimed at improving the outcomes of looked after children, including health, education and safeguarding outcomes. They also include the provision of specialist mental health services and services specifically targeted at young people on the edge of care and leaving care.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder since 1998. **(AQW 18906/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The information requested is not collected centrally and was requested from the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. The response from each HSC Trust is listed below:

Belfast HSC Trust:

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Information on admissions for ICD10 Diagnosis PTSD (F431) could not be provided in the time frame provided.

Northern HSC Trust:

CLIENTS DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL 01.01.1998- 31.12.1012 - EPISODE DIAGNOSIS OF F43.1 - POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Clients Discharged from Hospital	8	25	33	34	31	15	23	18

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Clients Discharged from Hospital	19	25	21	12	17	11	20

	Total
Clients Discharged from Hospital	312

Source - Epex3 - Scan used DIAGF43

Please note: Community Clients diagnosis is not recorded

Please note: Diagnosis recording coverage is currently at 75%.

South Eastern HSC Trust:

NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS TO SOUTH EASTERN HSC TRUST WARDS FROM 1 JANUARY 1998 – PRESENT WITH PRIMARY OR SECONDARY ICD10 DIAGNOSIS PTSD (F43.1)

Locality	Primary Diagnosis	Secondary Diagnosis	Grand Total
Belfast *	2	2	4
South Eastern	24	6	30
Grand Total	26	8	34

* Patients within the Belfast catchment area being treated in the South Eastern Trust

Southern HSC Trust:

FINISHED INPATIENT EPISODES

PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS - POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

PERIOD 01/04/07-31/12/12

Hospital on Admission	Primary Diagnosis	Year	Admissions
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2007	4
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2008	4
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2009	2
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2010	3
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2011	1

There were no admissions to St Luke's with ICD 10 (F43.1).

Western HSC Trust:

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost, however information is available on those diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) who have had inpatient treatment.

ADMISSIONS TO WESTERN HSC TRUST PSYCHIATRIC WARDS 1 JANUARY 1998 - PRESENT WITH ICD10 DIAGNOSIS PTSD (F431)

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Admissions	7	16	16	20	12	7	5	6

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Admissions	2	3	3	5	2	6	4

Total admissions for F431 during the specified period are 114. The admissions above relate to 75 individuals. There are currently no psychiatric inpatients in Western HSC Trust with F431 recorded as a diagnosis at present although diagnosis is normally coded on discharge. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people (i) in Belfast; and (ii) outside of Belfast are currently diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.
(AQW 18907/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not collected centrally and was requested from the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. The response from each HSC Trust is listed below:

Belfast HSC Trust:

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Information on admissions for ICD10 Diagnosis PTSD (F431) could not be provided in the time frame provided.

Northern HSC Trust:

Clients Discharged from Hospital 01.01.1998- 31.12.1012 - Episode Diagnosis of F43.1 - Post-traumatic stress disorder

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Clients Discharged from Hospital	8	25	33	34	31	15	23	18

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Clients Discharged from Hospital	19	25	21	12	17	11	20

	Total
Clients Discharged from Hospital	312

Source - Epex3 - Scan used DIAGF43

Please note: Community Clients diagnosis is not recorded

Please note: Diagnosis recording coverage is currently at 75%.

South Eastern HSC Trust:

NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS TO SOUTH EASTERN HSC TRUST WARDS FROM 1 JANUARY 1998 – PRESENT WITH PRIMARY OR SECONDARY ICD10 DIAGNOSIS PTSD (F43.1)

Locality	Primary Diagnosis	Secondary Diagnosis	Grand Total
Belfast *	2	2	4
South Eastern	24	6	30
Grand Total	26	8	34

* Patients within the Belfast catchment area being treated in the South Eastern Trust

Southern HSC Trust:**FINISHED INPATIENT EPISODES
PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS - POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
PERIOD 01/04/07-31/12/12**

Hospital on Admission	Primary Diagnosis	Year	Admissions
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2007	4
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2008	4
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2009	2
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2010	3
Bluestone Unit	F43.1	2011	1

There were no admissions to St Luke's with ICD 10 (F43.1).

Western HSC Trust:

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost, however information is available on those diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) who have had inpatient treatment.

**ADMISSIONS TO WESTERN HSC TRUST PSYCHIATRIC WARDS 1 JANUARY 1998 - PRESENT WITH
ICD10 DIAGNOSIS PTSD (F431)**

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Admissions	7	16	16	20	12	7	5	6

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Admissions	2	3	3	5	2	6	4

Total admissions for F431 during the specified period are 114. The admissions above relate to 75 individuals. There are currently no psychiatric inpatients in Western HSC Trust with F431 recorded as a diagnosis at present although diagnosis is normally coded on discharge. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available to sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder; and what measures are being taken to ensure that patients are not disadvantaged from receiving appropriate treatment and support.

(AQW 18908/11-15)

Mr Poots: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is recognised as an effective treatment for PTSD. 'A Strategy for the Development of Psychological Therapies Services' was published by my Department in 2010 and has been underpinned by an additional £4.4m per annum.

While it is not possible to quantify separately the resources provided by Health and Social Care Services for the treatment of PTSD, £227.5 million was spent on specialist services for people with mental health problems in 2011/12. This does not include expenditure on primary care services and voluntary organisations which may support patients with post traumatic stress disorder.

The adequacy of services that are available to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder cases is primarily for the Health & Social Care Board to address as part of its commissioning role.

Fluoridate the Water Supply

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposals to fluoridate the water supply.

(AQW 18929/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am still considering my position on fluoridation of the water supply in Northern Ireland and continue to consult with Executive colleagues on the matter before I come to a decision.

If a proposal to fluoridate the water supplies is made, we are required under, The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to consult and ascertain public opinion. Should such a consultation proceed, we would welcome the views of all interested parties, at that time.

Hospitals

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients, with an address in the Republic of Ireland, attended hospitals in Northern Ireland under (i) private funding arrangements; and (ii) contract arrangements in 2011/12.

(AQW 18938/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care is first and foremost a resource for the residents for Northern Ireland. Generally access to health services in Northern Ireland is based on whether a person is “ordinarily resident” here. This requires them to reside in Northern Ireland on a lawful continuous and settled basis with an identifiable purpose for their residency here. Usually residency of a 6 month period or longer is required.

In addition there is a reciprocal arrangement between the UK and the Republic of Ireland on the provision of healthcare i.e immediate necessary care when on a visit to Northern Ireland.

Each Health and Social Care Trust gathers data on the patients they treat in different ways. It is not possible for Trusts to provide a breakdown of Republic of Ireland patients treated specifically under contract or private arrangements

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18952/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety does not have any plans to transfer any of its functions to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

The collaborative working arrangements that are already in place between the Public Health Agency and local councils should support the proposed community planning and well-being role envisaged for local government.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what community engagement the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has undertaken with families in need to help them to avail of local support services.

(AQW 18991/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), who have regional responsibility for Family Support services, held a public consultation in 2011 on its plans for family support. This went on to inform the CYPSP Plan 2011 – 2014. These documents and an outline of the process can be found at: www.cypsp.org

The South Eastern Outcomes Board involved statutory, voluntary and community organisations in putting together and submitting a more local action plan to the Children and Young People’s Strategic

Partnership. In addition, a workshop was held on the 9th January 2013 to refine and reprioritise plans for Family Support in the area. This event was attended by over 30 statutory, voluntary and community groups.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what funding service level agreements the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has reached with the community and voluntary sector over the last three years, broken down by office.

(AQW 18997/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below shows the number and value of service level agreements / funding packages in place with the voluntary and community sector in the South Eastern Trust area.

Information to enable me to distinguish between service level agreements and funding packages is not held.

Year	Funding Packages/Service Level Agreements	Funding
2010/11	167	10,680,200
2011/12	171	9,428,220
2012/13	161	11,371,900

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what funding packages the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has agreed with the community and voluntary sector over the last three years, broken down by office.

(AQW 18998/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer my colleague to the answer provided to AQW 18997/11 -15.

Children on the At Risk Register

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust are on the At Risk register, broken down by council area.

(AQW 18999/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that what is meant by the 'At Risk Register' is the Child Protection Register.

- (i) Information regarding the number of children on the Child Protection Register is not broken down geographically beyond Health and Social Care Trust areas.
- (ii) Table 1 below details the numbers of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 December 2012 by Health and Social Care Trust.

TABLE 1: CHILDREN ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER BY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AT 31 DECEMBER 2012

Health and Social Care Trust	No. of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 December 2012
Belfast	462
Northern	560
South Eastern	401

Health and Social Care Trust	No. of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 December 2012
Southern	303
Western	283
Total	2,009

Source: Community Information Branch Quarterly CPR4 Return

Note: These figures are provisional and potentially subject to change before publication

Quarterly Child Protection figures can be sourced from the Department's website at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/children_order_quarterly.htm

At Risk Register

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children in each Health and Social Care Trust are on the At Risk register.

(AQW 19000/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that what is meant by the 'At Risk Register' is the Child Protection Register.

- (i) Information regarding the number of children on the Child Protection Register is not broken down geographically beyond Health and Social Care Trust areas.
- (ii) Table 1 below details the numbers of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 December 2012 by Health and Social Care Trust.

TABLE 1: CHILDREN ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER BY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AT 31 DECEMBER 2012

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http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/children_order_quarterly.htm

Mental Health Facilities

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions have been taken to improve mental health facilities and services for children and young people; and what proportion of the mental health budget is allocated to children and young people's services.

(AQW 19028/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been considerable improvements and investment in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in recent years, including the development of a £16M 33-bedded Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit (Beechcroft) which opened in 2010, and developments in services for eating disorders and crisis intervention.

The HSCB and Trusts have commenced implementation of the Regional Service Model for CAMHS which my Department published in July 2012. The CAMHS Service Model aims to promote consistency in service provision across Northern Ireland. Improvements to services will include an increased focus on early intervention, better multi-disciplinary working and better collaboration with the community and voluntary, education and youth justice sectors.

The HSCB has recently invested an additional £2.27M in CAMHS, which in the main will be used to establish Primary Mental Health Teams and Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Services across all Trusts.

Expenditure in specialist CAMHS is currently in the region of £19M which is approximately 8% (7.9%) of the total Mental Health budget. This figure does not include investments made by PHA in a wide range of young people's emotional health services, nor does it include expenditure on the wide range of children's services that contribute towards addressing the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people such as family support services, safeguarding, and primary care services. Other government departments also invest in the improvement of emotional health and well being of children and young people.

New Fire Station in Cushendall

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Fire and Rescue Service abandoned its business plan for a new fire station in Cushendall.

(AQW 19055/11-15)

Mr Poots: The timing of business case preparation, appraisal and approval is set to ensure that appropriate approval is in place in time for any proposed expenditure as set out in the capital programme for DHSSPS and its arms length bodies. The business case for the Cushendall Fire Station has not been abandoned but will proceed to completion and approval when money becomes available to progress the scheme.

The DHSSPS capital programme is constrained by the allocations set out in Budget 2010 and, in the longer term, by the indicative allocations set out in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. The highest priority projects are profiled within that period but I do not have sufficient funding available to undertake all of the projects which are needed.

The Cushendall Fire Station is not sufficiently high up the list of priorities to be profiled for expenditure in the current budget period.

Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre, Foyle

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why it was deemed that the Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre in Foyle had to be Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority regulated when only 10 percent of its service is residential care.

(AQW 19116/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre is defined as a residential care home under the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland)

Order 2003. Whilst the treatment prescribed at the Centre includes group and individual counselling for persons in need of personal care by reason of past or present dependence on alcohol or drugs, it may also provide residential accommodation as part of a residential treatment and rehabilitation programme. In line with the 2003 Order, Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre was required to make an application to register with RQIA and was registered as a residential care home by RQIA on 13 March 2012.

Nuerologist Appointment Waiting Times

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average waiting time to see a nuerologist on the Health Service; and what is the longest time waited for a nuerologist appointment in the last three years.

(AQW 19132/11-15)

Mr Poots: Data are collected in aggregate time bands, based on the length of time a patient is waiting for a first outpatient appointment, therefore it is not possible to calculate an average waiting time. It is, however, possible to calculate the median time band, a similar statistical measure.

The waiting time for a first outpatient appointment with a consultant in the Neurology specialty, at 30th September 2012, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, is outlined in the table below.

	Patients Waiting for an Appointment, by Weeks Waiting							Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-13	>13-18	>18-21	>21-26	>26	
Northern Ireland	1,633	656	561	427	161	142	198	3,778

Source: Departmental Return CH3

The median waiting time band, for a first outpatient appointment with a consultant in the Neurology specialty, at 30th September 2012, was between 6 and 9 weeks.

My Department collects waiting time information on the basis of how long patients are currently waiting for a first outpatient appointment and not the completed length of time they waited before attending. I refer you to the table above, which indicates that at 30th September 2012, the longest waiting time for a first outpatient appointment with a consultant in the Neurology specialty was in the time band 'greater than 26 weeks'.

Health Service Patient Referrals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what is the cost of referring a Health Service patient to a private sector neurologist; (ii) how many patients were referred during the last twelve months; and (iii) what is the cost of referring a patient for an appointment with a Health Service neurologist.

(AQW 19133/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The current agreed tariff for a new neurology outpatient assessment in the independent sector is £400. This includes the average cost of any associated diagnostic tests.
- (ii) My Department does not collect information on the number of patients referred to the independent sector. My Department collects information on the number of patients treated in the independent sector, by new and review appointments, for the neurology specialty. In the period September 2011 to September 2012 (latest information available), there were 1,634 new appointments and 119 review appointments.

- (iii) The 2011-12 Northern Ireland average cost for a neurology outpatient attendance is £447. This includes the average cost of any associated diagnostic tests and also includes capital charges.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many referrals have been made to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust from (i) Child Protection; (ii) Gateway; (iii) Family Intervention Teams, broken down by the Trust offices in (a) Newtownards; (b) Downpatrick; and (c) Lisburn, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 19162/11-15)

Mr Poots: All referrals to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) are dealt with by Gateway Teams, where they are subject to screening and initial assessment. It is assumed that this Assembly Question relates to how many referrals, after initial assessments, have been allocated as Child Protection referrals or Family Support referrals.

Table 1 below contains the number of Child Protection and Family Intervention referrals received by each of the three Trust offices in the last four years.

It was not possible to collect figures for 2007/08, as it was only from 2008 onwards that Gateway/FIT Teams were established and the tracking tools put in place.

Please note that new referral coding practices were introduced in November 2010, in line with the 'Regional Agreement on the use of SOS CARE within Children's Services.' Therefore referral figures from 2010/11 onwards are not directly comparable with previous years.

TABLE 1: CHILD PROTECTION & FAMILY INTERVENTION REFERRALS RECEIVED BY THE SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST 2008/09 – 2011/12

Office	Type of Referral	Year			
		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Ards	Child Protection Referrals	401	693	839	666
	Family Intervention Referrals	1,738	1,985	2,516	4,331
	Total	2,139	2,678	3,355	4,997
Down	Child Protection Referrals	202	259	301	325
	Family Intervention Referrals	1,039	1,332	1,471	2,434
	Total	1,241	1,591	1,772	2,759
Lisburn	Child Protection Referrals	427	550	580	491
	Family Intervention Referrals	1,525	1,732	2,457	3,360
	Total	1,952	2,282	3,037	3,851

Office	Type of Referral	Year			
		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total	Child Protection Referrals	1,030	1,502	1,720	1,482
	Family Intervention Referrals	4,302	5,049	6,444	10,125
	Total	5,332	6,551	8,164	11,607

Source: SOS CARE/Information as of 01/02/2013

Note: This data has not been validated by Community Information Branch, DHSSPS

Hollywood and Tandragee Fluoridation Trials

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any health records were kept before, during, and after the Hollywood and Tandragee fluoridation trials, and where and how these records may be accessed.

(AQW 19182/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not hold health records from before, during, or after the Hollywood and Tandragee fluoridation schemes. My officials have carried out an extensive search of Departmental records, including the archives of the Public Records Office to check for such records.

Death Certificates at Southern Health and Social Care Trust Hospitals

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he will take to remove the delays in the issuing of Death Certificates at Southern Health and Social Care Trust Hospitals, which cause further distress to families.

(AQW 19190/11-15)

Mr Poots: Registered Medical Practitioners have a legal duty to provide, without delay, a certificate of cause of death if, to the best of their knowledge, that person died of natural causes for which they had treated that person in the last 28 days.

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust have advised that it is not aware of any recent delays in issuing death certificates. The Trust has policies in place that provide nursing and medical staff with clear guidelines on their roles and responsibilities following the death of a patient.

All Trusts within Northern Ireland have been issued with the Departmental document, "Guidance on Death, Stillbirth and Cremation Certification". This document outlines the role and responsibilities of Doctors when writing a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, including when a death should be referred to the Coroner and the circumstances in which a Death Certificate can and cannot be legally issued.

Death Certificates

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the procedures used by all Health and Social Care Trusts for the issuing of Death Certificates, including when out-of-hours doctors are involved.

(AQW 19191/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Trusts within Northern Ireland have been issued with the Departmental document, "Guidance on Death, Stillbirth and Cremation Certification". This document outlines the role and responsibilities of doctors when writing a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), including when a death should be referred to the Coroner and the circumstances in which an MCCD can and cannot be legally issued.

Trusts have procedures in place to issue a MCCD based on the guidance issued by the Department.

A doctor completing a MCCD must have treated the patient for the condition of which they died within the last 28 days of life otherwise that Doctor cannot complete the MCCD. In those cases, where the doctor confirming death is unable to complete the MCCD, the doctor treating the patient will be asked to complete the MCCD as soon as possible.

Paediatric Congenital Children's Services

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the Terms of Reference for the Independent Review Panel on the Safe and Sustainable Review on Paediatric Congenital Children's Services.

(AQW 19195/11-15)

Mr Poots: A copy of the Terms of Reference for the "Safe and Sustainable Review of Children's Congenital Heart Services" being undertaken by the Independent Reconfiguration Panel in England can be accessed via the following link: -

<http://www.irpanel.org.uk/lib/doc/sos2br%20tofr2%2010.12.12.pdf>

Ambulance Deployment Point in Crossmaglen

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 18133/11-15, when the discussions will finish and action will be taken regarding an ambulance deployment point in Crossmaglen.

(AQW 19203/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) that final arrangements to allow NIAS staff to access the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service station will be completed this week. Operational Crews and Emergency Ambulance Control will be informed of the arrangements as soon as possible after completion.

Slievemore House in Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the situation at, and the future of, Slievemore House in Derry.

(AQW 19342/11-15)

Mr Poots: Slievemore Nursing Unit is an 18 bedded unit providing specialist services for people with dementia who present with challenging behaviour. There are currently 10 patients in Slievemore.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) carried out an inspection of Slievemore Nursing Unit in early January 2013. They raised concerns in relation to the model of service provision and consequently also the registration status and environmental requirements for the facility. Given these concerns it has been decided to suspend admissions to the Unit. The concerns raised by RQIA are not in relation to the quality of nursing care being provided.

The Trust will now consider alternative options as to how and where the service currently provided at Slievemore Nursing Unit is delivered and will undertake to engage and consult with patients, relatives, staff and their representatives on the way forward.

Health Inequalities: Committee Report

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline how he will implement the recommendations in the report of the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on its Review of Health Inequalities.

(AQO 3321/11-15)

Mr Poots: I welcome the Health Committee's Report of its Review of Health Inequalities, which was forwarded to my department on 17 January. It contains 9 recommendations some of which are beyond the sole remit of my Department and will require consideration with other departments and Executive colleagues.

In July of last year I published a draft cross-cutting public health framework "Fit and Well – Changing Lives" for public consultation. Officials are currently considering the outcomes of that consultation and moving forward with a process to finalise the framework. This will include further work with stakeholders, including within Health and with other departments, and has been timetabled to be concluded in Spring 2013.

The recommendations made by the Committee in their report on health inequalities are timely and will also be considered as part of this process, and I have undertaken to provide the Committee with a detailed response in due course, and prior to finally publishing the framework.

Ulster Hospital: Waiting Times

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to explain why the number of patients at the Ulster Hospital, who waited for longer than twelve hours to be treated and either discharged or admitted, increased from 136 to 286 between October and December 2012.

(AQO 3322/11-15)

Mr Poots: The increase in Emergency Department waiting times for people who waited longer than 12 hours at the Ulster Hospital in December was due to several factors. These include a gap in bed capacity at the Ulster Hospital, which the Health and Social Care Board and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust are working to address. There was also an increase in admissions in December and an increase in the severity of sickness and complexity of those who attended the Emergency Department.

The Trust also experienced norovirus and gastroenteritis outbreaks across a number of wards in December which made it necessary to close wards for a defined period to contain and control the outbreaks. Similar outbreaks in nursing and residential homes also affected the Trust's ability to discharge patients efficiently. While recognising that some of these factors were outside the control of the Trust, I find it unacceptable that patients are experiencing excessive waiting times and I look to the Board to work with all Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure that a focus remains on improving the performance of our emergency departments.

Hospitals: Cancelled Operations

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what use will be made of the additional money allocated to help hospitals which have cancelled operations due to winter pressures.

(AQO 3316/11-15)

Mr Poots: I announced on 22 January that I had secured an additional £10 million funding to help frontline service delivery. This includes £7 million to support Trusts in dealing with the additional demand on emergency departments and other acute health services as a result of winter and unscheduled care pressures. This money will fund: staffing increases to improve seven day working; extended hours for Emergency Department nurse practitioners; and, supporting community services to be able to respond to hospital discharge demands. The Executive also made available an additional £19 million in 2012 to address backlogs in elective care specialities where there are significant waiting times.

Care Homes

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he monitors the success of locating residential and special needs care homes in residential areas.

(AQO 3320/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care system does not monitor the success of locating residential and special needs care homes in residential areas. Such homes are now mainly built by the private or community/voluntary sectors and their actual location is subject to planning application and consultation processes. These functions are not within the remit of my Department. However, my Department and HSC organisations do work collaboratively with other Government departments, local agencies and individuals and carers to assess the needs of the individual. This includes consideration of a range of community options.

I believe that society should do all that it can to promote social inclusion. I would assure the member, that my overriding priority is to ensure the safety and well being of all of the people placed in care. The “success” of residential care homes, including those for people with special needs, is measured by monitoring the wellbeing of their residents on at least an annual basis, through the Care Management process which also involves the resident themselves, and their family whenever possible. In addition, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Agency also has a role in assessing care provision against standards.

Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what role he envisages for Daisy Hill hospital in the future delivery of health care.

(AQO 3323/11-15)

Mr Poots: Hospitals within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area operate in a network, making best use of infrastructure, skills and resources. Daisy Hill is an integral and essential part of that acute hospital network, providing high quality care to many patients every day. Daisy Hill is a hospital that has served the local community well for many years and will do so for many more.

The Southern HSC Trust has in recent years demonstrated its commitment to Daisy Hill by investing £2.5m to improve infrastructure and services at the site with a further investment of £4.7m to upgrade theatres planned for the next financial year.

Hospitals: Emergency Care

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the percentage of patients attending Type 1 emergency care departments, who were treated and discharged or admitted within four hours, fell to 71.7 percent between October and December 2012.

(AQO 3324/11-15)

Mr Poots: The lower performance rate for Type 1 Emergency Departments between October and December 2012 reflects the higher volume of patients and more complex cases which presented to these hospitals. In addition, there were 362 more admissions to hospitals from emergency departments with fewer beds being available for admission as a result of winter bug outbreaks in acute hospitals and in nursing and residential homes. This situation resulted in greater numbers of people needing care in emergency departments for longer periods

While recognising that some of these factors were outside the control of Trusts, I find it unacceptable that patients are experiencing excessive waiting times and I look to the Health and Social Care Board to work with all Trusts to ensure that a focus remains on improving the performance of our emergency departments.

Marie Stopes International Clinic

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many abortions have been carried out in the Marie Stopes clinic in Belfast.

(AQO 3325/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not held by the department.

It is my intention that data about all terminations that take place in Northern Ireland should be recorded and officials are exploring the best way to achieve this.

Carrickfergus Ambulance Depot

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans to make the Ambulance Depot in Carrickfergus permanent.

(AQO 3326/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Ambulance Station in Carrickfergus is permanent and I am advised by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service that it has no plans to change its status.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust: Chairperson

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what arrangements have been put in place to appoint a new Chairperson to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQO 3327/11-15)

Mr Poots: An open public appointments competition will be held to appoint a new Chairperson to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The advertisement for this position will appear in the three regional newspapers week commencing 4 February 2013.

Department of Justice

Beech House, Hydebank Wood

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why inmates in Beech House, Hydebank Wood have not had association for over six weeks.

(AQW 18619/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Due to temporary staff shortages it has been necessary to restrict evening association for all prisoners in Hydebank Wood. Although Beech House has been affected by these restrictions, inmates have had the opportunity to avail of association throughout the day in the form of attendance at activities including education, vocational training, physical education and visits. Prisoners not engaged in any form of activity during the day are, where possible, permitted association time on their landing.

Inmates located on a landing subject to restricted regime during evening association, are afforded an appropriate amount of time out of cell to shower, use the telephone, and to make the necessary preparations for the evening and following day.

Prisoner Assessment Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given his intention to reopen the Prisoner Assessment Unit, whether he will authorise the publication of the full version of the report into the closure of the unit, without any redactions, with the exception of where personal security is at risk, in the interests of transparency and to ensure that previous errors have been addressed for the unit's reopening.

(AQW 18620/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW/14000/11-15.

Prison Officers: Return to Work

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of prison officers who have taken sick leave as a result of injury caused by a prisoner have returned to work on light duties.

(AQW 18621/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

Prison Service Management Board

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail why the minutes of the November and December 2012 meetings of the Prison Service Management Board have not been published on the Department's website and when they will be published.

(AQW 18622/11-15)

Mr Ford: A note of the meetings of the Prison Service Management Board is not published until they are approved by the Board members at the next scheduled Board meeting. As no meeting was scheduled for December, November's note of the meeting was only approved at the January Board meeting held on the 8 January.

A note of the November Board meeting has now been published on the NIPS website.

Acting Director General of the Prison Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether new recruits to the Prison Service are issued with caps bearing the badge of Her Majesty's Prison Service.

(AQW 18624/11-15)

Mr Ford: Custody Officers are issued with caps bearing the badge of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

HMP Magilligan

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail any works order that has been submitted to replace the signage at HMP Magilligan and how the content will differ from the current signage.

(AQW 18625/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details a list of Works Orders issued for signage at Magilligan Prison during the past twelve months (since January 2012):

Date	Order Nr	Nature of Signage
22 February 2012	190001194	"Unauthorised / Prohibited Articles"
13 March 2012	190001207	"No Physical Contact permitted at Table"
25 May 2012	190001229	"Name of Staff Member Health and Safety Officer"
3 September 2012	190001316	"Visitors Reception"

The content of these signs did not differ from the signs they replaced.

Young People: Crime

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what funding is available through his Department for programmes aimed at deterring young people from crime.

(AQW 18640/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are a number of funding streams available within my Department for the purpose of deterring young people from crime.

The Youth Justice Agency offers funding of around £540,000 to a range of voluntary and community groups for programmes that are agreed annually. It also operates a scheme with an annual value of

around £120,000, through which voluntary and community groups can apply for small grants of up to £2,500, to support local projects that work to keep young people out of the criminal justice system.

My Department also makes available over £200,000 annually through its Priority Youth Intervention programme, the purpose of which is to deter young people from anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

Further funding is made available to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, some of which is allocated to programmes aimed at deterring young people from crime. This includes, for example, projects providing early interventions and diversionary activities for those young people involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, anti-social behaviour, and work to help young people develop healthy relationships; as well as education projects to raise awareness of the risk factors for young people.

Additionally, funding is being provided for youth diversion activity through small grants made available under the Assets Recovery Community Scheme.

Finally, my Department has directly funded projects that offer innovative and promising solutions and align with our overall aim of reducing offending. This is often in partnership with other Departments and Agencies to emphasise the importance of a joined-up approach to addressing problems before they lead young people into crime.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to allegations that a prison officer planted details in a prisoner's cell concerning Governor Steve Rodford and in terms of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline, to detail (i) the date the officer became aware that he was under investigation; (ii) the date of interview; (iii) the date the disciplinary report was submitted to the Northern Ireland Prison Service; (iv) the outcome, including the date of decision and name of authorising personnel; (v) the current status of the prison officer; and (vi) the Terms of Reference of the disciplinary investigation.

(AQW 18682/11-15)

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.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission requested additional funding for the financial year 2011/2012, and if so, how much was granted and when was it sought and paid.

(AQW 18695/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Service Commission's (NILSC) initial budget allocations for legal aid funds 2011/12 are set out in the table below, with comparison against annual expenditure levels.

TABLE 1: LEGAL AID BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2011/12

2011/12	£m	£m
Main Budget Allocation		83.6
Additional Funding granted:		
Monitoring Round 1	2.3	
Monitoring Round 2	12.3	
Monitoring Round 3	1.1	
Monitoring Round 4	9.6	

2011/12	£m	£m
Total Additional Funding granted		25.3
Total Funding granted		108.9
Total Net Spend		108.2

Note: Figures relate to civil and criminal legal aid and running costs.

The Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) in-year monitoring process provides a formal system for subsequent review of spending plans to ensure that resources are directed towards the highest priority areas, offering an opportunity for Departments to bid for additional funding allocation, if required.

As set out in the above table, additional resources of £25.3m were allocated to the NILSC via Budget Monitoring Rounds in 2011/12. The NILSC met all liabilities, amounting to £108.2m throughout this period.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant AQW 17826/11-15, to detail (i) why this particular prisoner was afforded special treatment, particularly given that his partner was included and the costs met by Northern Ireland Prison Service; (ii) what made this person unique amongst the prisoner population; (iii) which specific person or agency was instrumental in suggesting and authorising this course of action; and (iv) whether he intends to investigate this case, particularly in respect of financial outlay, and to establish if this action was fully required and proved beneficial to those in question.

(AQW 18697/11-15)

Mr Ford: The treatment afforded to this prisoner was proportionate to his assessed risk of reoffending.

Each case is considered on its own merit and appropriate interventions agreed to assist the prisoner to resettle back into the community.

The multi disciplinary process, led by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), determined the most appropriate course of action for this prisoner.

NIPS is presently reviewing the circumstances surrounding the interventions provided to this prisoner and his wife and is satisfied that the treatment provided was appropriate. The review has highlighted that NIPS did bear the cost associated with the programme of interventions as previously stated in AQW 17826/11-15. However, this did not include transport costs.

Thompson House, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how much has been paid to Thompson House to accommodate offenders in each of the last two years; and (ii) to how many offenders do these figures equate.

(AQW 18698/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department does not make payments to Thompson House. Funding for the accommodation is provided through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Supporting People Programme.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the disciplinary process following the discipline investigation into the death in custody of Colin Bell at HMP Maghaberry in June 2008 to detail (i) the composition of the internal Northern Ireland Prison Service independent appeal panel that dismissed all disciplinary charges in respect of ten night custody officers; (ii) the arrangements in respect of the remaining officers and the outcome; (iii) whether such arrangements were compliant with the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline; and (iv) if so, detail why the three

healthcare staff involved in the Deery case were not afforded similar treatment and arrangements in accordance with the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline.

(AQW 18700/11-15)

Mr Ford: The independent three person appeal panel comprised a solicitor; a retired official of the Prison Officers' Association, England & Wales; and a retired Scottish Prison Service Governor.

Disclosure of the information requested in part (ii) would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

The arrangement to convene an Independent Panel was made in agreement with the POA, NIPS senior management and the Labour Relations Agency.

As the cases referred to in part (iv) of the question are still ongoing, I am unable to provide the Member with the details requested.

Supporting Prisoner at Risk Documentation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17887/11-15, to detail how managers, who are responsible for staff that are dealing directly with vulnerable and suicidal prisoners, ensure that relevant policies, procedures, prison rules and best practice are adhered to, including the completion of Supporting Prisoner at Risk documentation and multi-disciplinary reviews on prisoners.

(AQW 18757/11-15)

Mr Ford: Managers on a daily basis have responsibility for managing specific tasks within the prison, including the use of the Supporting Prisoner At Risk (SPAR) procedures. In addition, the Northern Ireland Prison Service has in place a performance management system for all managers and staff, where key objectives are set with the agreement of the job holder and manager. Performance is monitored and assessed against these objectives and managed throughout the year with a mid year and annual review report completed.

Safer Custody managers also carry out audits of safer custody policies and procedures, which includes reviewing Supporting Prisoner at Risk documentation and any issues will be reported to line managers.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Head of Professional Standards

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17980/11-15 and AQW 17821/11-15 to detail (i) the date on which the Head of Professional Standards of the Northern Ireland Prison Service was appointed, as referred to in the November minutes of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Board meeting; and (ii) the grade of the person concerned.

(AQW 18758/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Grade 7 who will manage the Professional Standards Unit was appointed on 16 January 2012.

People with Disabilities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people with disabilities are employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 18759/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of people currently employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and recorded as having declared a disability is 79. This equates to 3.8% of the total number of staff in post.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Prisoner Ombudsman is open to legal challenge in instances where a recommendation is made for suspension and/or dismissal of a staff member which is accepted the Northern Ireland Prison Service, but later overturned on appeal.

(AQW 18760/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman does not make recommendations covering the suspension and/or dismissal of staff, but may recommend that the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) consider conducting an internal disciplinary investigation into a staff member's actions. In those circumstances, NIPS will investigate the facts in line with the disciplinary process set out in the NIPS Code of Conduct.

An individual officer who is concerned about a recommendation made by the Prisoner Ombudsman may make a complaint to the NIPS Director of Operations directly. If such complaints cannot be resolved internally then there is scope for a person to make a complaint via an MLA to the Assembly Ombudsman.

It may also be possible for a recommendation of the Prisoner Ombudsman to be challenged by way of a judicial review application.

Prisoners Tested Positive for Illegal and/or Non-Prescribed Drugs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail what percentage of sentenced prisoners tested positive for illegal and/or non-prescribed drugs, per prison facility, including Hydebank Wood, in 2012. **(AQW 18761/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The percentages of positive drug tests showing the presence of illegal and/or non-prescribed drugs per prison facility in 2012 are shown below.

Establishment	Percentage of Positive Drug Tests
Maghaberry	15.35%
Magilligan	8.39%
Hydebank Wood	8.37%

The results of positive drug tests from remand and sentenced prisoners are not recorded separately.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff Exit Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) why he chose to bid for a further £31.6m of resource funding in the January monitoring round to fund the Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff Exit Scheme; and (ii) the consequences for the delivery of the exit scheme if the agreed allocation is only £10m of the funding requested.

(AQW 18783/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Voluntary Early Retirement (or VER) scheme was launched on 8 November 2011 following approval of the business case by the Department of Finance and Personnel which allowed the release of 360 staff under the scheme. 544 members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service applied for the VER Scheme. Prison Service Management is committed to ensuring as many staff as possible are afforded the opportunity to leave the Service under the Scheme in the context of operational necessity and affordability. Progress is being kept under review.

In this context, my Department submitted a bid to the Department of Finance and Personnel for the additional budget required to fund all officers who applied for the Scheme. The £10m allocation will be used to facilitate the departure of the staff as outlined in the business case. Work is ongoing to firm up detailed costings. It will be necessary to secure additional funding in order to allow all officers to leave under the Scheme.

Supporting Prisoner at Risk Procedures

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17555/11-15 and in light of the recommendations contained in the report on an inspection of Maghaberry Prison on 19-23 March 2012 in relation to the improvement of Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures, will he reconsider his

decision not to amend the opening and closing of Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures and instead have them remain open for vulnerable or at risk prisoners.

(AQW 18804/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is not considering amending the Supporting Prisoners at Risk procedures to have it applied to vulnerable prisoners at all times.

2012 Proposed Domestic Violence Programme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the status of the 2012 proposed domestic violence programme for prisoners at Maghaberry and to clarify when it (a) was implemented or (b) is intended to be implemented in 2013.

(AQW 18805/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service addresses offenders' needs on an individually assessed basis which takes into account violence which is sexual, alcohol or anger driven. NIPS has a range of group programmes which address these serious types of offending including Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it (CALM), Alcohol Related Violence (ARV) and the Sexual Offender Treatment Programmes (SOTP). Where high risk offenders present with a "mixed" pattern of general and domestic violence they are eligible to be referred to the Cognitive Self Change Programme (CSCP) as research and clinical experience shows that the underlying attitudes and beliefs held by these perpetrators are often closely related.

The outcomes for existing domestic violence programmes are disappointing, and therefore the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is currently revising and developing its domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. NIPS, through its partnership with NOMS, will be monitoring this progress and in future may introduce a new evidence based group intervention at Maghaberry.

Prisoner programme needs for 2013/2014 are currently being assessed and it is anticipated that all of these programmes that address serious violence will continue to be delivered.

Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeals Board

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether any officer dismissed from the Prison Service in connection with the death in custody of Colin Bell submitted an appeal to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeals Board; (ii) to detail the number of appeals and the outcomes; (iii) the number of officers who received compensation; (iv) from which appeal forum; and (v) the total cost to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 18806/11-15)

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.

National Offender Management Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how the 2012/13 target cost per prisoner of £67,600 compares with that of the National Offender Management Service.

(AQW 18808/11-15)

Mr Ford: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) measures the annual 'cost per place' but has not published a target for 2012-13. The last full year for which it published this cost was 2011-12 when it was £37,648. The 'cost per prisoner place' (CPPP) for the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) in that year was £71,398.

Economies of scale lead to higher costs in Northern Ireland.

There is also the added complication, exclusive to NIPS, of separated paramilitary prisoners which leads to increased running costs and reduced operational flexibility of accommodation.

In addition the calculation here includes different elements. For example, NOMS does not include all of its education costs in its calculation.

However, the NIPS CPPP has reduced by £9,942 from 2008-09 to £71,398 in 2011-12 and is set to reduce by a further £3,798 this year as the 2012-13 target of £67,600 is currently on track for achievement.

It is also anticipated that this target will be further reduced when the current reform process is complete. This will be subject to the successful delivery of the voluntary early retirement scheme and construction of new accommodation as part of the Estates Strategy.

Thompson House, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much is paid to Thompson House per offender, per week and which agency meets these costs.

(AQW 18810/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the answer I gave to AQW/18698/11-15. Funding for approved premises is provided through the Housing Executive's Supporting People Programme.

Prisoners: Drug Smuggling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many visitors to prisons have been convicted of smuggling, or attempting to smuggle, drugs into prison, in each of the last two years, broken down by prison facility.

(AQW 18868/11-15)

Mr Ford: NIPS request PSNI to attend an establishment, when suspicion warrants, in regard to visitors smuggling drugs. They may subsequently be cautioned, proceeded against by summons or charged for offences either under the Misuse of Drugs Act or the Prison Act. This process cuts across PSNI, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service and Public Prosecution Service.

PSNI are able to provide figures on the number of persons arrested. However, under the Data Protection Act, NIPS is unable to obtain individual names in order to ascertain through the PPS whether any of the persons arrested were subsequently convicted of smuggling or attempting to smuggle drugs into prisons.

Producing the information could only be obtained by manually checking all warrants and the completion of this exercise would be at a disproportionate cost to the public purse.

People Trafficking

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted of people trafficking in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) Crown Court; and (ii) Magistrates Court.

(AQW 18870/11-15)

Mr Ford: People trafficking offences may be prosecuted under Sections 57(1)(a), 57(1)(b), 58(1) and 59(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and Sections 4(1) and 4(2) of the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004.

The Department's formal convictions database shows that one person was convicted of such offences in 2008 and was dealt with in the magistrates' court. In addition we understand from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service and Public Prosecution Service that two persons were prosecuted for and convicted of people trafficking offences in the Crown Court in 2012.

There are a number of cases in which decisions have been taken to prosecute on indictment in the Crown Court for offences of Human Trafficking which have not yet concluded.

There are also a number of human trafficking related cases which have been submitted to the PPS which are currently under active consideration.

It is worth highlighting that there have been a number of other prosecutions of individuals where the evidence was insufficient to prosecute for the actual offence of human trafficking, but evidence was sufficient to prosecute for other offences, such as controlling prostitution. The prosecution of these offences is also effective in disrupting the activities of human traffickers. Effective prosecution of offenders will help to make Northern Ireland a hostile environment for human traffickers.

Class A Drugs

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted of the supply of class A drugs in each of the last five years, broken down by (a) Crown Court; and (b) Magistrates Court.

(AQW 18871/11-15)

Mr Ford: The supply of Class A drugs may be prosecuted under Section 4 (3) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Section 5 (3) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Article 3(1) of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 and Article 9(1) of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

The table below gives the number prosecuted for the supply of Class A drugs for the calendar years 2005 and 2006 (the latest year for which figures are currently available) and convictions for the supply of Class A drugs for the calendar years 2005 to 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available) by court type.

Number of prosecutions and convictions for supply of class A drugs offences by Court Type, 2005 to 2009

	Convictions			Prosecutions		
	Magistrate Court	Crown Court	Total	Magistrate Court	Crown Court	Total
2005	3	43	46	8	44	52
2006	7	41	48	20	49	69
2007	8	69	77	N/A	N/A	N/A
2008	11	68	79	N/A	N/A	N/A
2009	19	68	87	N/A	N/A	N/A

The offences included are supplying class A controlled drug, offering to supply class A controlled drug, being concerned in supply of class A controlled drug and being concerned in offer to supply of class A controlled drug.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2005 to 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2009 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Class A Drugs

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice what proposals he has to make offences of supply of class A drugs triable only on indictment.

(AQW 18873/11-15)

Mr Ford: As indicated in my answer to AQW/18871/11-15, the majority of prosecutions for supply of Class A drugs are already brought on indictment and I have no plans at present to change the mode of prosecution. Legislation on the misuse of drugs is a matter of cross-jurisdictional importance and in any event is a reserved matter under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. I believe it is appropriate to maintain a consistent approach across jurisdictions.

Court Costs Orders

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice what is the total of Court costs orders made against defendants in the Magistrates Courts in each of last five years; and how this figure compares with England and Wales.

(AQW 18874/11-15)

Mr Ford: The term “Court costs orders” is taken to refer to extra costs and other party costs orders made at the Magistrates’ Court.

The total of these orders made in each of the last five financial years at the Magistrates’ Court is set out in the table below:

Financial Year	Extra Costs £	Other Party Costs £	Total £
2007/08	50,652	291,438	342,090
2008/09	76,318	294,265	370,583
2009/10	52,201	295,588	347,789
2010/11	54,332	239,319	293,651
2011/12	49,131	214,380	263,511

Extra costs and other party costs orders cover a range of types of costs and can include service fees for summonses and evidence served on the defendant, analysis fees, witness costs, solicitor and/or counsel fees. It is not possible to break down the figures further into types of costs.

My Department does not hold information in respect of England and Wales court costs orders. However, published information for the last three years in respect of prosecutor costs orders is set out below. These figures are for both Crown and Magistrates’ Courts in England and Wales and are not directly comparable to figures for Northern Ireland, since prosecutor costs orders are routinely applied for by the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales in all cases, but in Northern Ireland the PPS does not seek prosecution costs in police cases.

Financial Year	Prosecutors’ Costs £	Crown Prosecutors’ Costs £	Total £
2009/10	60,781,000	41,735,000	102,516,000
2010/11	55,261,000	44,286,000	99,547,000
2011/12	55,898,000	42,452,000	98,350,000

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17821/11-15 and AQW 12222/11-15, and given that the Pearson Review Team Report of 9 June 2009 at Paragraph 63 states that an effort was underway to review and rewrite the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct, to outline the complexities in developing a new Code of Conduct; and for his assessment of the length of the delay in producing the Code.

(AQW 18877/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Finance and Personnel has overall policy responsibility for Conduct and Discipline in the Department of Justice. The new Prison Service Code of Conduct has therefore had to be developed with appropriate input from the Department of Finance and Personnel as well as Trade Union partners.

I am satisfied that a robust and fair disciplinary system is being developed for the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Prisoners Released for Christmas

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18106/11-15, how many prisoners were charged for breaching their conditions; and what was the nature of the breaches.

(AQW 18878/11-15)

Mr Ford: The ten prisoners and one young offender who failed to abide by their home leave conditions all had adjudications opened. Of these eleven adjudications, two were not concluded as the prisoners are now time served, three have been found guilty, two have been adjourned until a later date, three have been withdrawn and one was dismissed.

The breaches were for breach of curfew; consuming alcohol; missed appointment with the Probation Officer and returned late to prison.

'Lifer' Policy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the status of the 'lifer' policy drafted in February 2012; and (ii) the provision of 'lifer' training for disciplinary staff; and to outline the number of times annually that prisoners who are serving life sentences are reviewed by Prison Service key workers.

(AQW 18880/11-15)

Mr Ford: Maghaberry prison commenced the development of a revised strategy for life sentenced prisoners during 2011. Implementation of the draft strategy was suspended pending a corporate decision on the future of the Prisoner Assessment Unit and the development of a revised offender management policy and standards (to include life sentenced prisoners) as part of the work under the Northern Ireland Prison Service Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness (SEE) programme.

The training needs and development of offender supervisors and other members of staff working with indeterminate prisoners will be considered as part of the introduction of the revised offender management arrangements. In the interim, immediate training needs are currently being looked at within offender management units.

The current arrangement for life sentenced prisoners is that those cases within three years of their tariff date are reviewed on a 3-monthly basis. As far as possible all other life sentenced prisoners are seen by discipline managers and designated staff once per year.

Flag Protests

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Justice what discussions he has had with the PSNI on the flag protests in the East Antrim constituency.

(AQW 18893/11-15)

Mr Ford: While I have had discussions with the Chief Constable and other officers about the protests, these have covered all areas.

Conditional Discharge

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Justice whether a Conditional Discharge constitutes as conviction if the subject does not breach its terms.

(AQW 19272/11-15)

Mr Ford: An order for a conditional discharge is treated as a conviction in particular circumstances. It is treated as a conviction for the purpose of the proceedings in which the order is made; for the purposes of any disqualification, such as a driving disqualification, that may be imposed and for the purposes of any notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. If a person who is subject to a

conditional discharge re-offends during the period specified in the order, the court may deal with the person afresh for the original offence.

Criminal record disclosure certificates may include information on conditional discharges. For a Basic Certificate a conditional discharge is not disclosed after the date on which the order ceases, or one year, whichever is the longer. For Standard and Enhanced certificates a conditional discharge is always disclosed.

Contingency/Emergency Prison, Millisle

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18454/11-15, to clarify if the site at Millisle has now been ruled out as a site for a contingency/emergency prison.

(AQW 19310/11-15)

Mr Ford: Millisle has been ruled out as a site for a contingency/emergency prison facility.

Diesel Fuel

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Justice to detail his plans, as referenced in responses he gave to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, to create new licensing legislation solely governing the retailing of diesel fuel including licences, which could be revoked with penalties in the instance of proprietors who are detected selling laundered diesel fuel.

(AQW 19326/11-15)

Mr Ford: As my response to the recommendation in the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) report on fuel laundering and smuggling in Northern Ireland said, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Fuel Oils Forum concluded that an amendment to petroleum licensing legislation would not address the problem, as this legislation is designed to achieve health and safety objectives rather than as a tool to combat crime. Selling laundered fuel is already an offence and were proprietors found to be knowingly selling such fuel, testing could identify that and prosecutions could follow. The Department will continue to work with colleagues in the Organised Crime Task Force to see what else can be done, for instance, the alteration of the marker in diesel fuel. A tender process is ongoing to develop a new marker technology and testing.

We are also seeking to make maximise publicity where illegal plants are discovered, such as that near Jonesborough, on 30 January 2013. Tackling this crime type remains a priority for the OCTF.

Human Trafficking

Mr Gardiner asked Minister of Justice for his assessment of the level of human trafficking which does not involve immigrants.

(AQO 3328/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am sure Members will be at one in condemning this heinous crime of human trafficking, regardless of the nationalities of the victims who are trafficked.

During the financial year 2011 to 2012 a total of 33 potential victims of human trafficking were referred to the National Referral Mechanism – the NRM - from Northern Ireland. Almost a quarter (eight) of these potential victims were UK nationals who had been trafficked internally to Northern Ireland from other parts of the United Kingdom. The second and third largest nationality groups represented were Chinese and Ghanaian nationals, with seven and six potential victims recovered from these nationality groups respectively.

The number of cases of potential victims referred to the NRM from Northern Ireland has dropped in the first three quarters of the 2012 to 2013 financial year, with only eight potential victims referred so far, of whom six were Chinese, one was a UK national and one was a Romanian national.

However it is important to recognise that these figures relate only to those potential victims of human trafficking who have been referred to the NRM. As such the figures do not present the full picture of

the level of human trafficking within Northern Ireland; for example, there may be some potential or suspected victims of trafficking who currently remain undetected or others who, whilst recovered, do not want to be referred to the NRM.

That is why my Department is working closely with partners in other Government Departments and law enforcement agencies, and across both the statutory and non-statutory sectors to provide a joined-up response to tackling human trafficking.

A key part of the work being undertaken by officials, in conjunction with partners, is to improve data collection. We want to develop a more comprehensive picture of human trafficking across Northern Ireland.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships: Independent Members

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice whether there are any independent members still to be appointed to the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

(AQO 3331/11-15)

Mr Ford: All appointments were finalised by October 2012.

While all partnerships are now fully operational and delivering on the ground for the benefit of the local community, the Policing Board has advised that there is currently one vacancy – resulting from a resignation – on South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership (DPCSP). Arrangements are being made to fill this position.

Prison Officers: Early Retirement

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the number of prison officers who are expected to take early retirement during 2013.

(AQO 3339/11-15)

Mr Ford:

544 members of staff applied to leave NIPS under the terms of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme. To date 287 individuals have left the Service. Business Case approval has been given for a total of 360 staff to leave the Service. A Business Case seeking approval to extend the Scheme to cover all those who initially applied will be submitted to DFP shortly.

Department for Regional Development

Roads Service Repair Works

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many repair works in the North Down area were carried out by Roads Service in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 17983/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Details of road repair works carried out by Roads Service in the North Down area, in each of the last three complete financial years, and the current year to date, are set out in the table below:

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 (Apr – Dec)
Number of repairs	4,126	4,035	3,788	3,296

The fact that the number of defects identified and repaired has been decreasing is a strong indicator of an improvement in the condition of the network. This may be, in no small measure, due to the record

levels of structural maintenance expenditure - £120 million in 2011/12 and currently £106 million in 2012/13.

Road Safety on the Rathgael Road, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to improve road safety on the Rathgael Road, Bangor.

(AQW 18688/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service receives information on personal injury collisions from the PSNI. This allows officials to plan collision remedial schemes for locations that meet the initial intervention level of four collisions in a three year period, and where there is a common pattern of collisions which can be addressed by engineering methods.

A review of the records of personal injury collisions available to Roads Service for the Rathgael Road, between the A2 and A21 junctions, has not identified a particular problem.

In addition, the Rathgael Road is also inspected on a cyclical basis, in accordance with Roads Service's Maintenance Standards, and any actionable defects identified are prioritised and programmed for repair.

As I am sure you are aware, Rathgael Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit from the A2 Bangor Road to the A21 Newtownards Road. To help highlight this speed limit to drivers, Roads Service has recently provided larger 30mph speed limit signs at the junction with the A2 Bangor Road, to increase their visibility for drivers entering Rathgael Road.

Information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can also 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.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Budgets and work programmes for the 2013/14 financial year have yet to be determined, however, when finalised, details of the schemes to be undertaken will be published in the afore-mentioned Council Reports.

Adoption of Private Streets

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there is a relief fund allowing for the adoption of private streets where the developer is bankrupt and has no bond in place.

(AQW 18754/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Developers are responsible for providing new roads in housing developments, and for making provision for the costs of doing so, in the event they are unable to complete the works.

Unfortunately, where a developer has gone bankrupt and a bond has not been put in place to provide for the cost of constructing the streets in a development, my Department is unable to adopt such private streets, until they have been completed to appropriate standards.

There is currently no relief fund that allows my Department to complete and adopt such private streets, where a bond has not been put in place.

Northern Ireland Railways Lines

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amounts allocated for the maintenance of Northern Ireland Railways lines to (i) Newry/Portadown; (ii) Londonderry/Portrush; (iii) Bangor; and (iv) Larne, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18756/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the table below sets out the amounts allocated for maintenance of Northern Ireland Railways lines in each of the last five years.

The information is provided on the basis of recognised NIR line sections, which is how such costs are allocated within Translink.

Amounts allocated to maintenance inevitably depend on line condition in the first place, thus no conclusion can be drawn from the figures.

**NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS
LINE MAINTENANCE COSTS 2007/08 TO 2011/12**

Line	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Larne Line	680,366	937,064	481,913	469,169	961,196
Bangor Line	471,207	454,233	465,705	425,702	522,589
Portadown / Newry / Lisburn / Cross Border Line	1,684,725	1,757,350	1,667,481	1,286,088	1,361,085
Londonderry / Coleraine / Bleach Green Line	1,940,170	1,944,700	1,907,698	1,491,709	1,564,849
	4,776,469	5,093,348	4,522,796	3,672,668	4,409,719

Cookstown District Council

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of parking enforcement notices that have been issued in the Cookstown District Council area, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 18762/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in the Cookstown District Council area, in each of the last three years, are provided in the table below:

Year	PCNs Issued In Cookstown District Council Area
2010	1,813
2011	1,964
2012	1,588

Parking Enforcement Notices

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of parking enforcement notices that have been issued in the Magherafelt District Council area, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 18763/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in the Magherafelt District Council area, in each of the last three years, are provided in the table below:

Year	PCNs Issued In Magherafelt District Council Area
2010	2,000
2011	2,633

Year	PCNs Issued In Magherafelt District Council Area
2012	1,795

Parking Enforcement Notices

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of appeals that have been lodged for parking enforcement notices that have been issued in the Cookstown District Council area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 18764/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain details of challenges to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) by town or council area. However, details of the number of challenges to PCNs issued in Northern Ireland and the number that have been successful, in each of the last three years, are provided in the table below:

Year	Challenges to PCNs issued in Northern Ireland	Successful Challenges to PCNs issued in Northern Ireland
2010	15,001	8,984
2011	16,496	9,657
2012	19,906	9,105

When a challenge to a PCN has been successful, the PCN is cancelled. However, when a challenge to a PCN has been unsuccessful, the PCN may be paid. Should the PCN remain unpaid, a Notice to Owner is issued. Roads Service does not maintain details of PCNs at the various processing stages for cases where there has been an unsuccessful challenge.

Parking Enforcement Notice Appeals

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of appeals that have been lodged for parking enforcement notices that have been issued in the Magherafelt District Council area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 18765/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 18764/11-15.

Parking Enforcement Notices

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of parking enforcement notices that have been successfully appealed in the Cookstown District Council area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 18766/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 18764/11-15.

Road Gritting

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of how Roads Service is meeting the demand for gritting roads in light of the recent snowfall.

(AQW 18772/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has worked hard to keep the strategic road network open during the recent cold spell. Some areas have experienced difficulties and as with all such significant

weather events, Roads Service will examine the operational effectiveness of its response and take on board any lessons to be learned.

Liability for Paint Spillages

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department accepts liability for paint spillages on roads and footpaths.

(AQW 18775/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has a duty under Article 8 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 to maintain the structure (fabric) of roads to a reasonable standard. However, paint or any other object / material deposited on the road surface does not form part of the fabric of the road and, as such is not covered under Article 8.

The Department assesses each claim for compensation on the basis of the individual circumstances of the case and consideration as to whether the Department has discharged its statutory obligations appropriately, before making a decision regarding acceptance of liability.

An individual also has the option of initiating legal proceedings against the Department and it would therefore be a matter for the courts to determine if the Department was liable.

A5 Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the A5 scheme.

(AQW 18776/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that the A5 project is the subject of an ongoing legal challenge which is scheduled to be heard in court on 12-14 February 2013. In the meantime, my Department's Roads Service is continuing with preliminary works considered essential to mitigate the impact of delays associated with the legal challenge. These works include fencing, vegetation management, service diversions, ecology and archaeology works. Commencement of the main works will be dependent on the outcome of the legal challenge.

Londonderry Railway Line

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development why Translink has ceased the refreshment trolley service on the Londonderry Railway Line.

(AQW 18787/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that it ceased the operation of a refreshment trolley on the Londonderry-Belfast railway line in late 2005. It was not profit making.

Comber Greenway at Ballyrainey Road, Newtownards

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are being taken to address the problems with access to the Comber Greenway at Ballyrainey Road, Newtownards following the installation of a bridge at this location.

(AQW 18795/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Due to the provision of a new bridge over the Ballyrainey Road, in addition to the associated earthworks and embankments, it was not possible to retain the existing accesses onto the Greenway at this location.

Roads Service officials have been exploring a number of options in the hope of providing an alternative access point onto the Greenway Cycle route, in the vicinity of Ballyrainey Road junction, which, to date, are proving to be financially prohibitive. Land issues are also proving to be problematic, due to the requirement to acquire land which is not in public ownership.

Regrettably, my Department, taking account of current funding levels and other competing priorities, is unable to pursue this matter further at this time.

District Electoral Ward

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 17873/11-15, to provide a breakdown of expenditure on roads maintenance by District Electoral Ward.

(AQW 18799/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain an analysis of expenditure on roads maintenance by District Electoral Ward.

Road Safety on the Gransha Road, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what more his Department can do to improve road safety on the Gransha Road, Bangor.

(AQW 18834/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service monitors road traffic collision data with a view to identifying recurring factors or patterns that can be addressed through engineering methods. Personal injury collision information available to Roads Service does not indicate there are any particular issues along Gransha Road, Bangor.

However, as part of the planning approval for the new Bangor Grammar School, to which Roads Service provided input as a consultee, the education authority carried out a number of improvement works including:

- widening the footways at the site frontage along Gransha Road;
- installing a new Puffin enhanced road crossing;
- the relocation of two pedestrian islands on Gransha Road;
- creating a right turn pocket and new road markings on Gransha Road;
- installing 'Safe Routes to School' solar signs;
- the provision of a pedestrian guard rail at entrance of the school;
- providing school bus boarding and drop off points within the school premises;
- creating a dedicated bus lay-by, with lowered kerbs for easier access;
- providing drop-off lay-bys for parents to use on Gransha Road; and
- installing a new bus shelter on Gransha Road.

Roads Service also reviewed the road junctions serving residential areas close to the school entrance which officials considered had adequate sight splays and footway provision to provide safe access.

It should be noted that previously the Gransha Road in the vicinity of the school site had been provided with central hatching, right turn pockets and central pedestrian refuge islands, which channel the traffic and make it safer for pedestrians to cross the road. In addition, Roads Service has also recently widened the junction of Cranley Road to allow a left turning vehicle to safely pass a right turning vehicle.

I can assure you that Roads Service is aware of public concern relating to road safety on the Gransha Road and it intends to monitor the operation of the junctions to determine if any further measures are deemed necessary.

Parking Enforcement Notice Appeals

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of parking enforcement notice appeals that have been successful in the Magherafelt Council District area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 18851/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 18764/11-15.

Translink's Rail Services

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development what impact the weather conditions from 18 January 2013 to 22 January 2013 had on Translink's rail services.

(AQW 18875/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advise that during the period Friday 18 January to Tuesday 22 January 2013, NI Railways were scheduled to operate 1,491 services. Only one service was cancelled and 16 were delayed due to the weather conditions.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices were issued in (i) Ballymena; (ii) Belfast; (iii) Enniskillen; (iv) Newry; (v) Omagh; (vi) Newtownards; (vii) Dungannon; (viii) Strabane; (ix) Magherafelt; (x) Cookstown; (xi) Carrickfergus; and (xii) Larne in 2012; and how this compares with 2011.

(AQW 18876/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in 2012 and 2011, for the areas requested are provided in the table below:

Town/City	PCNs Issued 2012	PCN Issued 2011
Ballymena	4,693	6,855
Belfast	32,155	36,355
Enniskillen	5,389	6,517
Newry	5,202	8,501
Omagh	4,249	5,098
Newtownards	2,959	3,058
Dungannon	2,168	2,333
Strabane	2,086	2,659
Magherafelt	1,686	2,439
Cookstown	1,588	1,964
Carrickfergus	1,432	1,547
Larne	1,317	1,374

Larne Railway Line: Price Rises

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what impact the price rises on the Larne railway line will have on the development of the route as a viable alternative for commuters in East Antrim before the commencement of major works on the A2.

(AQW 18894/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advise that there has been no recent price rise on the Larne railway line. The last fare increase on the NI Railways network was in April 2012.

Lay Pipes on Private Property

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what powers his Department has to lay pipes on private property.

(AQW 18911/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has powers under Article 45 of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, to construct and lay road drains in land adjacent to or adjoining a road. The Department may also scour, cleanse and repair road drains as required.

Northern Ireland Water has powers under Article 220 of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to lay pipes in private land for the purpose of carrying out its water and sewerage functions.

Fluoridate the Water Supply

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposals to fluoridate the water supply.

(AQW 18930/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NI water at present does not use fluoride in its drinking water processes.

Any decision to increase the fluoride levels in water for health reasons is a decision for the Minister of Health, who is empowered to make regulations under the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

Translink Bus Depots

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the Translink bus depots at Newtownards and Bangor have the capacity to store additional buses.

(AQW 18954/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: This is an operational matter for Translink, however it has advised me that neither Newtownards nor Bangor depots are currently at full capacity.

Parking Enforcement Notice Appeals

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the each town in South Down, to detail the number of (i) parking enforcement notice appeals that have been issued; and (ii) the number parking enforcement notice appeals have been successful, in the last two years.

(AQW 18992/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain details of challenges to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) by town or council area. However, details of the number of challenges to PCNs issued in Northern Ireland and those which were successful, in each of the last two years, are provided in the table below:

Year	Challenges to PCNs issued in Northern Ireland	Successful Challenges to PCNs issued in Northern Ireland
2011	16,496 (approximately 13% of all PCNs)	9,657 (approximately 58% of all challenges received)
2012	19,906 (approximately 15% of all PCNs)	9,105 (approximately 54% of all challenges received)

When a challenge to a PCN has been successful, the PCN is cancelled. However, when a challenge to a PCN has been unsuccessful, the PCN may be paid. Should the PCN remain unpaid, a Notice to Owner

is issued. Roads Service does not maintain details of PCNs at the various processing stages for cases where there has been an unsuccessful challenge.

Car Parking Fines

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the revenue generated by car parking fines issued in South Down, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 18993/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain details of revenue generated from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued on a town or constituency basis. However, the total revenue generated from PCNs issued in Northern Ireland in 2010/11 and 2011/12 was, £4.5M and £4.6M respectively.

Details of the number of PCNs issued in Downpatrick, Newcastle, Ballynahinch and Kilkeel in each of the last two years (shown as a percentage of the overall Northern Ireland figure) are provided in the table below:

Town	PCNs Issued	
	2011 (% of total no of PCNs)	2012 (% of total no of PCNs)
Downpatrick	1,452 (1.2%)	1,514 (1.3%)
Newcastle	1,044 (0.8%)	1,157 (1.0%)
Ballynahinch	374 (0.3%)	292 (0.3%)
Kilkeel	119 (0.09%)	150 (0.13%)

Carlingford Lough

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, while the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority is responsible for the maintenance of the navigation channel in Carlingford Lough, where does the legislative competence lie in relation to any authority necessary to obstruct or interfere with this waterway.
(AQW 19002/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Responsibility for the maintenance of the navigation channel in Carlingford Lough is principally the responsibility of the Carlingford Lough Commissioners except within the limits of Warrenpoint Harbour where Warrenpoint Harbour Authority is responsible. Upstream of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority limits (on the Newry River) neither body has responsibility.

Within their respective limits, Carlingford Lough Commissioners and Warrenpoint Harbour Authority have a statutory responsibility to maintain the navigation channel within Carlingford Lough and this would include the removal of obstructions in the channel. As a general principle, extinguishment of public rights of navigation requires legislation, exercise of a statutory power or destruction of the subject matter of the public rights of navigation.

Narrow Water Bridge Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development in relation to the Narrow Water bridge project, which agency will be responsible for the maintenance of (i) the bridge; and (ii) the link road to the bridge from the roundabout on the Northern Ireland side, and will the link road and bridge, or any part thereof, be adopted by Roads Service.

(AQW 19003/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Narrow Water Bridge project is being progressed by Louth County Council, in partnership with Newry and Mourne District Council and East Border Region Limited.

The operation and maintenance of the bridge, together with maintenance of the link road from the existing roundabout to the bridge, will be carried out by Newry and Mourne District Council (through an agreement with Louth County Council).

No part of the bridge or link road would be adopted by Roads Service.

Asbestos Pipes

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of asbestos pipes currently being used in the water system; and (ii) how many EU countries still use asbestos pipes to deliver water to homes.

(AQW 19098/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) the water supply network has 1,381 kilometres of asbestos cement pipes currently in use which represents around 5% of the water supply network. The replacement of asbestos cement pipe with newer industry material is taken on a serviceability basis such as burst history. (ii) NIW does not hold information on the number of EU countries using asbestos cement pipes. However a Review Paper for the Drinking Water Inspectorate in May 2002 concluded that "Asbestos cement pipes have been widely used for drinking water distribution and there are many kilometres to be found all over the world, including many European countries."

NIW is satisfied that there are no associated health risks with the use of asbestos cement pipes to supply drinking water. The World Health Organisation has undertaken a number of studies on the subject and concluded that, while inhaled asbestos is a known health risk, there is no consistent or convincing evidence that ingested asbestos is hazardous to health. The health concerns regarding asbestos cement pipes are related to occupational exposure during their manufacture, installation and disposal and these are covered by industry regulations. Any work undertaken by NIW staff on asbestos cement pipes is in accordance with legislative requirements and associated Health and Safety guidance.

Magee Campus, University of Ulster

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on parking provision in the Magee Campus area of the University of Ulster.

(AQW 19113/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of a Traffic Management proposal in relation to this matter, including a one-way system and waiting restrictions, were forwarded to the Aberfoyle Residents Association in February 2012 to initiate consultation and gauge resident support, or otherwise, for the scheme. The Residents Association responded in October 2012 to my Department's Roads Service, however, it was noted the consultation that had been carried out did not include some areas of Aberfoyle Crescent and Dill Park.

At that time, Roads Service officials advised the Residents Association to engage with the residents of those areas not included in the initial consultation, thus allowing Roads Service to determine the merits, or otherwise, of beginning the lengthy legislative process required to implement the scheme. To date, no further feedback has been received from the Residents Association.

Roads Service has received correspondence from one resident of Aberfoyle Crescent who has stated they would not be in support of the scheme.

Enniskillen and Altnagelvin Hospitals

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the success of the pilot scheme connecting Enniskillen and Altnagelvin Hospitals.

(AQW 19145/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The pilot service commenced on 5 September 2012. Up to the 27 December 2012 a total of 261 end-to-end passenger journeys were made from Enniskillen to Altnagelvin hospital, out of a total of 967 journeys on that route.

Translink are of the view that the service is still at the early stages of establishing patronage.

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2101/11-15, and his acknowledgement in the Assembly that the anticipated £40 million funding from the Harbour Commissioners to the Executive budget will not be obtainable, to set out the reasons why this is the case and why this was not known when the initial announcement was made that such funding would be extracted.

(AQW 19202/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: When Budget 2011-15 was agreed by the Executive in March 2011 there were a wide range of revenue generating proposals advanced following discussions between ministers. The Minister of Finance has informed me that the Executive were aware of the significant level of financial reserves retained by Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) and there was agreement that BHC should therefore make a contribution towards improving the infrastructure network. The detail on delivering this was delegated to the Budget Review Group.

The Budget Review Group agreed that the Department should focus on working collaboratively with the Belfast Harbour Commissioners on release of value projects. Following a meeting of the Budget Review Group on 27 September and between representatives of that Group and the Harbour Commissioners on 11 October it was agreed that the Commissioners would take forward, from within their resources, proposals for investment in Foreign Direct Investment accommodation in 2013/14 and consider other suitable projects in future years.

Northern Ireland Water: Sewage Solution Pollution

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development when Northern Ireland Water will commence and finish the project to alleviate the problem of sewage solution pollution in the Kinnegar area, Holywood and the total budget earmarked for such.

(AQW 19298/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the £3.5 million infrastructure project to resolve the sewage pollution at Kinnegar Lagoons, Holywood is progressing well and is on target to be delivered within its PC13 Business Plan which covers the period April 2013 to March 2015. Subject to the usual statutory approvals and budgetary constraints, NIW propose to commence the project early within the next financial year with a construction period of approximately twelve months.

While this project will prevent pollution to the Lagoons, a second complementary project will consider the remediation options for the Lagoons and particularly the odours emanating from the mud at low-tide. NIW has also commenced work on this second phase and it is progressing well with several environmental studies and mud samplings completed. Further impounded water sampling and flood analysis is also planned and the emerging findings will be known in the Spring of 2013. At that time the financial and programming implications, will be considered in relation to the recommended remediation option.

Belfast on the Move

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the estimated reduction in car usage in Belfast city centre each month since the introduction of Belfast on the Move.

(AQW 19355/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Prior to the start of the implementation of the Belfast on the Move Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures traffic flow surveys were carried out on the arterial routes into and through the city centre. Following the completion of these works, which is scheduled for June 2013, further surveys will be carried out to measure the success of the project.

Data is not available to provide information on a monthly basis with the works being implemented on an incremental basis and therefore subject to constant changes in traffic movements. However preliminary data for October 2012, which followed the implementation of the bus priority measures on Oxford Street, May Street, Donegall Square South and Howard Street in September 2012, indicates that traffic levels are lower across the city centre and that some of the 'through' traffic has diverted to more strategic routes.

Specifically this preliminary data shows traffic on Oxford Street and May Street has reduced by around 40%, which is approximately 5000 vehicles per day, and traffic on Chichester Street has reduced by around 20%, which is approximately 2000 vehicles per day. Traffic levels on the Westlink have increased by around 5%, which is approximately 4000 vehicles per day. This would indicate that some of the through traffic from the city centre has re-routed to strategic routes.

Once the works are completed and the further surveys are carried out we will be able to measure the full impacts of the project.

Belfast on the Move

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the effect of Belfast on the Move on passenger journeys on Metro and Ulsterbus services since its introduction.
(AQW 19358/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In October and November 2012, compared to the same period in 2011, 1,500 additional passenger journeys per day were made on Metro services in Belfast. In the same period 1,500 additional passenger journeys per day were also made on Ulsterbus. In addition bus journeys to and from Belfast's dedicated Park & Ride sites have shown an average increase of 15%.

Translink have also indicated that bus reliability in Belfast has improved by 20% since September/October 2011.

Once the works are completed in June 2013 we will be able to measure the full impacts of the project on public transport usage and reliability.

Belfast on the Move

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total cost of phases one and two of Belfast on the Move.
(AQW 19359/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The total cost of the Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures of the Belfast on the Move project will be approximately £4.2m.

Of this £2.5m has been spent on the works completed prior to Christmas 2012 (Phase 1) and the remainder, £1.7m, will be spent between January 2013 and the end of the works in June 2013 (Phase 2).

Department for Social Development

Disability Living Allowance: Higher Rate

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) total number of people who were in receipt of the Higher Rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance; and (ii) ratio of recipients to population, in each constituency on 31 December 2011.

(AQW 18510/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):

- (i) As at December 2011, there were 96,360 people receiving the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance.

- (ii) The table below shows the breakdown of this total by Assembly Area, and the ratio of recipients to population in each Assembly Area.

Assembly Area	DLA recipients receiving Higher rate Mobility	2010 Population	% of population per Assembly Area
Belfast East	4,700	90,400	5.2%
Belfast North	7,450	101,400	7.3%
Belfast South	3,870	103,700	3.7%
Belfast West	8,780	90,800	9.7%
East Antrim	3,760	89,200	4.2%
East Londonderry	4,030	97,200	4.1%
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	4,670	104,300	4.5%
Foyle	6,840	103,000	6.6%
Lagan Valley	4,110	100,400	4.1%
Mid Ulster	5,190	97,900	5.3%
Newry and Armagh	6,580	113,100	5.8%
North Antrim	4,450	107,000	4.2%
North Down	3,400	90,200	3.8%
South Antrim	4,330	99,500	4.4%
South Down	5,790	109,600	5.3%
Strangford	4,180	90,400	4.6%
Upper Bann	7,190	118,400	6.1%
West Tyrone	6,610	93,000	7.1%
Unknown	430		
Total	96,360	1,799,500	5.4%

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Disability Living Allowance appeals that have been (i) lodged; (ii) processed; and (iii) ruled in the claimants favour in North Down, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18522/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format sought and The Appeals Service cannot provide the required information before June 2007.

The Appeals Service arranges for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) appeals to be heard at venues throughout Northern Ireland. The selection of venues for appeal hearings is determined by the postal district within which the appellant resides. The data is only available by appeal hearing venue.

Any appeal lodged with the Social Security Agency is subject to reconsideration and may therefore not progress to The Appeals Service. Appeals may not be dealt with in the same year that they are received.

The Chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination. The table below sets out the available information for the last five years in respect of DLA appeals within the postal districts of Newtownards and Bangor:

Period	Number of appeals received	Final outcomes: Number of appeals determined	More advantageous appeals
2007-08 (From June 2007)	356	251	78
2008-09	455	362	102
2009-10	377	356	127
2010-11	390	339	99
2011-12	302	263	93

Assistance for Low Income Families

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development what help is available for low income families to (i) reduce fuel costs; and (ii) insulate their homes.

(AQW 18618/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department continues to fund the Warm Homes Scheme which offers a range of insulation and heating measures to eligible householders. The Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) also allocates 80% of its annual funding to energy efficiency schemes for vulnerable Boiler Replacement Scheme claimants. There is no doubt that improving the energy efficiency of homes can significantly reduce fuel costs.

Help may also be provided through the social security system. Anyone who is receiving Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (income based) and Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) may qualify for Cold Weather Payments. Cold Weather Payments provide help to meet heating costs incurred, or likely to be incurred during periods of exceptionally cold weather, in the area where they live. In addition Winter Fuel Payments are paid each year to assist with the payment of heating bills during the winter months.

Flats in Rathmullan Drive, Newtownards

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed stock transfer of flats in Rathmullan Drive, Newtownards.

(AQW 18630/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that, in relation to current owners of former Housing Executive properties, any grant aid that could be considered towards the removal of high risk asbestos from such properties would only be through discretionary grant. Discretionary grants however can only be considered where there are clear exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, any grant aid would be subject to a means test being undertaken on individual owners to determine their ability to contribute towards the decontamination works, and would also require that the decontamination works be certified.

Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what funding for childcare is available through his Department that can be accessed by the Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor.

(AQW 18648/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Kilcooley Women's Centre Bangor currently accesses funding from the Women's Centre Childcare Fund (WCCF). They are one of fourteen women's centres across Northern Ireland in receipt of this funding.

Development of Young People

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what funding is available through his Department for the development of young people.

(AQW 18650/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Within my Department there is no specific funding programme for the development of young people. However there are a number of Programmes accessible to young people, these include the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, the Volunteering Small Grants Programme and the Volunteering Innovation Fund.

Funding through the above Programmes may be made available for the development of young people where a priority need has been identified and resources can be made available.

Dunclug Estate, Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development how many properties in the Dunclug Estate, Ballymena are currently empty.

(AQW 18663/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Neither my Department nor the Northern Ireland Housing Executive hold information on the number or addresses of empty homes. The Housing Executive has informed me that it currently has 282 properties in the Dunclug area having already sold 441 properties there through the House Sales Scheme. 25 of the NIHE's properties are vacant at present.

Dunclug Estate, Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development what action he is taking to reduce the number of empty properties in the Dunclug Estate, Ballymena.

(AQW 18664/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Neither my Department nor the NIHE hold information on the number or the addresses of empty homes. I am advised that, of the Housing Executive's 282 properties, 25 are vacant at present in the whole Dunclug area, of these:-

- 3 are pending demolition;
- 4 are on offer;
- 9 either requiring or are undergoing repairs; and
- 1 property purchased under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED) scheme.

The remaining eight properties are available to let. The Housing Executive has reported that it is difficult to predict when these eight properties will be allocated as they are considered difficult to let due to perceived anti social behaviour in the area. However, work is ongoing to place tenants there.

I have tasked the Housing Executive and my officials with developing a Northern Ireland-wide empty homes strategy and action plan which I expect to see finalised by 31 March 2013. One of the aims of the Empty Homes Strategy and action plan will be the identification and location of empty homes in the private sector. I remain committed to bringing empty homes back into use throughout Northern Ireland.

New Build Social Housing

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many new build social housing apartments, houses or flats will be provided in the (i) Coleraine; and (ii) Limavady council areas, in the course of the next three years.

(AQW 18715/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The new three year Social Housing Development Programme for the period 2013/14 to 2015/16 includes a total of 36 new homes for the Coleraine Council Area and 16 new homes for the Limavady Council Area. Details are as follows:-

Coleraine

2013/14 - 31a Hazelbank Road, Coleraine (11 units)

2013/14 - Darkfort Drive, Portballintrea (9 units)

2013/14 - Harpurs Hill, Coleraine (12 units)

2014/15 - Temple Park, Castlerock (4 units)

Limavady

2014/15 - Hass Road, Dungiven (10 units)

2015/16 - Tullyverry Drive, Greysteel (6 units)

The Social Housing Development Programme 2013/14 to 2015/16 is published on the Housing Executives website. The link is:- http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/services/housing_need.htm

Home Insulation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development which organisation his Department recommends to private home owners for independent advice and consultations on home insulation.

(AQW 18733/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department, through the Housing Executive, part funds and recommends the Bryson Energy advice number 0800 14 22 865 to private home owners for independent advice on all aspects of energy efficiency advice, including home insulation.

The Energy Saving Trust www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/northernireland and NI Direct www.nidirect.gov.uk are also excellent sources of energy saving advice.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the qualifying time period of consecutive days where the temperature is below freezing for the Winter Fuel Payment process to be triggered.

(AQW 18769/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Payment of Cold Weather payments are triggered when the average temperature is, or forecast to be, zero degrees centigrade or below for 7 consecutive days from 1 November to 31 March. This information is supplied to the Social Security Agency by the Met Office based on recordings and forecasts at 7 separate weather stations located at Aldergrove, Castlederg, Glenanne, Katesbridge, Magilligan, Stormont and Thomastown, each of which cover a range of designated post code areas. Payments are at a rate of £25 for each 7 day cold weather period and are issued automatically. They provide help to vulnerable people, regardless of age, to meet heating costs incurred, or likely to be incurred during periods of exceptionally cold weather, in the area where they live.

To qualify for a Cold Weather Payment a claimant must be receiving:

- State Pension Credit, or income-related Employment and Support Allowance (main phase) for at least one day in a period of cold weather; or

- They, or their partner, must be in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance (in the assessment phase) for at least a one day in the period of cold weather and:
 - have a dependant child aged under five; or
 - have a relevant pensioner or disability premium; or
 - be entitled to Child Tax Credit for child or qualifying young person who is disabled or severely disabled

Disability Living Allowance

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what changes will be made to the qualifying criteria for the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, in relation to the minimum distance of mobility claimants are moved to Personal Independence Payment; and what assessment has been made of the potential impact on claimants who have permanent, exacerbating or fluctuating conditions. **(AQW 18774/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: To be eligible to receive the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance due to walking difficulties, a person must:

- (i) be unable to walk or virtually unable to walk to receive the higher rate; or
- (ii) need someone with them to provide guidance and supervision for most of the time when they are outdoors on unfamiliar routes to receive the lower rate.

Under Personal Independence Payment, the enhanced rate of the mobility component will be automatically payable to anyone who cannot stand and move more than 20 metres, aided or unaided. An individual who can move more than 20 metres may also receive 12 points and the enhanced rate if they cannot do so safely, to a necessary and appropriate standard, repeatedly and in a timely manner. The standard rate will be payable to anyone who can reliably stand and move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. In addition, the ability to plan and follow a journey is also taken into account when assessing mobility.

The Personal Independence Payment assessment criteria have been revised throughout the development process taking into account the testing of current Disability Living Allowance customers, including people from Northern Ireland, and a lengthy consultation and engagement process with disabled people and their representative organisations. A formal consultation on the assessment criteria was completed in 2012, and as a result of the responses received, the assessment criteria for the 'moving around' activity was re-written to make the policy intent clearer.

In the final assessment criteria the activity has been clarified by including the ability to stand and removing reference to different aids. It was always intended to differentiate within the group of people who can move distances of less than 50 metres, giving those whose mobility is most limited the enhanced rate and the remainder the standard rate. The intention was not to tighten the activity, and the policy intent behind the activity remains the same.

In comparison to Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment will have a more systematic and active award review mechanism with a more personalised approach; decisions on award duration and review frequency will be made on the basis of individual needs and the likelihood of the health condition or impairment changing. Thus, the regular reviews will help to ensure that the awards given to people with deteriorating conditions remain correct.

The Personal Independence Payment assessment will also take account of health conditions and disabilities that have fluctuating symptoms or impacts. A descriptor will apply if the impact of a health condition or impairment is experienced on the majority of days over a twelve month period rather than the 'majority of the time' as in Disability Living Allowance, i.e. if a descriptor applies at any point during a 24 hour period, it is considered to apply for the entire day, whereas in Disability Living Allowance it would have to apply for the 'majority of the day'. The assessment will also take into account whether

claimants can complete activities reliably, i.e. safely, to a necessary and appropriate standard, repeatedly and in a timely manner.

Double Glazing Replacement Schemes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development what work on the replacement of double glazing in Housing Executive homes is currently taking place; and when this work is due to finish.

(AQW 18801/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In excess of 6,000 double glazing installations were started by the end of December 2012 and I have approved a further 13 schemes for some 2,400 dwellings. This will help the Housing Executive achieve the target of 8,600 dwellings to have double glazing installed by 2012/13.

A further 9,000 dwellings are programmed for 2013/14 and the remaining 4,000 approximately are programmed to be completed in 2014/15. This will achieve the PfG target by 2015.

Double Glazing Scheme

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development when he will announce the new specifications for the double glazing scheme.

(AQW 18803/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the procurement for their double glazing requirements is scheduled to commence with an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice on 26 February 2013. The documentation will be available from e-SourcingNI and will include the new double glazing specification.

Double Glazing Scheme

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration his Department will give to the value for money of (i) hinges; (ii) guarantees; and (iii) the length of guarantees when deciding on the type of windows that will be used in the double glazing scheme.

(AQW 18807/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I asked the Housing Executive to research the specifications used in double glazing as I was concerned that the Housing Executive's specification for the supply and fitting of double glazing did not offer best value for money and also that the specification for hinges and handles was much higher than the industry standards for domestic properties.

In relation to value for money, the use of casement hinges as opposed to fully reversible hinges demonstrates:

- cost differential and potential for savings, estimated at approximately £0.5m;
- based on "actual cost data" supplied by sole hinge agent (for the island of Ireland) – MILA supply costs for both hinge types with the 3 key features – child restriction, easy clean and egress;
- fully reversible hinges = £20.00/pair;
- casement hinges = £13.00-15.00/pair;

In terms of guarantees, standard casement hinges generally range from one to ten years in terms of a mechanical guarantee. The new/revised specification will require that a casement friction stay hinge provides a ten year mechanical guarantee and the suppliers of these will be required to demonstrate compliance to the Housing Executive with this performance standard.

The Housing Executive's Board has approved the new specification and that fully reversible hinges will still be an integral part of the specification. The preferred option now is casement style windows to all low and medium rise stock, which is the usual style opening window in privately owned houses, and reversible hinges will continue to be used in Medium and High Rise dwellings (4-20 storeys).

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what measures are in place to ensure that any groups that receive public funding comply with the legal requirements and requests from the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division.

(AQW 18811/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Article 32(8) of the Child Support NI Order 1991 makes it an offence for any employer who does not comply with a deduction from earnings order or any regulation under this specific Article.

Where an employer fails to comply with such a request, the Department may pursue legal action, irrespective of whether the employer receives public funding.

Victoria Square Project

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development how much public money was spent on the Victoria Square project (i) before the completion of construction work; (ii) between completion of construction and official opening; and (iii) after the official opening; and to whom this money was allocated.

(AQW 18823/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development did not provide any public funding towards the cost of the Victoria Square Development. The development was fully funded by CGI, a German investment bank. The Department used its statutory regeneration authority for comprehensive development to acquire/dispose land and the extinguishment of public rights of way.

Regeneration Scheme in Donaghadee

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the timeframe and funding allocation for the proposed regeneration scheme in Donaghadee.

(AQW 18824/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Ards Borough Council is in the process of running a competition to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team to prepare the concept design and economic appraisal for a public realm scheme in Donaghadee. The team is due to be appointed in April 2013 and it will take them in the region of 5 months to complete this work and send the economic appraisal to DSD for consideration. DSD has included £1 million towards a public realm scheme in Donaghadee in its forward work programme for 2014/15, subject to funding being available and all necessary approvals being in place. Ards Borough Council has advised that they will match fund the Department's contribution

Laps Scheme in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development why there have been further delays in the Laps scheme in North Down.

(AQW 18830/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the Member to the answer I gave to AQW 18361/11-15 on 24 January 2013. The Housing Executive has advised me that this is still the position.

Bangor Providence Trust

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what his Department can do to encourage Bangor Providence Trust to carry out repairs to the pensioner bungalows at Skipperstone Park, Avenue and Drive areas of Bangor.

(AQW 18831/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department has responsibility for the regulation, funding and monitoring of registered Housing Associations only. Bangor Providence Trust is not a registered Housing Association and therefore the Department cannot take any action to encourage the Trust to carry out repairs of their housing stock.

Housing at Loughview Estate, Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the timescale for the new build of housing at Loughview Estate, Holywood.

(AQW 18832/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Clanmil Housing Association continues to work towards starting the construction of 37 new social homes at West Green, Holywood by March 2013, subject to all necessary approvals being in place.

A planning application submitted in November 2012 is progressing and the association is hopeful of a positive outcome before 31 March 2013.

Street Improvement Works in Randalstown

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current status of street improvement works in Randalstown.

(AQW 18860/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A phased Environmental Improvements programme for Randalstown town centre was drawn up by DRD Roads Service, DSD and Antrim Borough Council in 2009. The first phase of the scheme was completed in March 2010 and improved the footways and roads at the southern entrance to the town, including the Maine River Bridge.

A further three phases of the works for the remainder of the town centre was provided for in the Department's capital programme. The scheme has been delayed to allow the Department to deal with issues raised by Randalstown Chamber of Trade.

Proposed Schemes in Randalstown

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the implications arising from the proposed schemes in Randalstown not proceeding within the identified budget timeline.

(AQW 18861/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The proposed remaining phases in the Randalstown Environmental Improvements programme did not proceed as planned. This would have caused slippage in the Department's 2012/13 capital grants programme. Consequently the capital programme budget earmarked for this scheme was re-allocated to other high priority schemes by the Department. Funding for the Randalstown scheme will now be subject to the programme budget available for 2013/14.

Street Improvement Works in Randalstown

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the nature of any delay with the street improvement works in Randalstown.

(AQW 18862/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Randalstown environmental improvements programme has been delayed due to concerns raised by the local Chamber of Trade regarding the duration of the works, its timing and the quality of materials. There are ongoing discussions between officials in DSD, DRD, Antrim Borough Council, local politicians and representatives from the Chamber of Trade to resolve these issues. Funding for an agreed scheme will be subject to the available Departmental budget in 2013/14 capital programme.

Homeless Young People

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how many young people have been assessed as being homeless in the Upper Bann constituency; and how their needs are being addressed.

(AQW 18887/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, they have provided information for their District Office areas of Lurgan, Portadown and Banbridge on homeless applications from young people in two age bands: 16 & 17 year olds; and 18 – 25 year olds.

The table below details the number of young people in the two age bands that were accepted as homeless at 31 December 2012: -

Age	Housing Executive District Office		
	Lurgan	Portadown	Banbridge
16&17	2	3	0
18-25	6	1	3

The service and accommodation needs for young homeless people are being addressed by a Northern Ireland regional group co-chaired by the Health and Social Care Board and the Housing Executive. The needs for this client group are being looked at across each Health Trust taking into account the assessed needs for service in each location.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Penalty for Under-Occupation

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how many people or families are at risk of financial penalty for under-occupation in each district within the Upper Bann Constituency.

(AQW 18888/11-15)

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 table below details the estimated number of cases at risk of financial penalty for under occupation in the Housing Executive's Lurgan, Portadown and Banbridge District Office areas. The information is provided in terms of housing benefit claimants affected which includes families, couples and single people.

Housing Executive District Office Area	Estimated number of Housing Benefit Claimants Affected
Lurgan	844
Portadown	469
Banbridge	539
Total	1852

It should be noted that these figures are based on the current regulations in Great Britain and may change.

Homeless Young People

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, following the closure of the Supporting People Service provided by Shankill Projects in Lurgan, how his Department plans to meet the needs of homeless young people.

(AQW 18889/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A housing needs assessment has been initiated by the NIHE/Southern Health and Social Care Commissioning Group.

Initial meetings have taken place and an exercise has been carried out which captures the housing support needs of young homeless and "Looked after children" within the Southern Trust.

It is anticipated that the data will be collated and finalised shortly.

This exercise will inform the future need and commissioning of any supported accommodation for young homeless/looked after children across the southern Health Trust area.

Fold Housing Association

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Social Development to provide details of the proposed housing project, being managed by the Fold Housing Association, on the old Northern Regional College site; and for an update on any progress that has been made since July 2012.

(AQW 18896/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The site of the former Northern Regional College, Fountain Street, Antrim initially appeared on the Surplus Public Sector Lands trawl in April 2012. This is a large site (approx 9.35 acres) and the Housing Executive expressed an interest in acquiring a portion of it for social housing. In May 2012, Land and Property Services indicated that apportionment of the site was feasible and the Housing Executive moved to nominate a Housing Association to take forward a 15 unit scheme.

Fold Housing Association was duly nominated and is currently in the process of procuring a design team to review the best design options for the part of the site they are interested in purchasing.

Fold Housing Association aims to make a planning application in May 2013, so as to achieve an on-site start currently scheduled in the Social Housing Development Programme for 2014/15.

Welfare Reform

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what measures are being taken to ensure that people who are likely to be most affected by Welfare Reform will be the most informed about the changes to the system.

(AQW 18909/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to keeping all claimants informed about the Welfare Reform changes, particularly those people who are likely to be most affected by changes to the system.

I have commissioned a dedicated resource within the Social Security Agency to identify the needs of claimants, and bring forward a range of actions that will ensure claimants are kept informed.

The work completed so far has been extensive and includes research, detailed claimant insight work, public information sessions, direct correspondence with claimants, and the publication of online information to keep the public informed of the changes.

My Department is also working closely with community and voluntary organisations to ensure that information reaches those who are likely to be most affected by Welfare Reform. This work will continue as we move closer to implementation.

Funding for Voluntary Organisations

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the decision to review how his Department supports the voluntary sector, to detail the funding arrangements for voluntary organisations in relation to the volunteering infrastructure for the next financial year.

(AQW 18926/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to ensuring effective infrastructure support for volunteering as part of Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy. My Department is presently considering delivery options for infrastructure support for volunteering. I expect any new arrangements to be put in place later this year. Where necessary interim arrangements will be put in place to ensure the continued

support for volunteering and my officials will be meeting with existing providers during February setting out the new arrangements.

Voluntary Organisations

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development what collaborative and partnership initiatives his Department has instigated with voluntary organisations since the decision in September 2012 to review how it supports the sector.

(AQW 18927/11-15)

Mr McCausland: New Regional Infrastructure Support arrangements came into effect from October 2012. These new arrangements are geared to provide key infrastructure support which allows Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to function effectively to deliver government objectives and maximise the impact of the work they do.

Under the new arrangements generic infrastructure support will be provided to the Voluntary and Community Sector by a consortium comprising NICVA, Community Evaluation Northern Ireland, Rural Community Network and CO3. Support will also been provided for the faith sector through Churches Community Work Alliance and for the voluntary advice sector through a consortium comprising of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Advice NI and the Law Centre.

Interim support is being provided for volunteering and for women in disadvantaged and rural areas until new arrangements are developed.

Volunteering Organisations

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the concerns of local volunteering organisations that the decision in September 2012 to review how his Department supports the sector could result in discouraging participation in volunteering.

(AQW 18928/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am fully committed to implementing Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy which aims to create the conditions that will encourage volunteering to flourish. I appreciate the concerns of volunteering infrastructure organisations following my decision in September to conduct further research into the infrastructure support that is needed. I remain committed to providing effective infrastructure support for volunteering as part of the Volunteering Strategy. My Department is presently considering delivery options for infrastructure support for volunteering. I expect any new arrangements to be put in place later this year.

Community Benefit Office in Shantallow, Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his future plans for the Community Benefit Office in Shantallow, Derry.

(AQW 18936/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In addition to its regional network of 35 Jobs and Benefit Offices/Social Security Offices, the Social Security Agency also has three Community Benefit Offices located in Ballyclare, Crossmaglen and Londonderry. The Community Benefit Offices currently provide only a limited range of services which often require the claimant to subsequently attend a local Jobs and Benefits Office. In line with the Agency's commitment to deliver a modernised Welfare System to all claimants, a review of these offices is currently underway. The outcome of the review is expected to be known shortly which will then be communicated to relevant stakeholders and staff.

Bedroom Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has discussed under occupancy with Lord Freud, and more specifically the impact of the bedroom tax on people with disabilities or on people who require an extra bedroom to accommodate contact with dependent children overnight; and whether

there is any scope for implementing recommendations 13 and 14 of the Report on Welfare Reform by the Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements.

(AQW 19130/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I recognise that the under occupancy restriction is a serious issue for Northern Ireland and I recently had a very productive meeting with Lord Freud, the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

My officials are working with the Housing Executive to develop a range of support measures to complement those outlined in my housing strategy, which aim to mitigate under occupancy for those affected, support households through the transition and ensure that everyone has access to affordable housing.

The size criteria will allow a disabled claimant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer one extra room. In the case of shared access to children the child is treated as living with the parent who has main responsibility. If there is reason that another room is necessary, either as a result of disability or to accommodate the shared access to children, help may be available through the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Commission Meetings

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) how many meetings of the Commission have been called since 1 December 2012; (ii) how many have taken place; and (iii) the parties that have been represented at each meeting.

(AQW 18692/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): In response:

- (i) Four meetings of the Commission have been convened since 1 December 2012;
- (ii) One meeting of the Commission took place on 4 December 2012 with all parties represented on the Commission being present;
- (iii) Two meetings of the Commission which were convened for December 2012 were inquorate. The DUP and UUP were represented on both these occasions; and
- (iv) One meeting of the Commission took place on 30 January 2013. The DUP, UUP and Alliance were represented on this occasion, the meeting was adjourned to resume on 5 February 2013.

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