

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 25 November 2011

Volume 69, No WA1

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 25 November 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Gaming Skills and Qualifications in Alternative Education Provision

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they plan to connect young people, who have gained gaming skills and qualifications in alternative education provision, with job opportunities created in the sector as a result of their presentations to investors in the USA.

(AQW 2708/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): During our recent visit to the US we met with senior executives in the film and TV, video gaming and mobile applications companies to promote the potential that Northern Ireland (NI) has to offer in these sectors. On the video gaming front, we established new contacts with leading US companies who are looking for the highly qualified game developers that are graduating from our universities.

While the gaming industry in NI is embryonic, some businesses and individuals are gaining traction by developing successful mobile phone and tablet games. InvestNI is working with Digital Circle, the industry body for Digital Content in NI and gaming is one of the areas of focus. Digital Circle has developed a cluster (Bloc 54) to develop opportunities in gaming and has 30+ members.

InvestNI is supporting this clustering approach with the aim of growing the gaming sector in NI and giving smaller businesses in the industry 'critical mass'. InvestNI would encourage businesses, individuals and organisations involved in alternative education provision to get involved with the cluster to ensure that they benefit from the opportunities that are emerging.

InvestNI runs a number of start-up programmes to support new businesses opportunities in the knowledge based economy (including gaming). These programmes include:

- Go-For-It Programme
- Social Entrepreneurship Programme
- Propel Programme

In addition, InvestNI continues to pursue inward investment opportunities in the gaming industry and is actively working with Skillset, the UK sector skills council for this industry, to ensure that the skills needed in this sector are being developed and accredited.

As new job opportunities are created in the sector, the Employment Service of the Department for Employment and Learning will advise clients who have the relevant skills and qualifications about vacancies. The Department can display employment vacancies on JobCentre Online which can be accessed by unemployed clients and job changers.

Social Investment Fund Steering Groups

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the arrangements for the appointment of members to the Social Investment Fund Steering Groups.

(AQO 492/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The public consultation on our proposals for the Social Investment Fund will afford people the opportunity to express their views on issues such as the arrangements for the Social Investment Steering Groups.

Within chapter 3 of the consultation document launched on 27th September we have outlined 4 possible options regarding the establishment of those Groups.

Once the consultation period has concluded and we have considered all of the responses received, we will then determine the more detailed operational arrangements of the Fund.

Social Investment Fund Zones

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline how the proposed Social Investment Fund zones were agreed.

(AQO 494/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The purpose of our public consultation on the Social Investment Fund is very much to obtain people's views on issues such as this.

The Fund is intended to target substantial resources to areas of greatest need where issues of poverty, unemployment and social disadvantage are most prevalent. The zones are therefore circled around clusters of 'Neighbourhood Renewal' and 'Areas of Risk' areas.

The public consultation document outlines a number of possible social investment zones and proposes these areas are flexible to bring in other relevant smaller areas on the basis of identified need for support.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Dunne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of how the Social Investment Fund is likely to benefit communities in the North Down area.

(AQO 496/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The outcome of the public consultation process, which we launched on 27 September, will inform how the Social Investment Fund will operate and how communities will benefit.

While a number of possible investment zones have been identified at this point, it is proposed that these areas are flexible to bring in other relevant smaller areas on the basis of identified need for support.

Maintaining a Segregated Society

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action his Department is taking to reduce the amount of money spent on maintaining a segregated society.

(AQO 657/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In our efforts to address the issue of divisions, we have brought forward proposals and consulted widely on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. The Programme contained priority themes for action relating to the creation of more shared spaces and the provision of shared services.

Currently, representatives from the 5 main political parties are working together through the mechanism of a cross-party working group to achieve a political consensus on the key issues relating to the Programme. Tackling issues of segregation and identifying opportunities for the development of shared spaces and services across the region will form part of the Working Group's considerations in developing the Programme.

When the cross-party working group has completed its work, we will publish a final Programme and Action Plan that will establish the way forward. The cross-party working group has met weekly since 27 September 2011. The cross-party working group consists of:

Alliance – Chris Lyttle MLA
DUP – Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA
SDLP – Conall McDevitt MLA
SF – Junior Minister Martina Anderson MLA
UUP – John McCallister MLA

Average Annual Salary of a Trade Union Leader

Mr Ross asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the average annual salary of a trade union leader, where part of the salary is paid by their Department; and (ii) how much of a leader's salary is paid by their Department.

(AQW 3789/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department does not employ or pay any part of the salary of a trade union leader.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr Ross asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding their Department has allocated to trade unions in each of the last ten years, broken down by each union.

(AQW 3791/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: During the nine financial years ending 31 March 2010, our Department did not allocate any funding to trade unions. During 2010/2011 we, along with all other departments, contributed £3,000 towards funding a position in the FDA union.

Child Poverty

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the current economic situation, what additional measures are being considered to combat child poverty.

(AQO 612/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Child Poverty Strategy was published on 24 March 2011. This sets out the actions proposed by the Executive to address the issue of Child Poverty here.

Over the summer period, Junior Ministers have met with both departmental and non-departmental members of the Poverty and Social Inclusion Stakeholder Forum to discuss the departments' respective inputs to a Child Poverty Action Plan and to seek the views of the non-departmental members on what they would like to see in the Plan.

As a result of these discussions, work is now in hand to finalise a Child Poverty Action Plan and an associated Outcomes Model to drive progress of the Plan towards eradicating child poverty.

The Stakeholder Forum, which is chaired by Junior Ministers, met on Thursday, 27 October 2011, to receive an update on progress and consider the proposed Outcomes Model.

Subject to the successful completion of this phase of the work, a draft Action Plan and Outcomes Model will issue for public consultation.

Social Protection Fund

Mr Brady asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Protection Fund.

(AQO 615/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive remains committed to tackling the problem of disadvantage here.

In addition to the Social Investment Fund, the Executive further proposed a Social Protection Fund to assist those most in need within the wider community. The Social Protection Fund programme will target individuals and families facing hardship due to the current economic downturn and pending welfare reforms.

The Fund will operate as an Executive Fund and as such it will be for departments, as opposed to individuals, to bid for funding for schemes. Some bids have already been submitted and our officials are currently working with other departments to assess funding options and potential initiatives including how the Social Protection Fund might assist, for example, those in fuel poverty.

Delays in Processing Welfare Benefit Claims

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the (i) procedures in place; and (ii) progress that has been made in dealing with the delays in processing welfare benefit claims with a cross-border element as highlighted in the Ministerial Statement of 11 October 2011. **(AQW 3984/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer you to our previous correspondence on this topic, copy attached, dated 31 October, which provides the information you requested.

“During the question and answer session on 11 October 2011 which followed the Assembly Statement on the NSMC Institutional meeting, you requested further details on the system that has been put in place to resolve delays in the processing of certain Department of Social Protection welfare benefit claims with a cross-border element.

NSMC Joint Secretariat officials have explored the issue of delays in processing benefit claims experienced by Department of Social Protection (DSP) officials when dealing with claims involving UK tax credits. These claims require DSP to obtain information from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and are dealt with by HMRC along with other international requests via its call centres.

The NSMC Joint Secretariat recently facilitated a discussion between senior officials from the Social Security Agency (SSA), DSP and HMRC during which it emerged that the historical backlog of cases handled by HMRC had reduced considerably and that procedures have been initiated to clear the backlog by the end of this year. HMRC officials also expressed willingness to put an administrative solution in place to prevent a recurrence of the problem. To this end, HMRC and DSP have put specific telephone arrangements in place and have agreed to monitor the progress of cases under these new working arrangements.

Joint Secretariat officials intend to review progress under the new arrangements soon.”

Departmental Staff Employed Within OFMDFM

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the current number of departmental staff employed within OFMDFM, broken down by the sections or areas in which they work. **(AQW 3997/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The table below details staff employed at 1 October 2011 within the following Departmental business areas:

Directorate	Number of staff in post
Head of Civil Service Office	8
Resources, Regeneration, International Relations and Institutional Review	92
Executive Secretariat	73

Directorate	Number of staff in post
Executive Information Service	38
North South Ministerial Council Secretariat	11
Equality and Strategy	84
Office of the Legislative Counsel	19

In addition, the Department employs administrative staff working in the following arms length bodies:

Directorate	Number of staff in post
Planning/Water Appeals Commissions	18
Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments	2
Office of the Attorney General	13

Funding from EU Bodies

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on how the Executive plans to maximise the drawdown of funding from EU bodies.

(AQW 4061/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive's European priorities of Competitiveness and Employment, Innovation and Technology, Climate Change and Energy and Social Cohesion have been carefully aligned with the Europe 2020 strategy to target initiatives enhancing economic growth and facilitate greater access to European assistance.

The Executive has charged the cross-departmental Barroso Task Force Working Group (BTWG) with delivering these priorities and maximising engagement in European funding programmes and networks. The BTWG are commissioning an audit of European funding to develop departmental allocations for increased drawdown. Four thematic sub-groups have been established and four Thematic Desk Officers are scheduled to take up post in the Executive's Brussels Office in early 2012 to assist departments in the delivery of these priorities.

Executive Ministers will continue to engage in and seek to influence the policy debate around the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2014-20 and its proposed initiatives, such as the new Connecting Europe Facility, which could provide the seed capital for trans-European network development in the areas of transport, energy and telecommunications.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail which sectors had events held for them during the consultation on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQW 4101/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The consultation process on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) consisted of a combination of public meetings and a series of more focused sectoral events. All these aspects were designed to complement each other to inform the debate around the Programme for (CSI), thus leading to enriched consultation responses.

During the consultation process, specific events were held with the following sectors, some by request of the sector:

- District Council Good Relations Officers;
- Churches;
- Business Community;

- Victims & Survivors;
- Young People;
- Minority Ethnic Groups;
- Statutory Bodies;
- Funders in the Good Relations Arena;
- Academics;
- Education Sector;
- Ex-Prisoners;
- Voluntary & Community Sector (one event held in the north-west and two in Belfast); and
- Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Sector.

The consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration attracted 288 written responses. The independent analysis included the wealth of views and material contained within the written submissions in addition to the information gathered from the discussions at the sectoral events and public meetings.

The consultation responses are now available on the OFMDFM website along with the independent analysis report and the departmental response to the issues raised. <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/community-relations/csi-consultation.htm>

Planning Appeals

Mr Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of planning appeals made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4157/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its independent tribunal status, its Chief Commissioner has been asked to provide a response directly to you, and we understand that she has written to you in the following terms:

“I have been asked to provide you with information requested in the above Assembly Question. In the following table, I have set out the number of appeals received by the Commission, over the last three financial years.

	Financial Year			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12 (to date)
Appeals Received	515	515	431	258

I would be happy to provide any further information you require arising out of this response or to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable.”

Government Sponsored Preventative Spending Initiatives

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number and name of the government sponsored preventative spending initiatives aimed at children that have received cross departmental funding in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4210/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM does not lead on preventative spending initiatives aimed at children. Whilst the Ten Year Strategy For Children and Young People examines the scope

for achieving a more joined-up approach within Government to children's issues, this does not replace or negate the duty of individual Ministers on those children's issues for which they have specific policy responsibility. Additionally, no central budget exists for delivering on the Strategy and ultimately individual Ministers are responsible for identifying their own priorities and developing spending plans for their own departments.

There are, however, a number of specific issues in relation to children which OFMDFM fund that may be regarded as 'preventative spending initiatives', which we have considered appropriate to take forward on a cross-departmental project basis. These are listed below:

- Play and Leisure Policy and Implementation Plan;
- Childcare Strategy and the Executive Childcare Fund;
- PlayBoard After School Childcare Projects; and
- Summer Interventions.

Draft Programme for Government for Consultation

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made with (i) the publication of a draft Programme for Government for consultation; and (ii) a legislative schedule for this Assembly mandate.

(AQW 4269/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: At its meeting of 16th November, the Executive agreed the Programme for Government. The document is now available for public consultation. We are currently working with other departments in the development of a legislative programme

Household Fuel Payment

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made on the introduction of a household fuel payment through the Social Protection Fund to mitigate the impact of fuel poverty.

(AQW 4270/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Having considered a number of departmental bids, we are keen to see a fuel poverty initiative delivered through the Social Protection Fund.

Our officials are currently liaising with colleagues in other Departments on the scale and scope of the initiative to ensure the most vulnerable are targeted this winter.

Housing at St Patrick's Barracks Site in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they had with the Joint Service Housing Advice Office about the housing at St Patrick's Barracks site in Ballymena being made available for purchase by serving and ex-military personnel.

(AQW 4290/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have not had any discussions on the issue of the former military housing at the St Patrick's Barracks site with the Joint Service Housing Advice Office.

Legislation Referred for Crown Consent

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the primary and secondary legislation, since 2007, that has been referred for crown consent because of the potential impact on the private interests of the Sovereign or the Duke of Cornwall, including proposals for legislation not ultimately enacted.

(AQW 4301/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are not aware of any Executive legislation having been referred either for Crown Consent on account of its affect on the prerogative or interest of the Crown; or for Consent in relation to the interests of the Duchy of Cornwall or the Duchy of Lancaster.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the total cost incurred by their Department on air travel (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010; and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010.

(AQW 4389/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The following table sets out the costs incurred by the Department in respect of air travel during the twelve months ended 31 December 2010.

Costs of flights between Northern Ireland and Heathrow	£30,250
Costs of flights between Northern Ireland and other GB airports	£17,356

Social Investment Fund

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the progress on the Social Investment Fund, including what types of project proposals may be considered under the proposed framework.

(AQO 724/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The outcome of the public consultation will inform how the Social Investment Fund will operate, including the arrangements for funding. However, we would expect that projects benefiting in due course will be those that have been identified and agreed by consensus as key to tackling priority issues and which display a clear link to the Fund's four strategic objectives of:

- building pathways to employment;
- tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation;
- increasing community services; and
- addressing dereliction.

Devolution of Corporation Tax Powers

Mr T Clarke asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the discussions that have taken place on the devolution of Corporation Tax powers.

(AQO 728/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We responded on 13 October to the Exchequer Secretary's letter asking for Ministerial nominations for the Ministerial Working Group. We agreed that we, along with Minister Wilson and Minister Foster, will sit on this Group, which will seek to establish, with clarity, the costs, administrative changes and the potential legislative vehicle for transferring Corporation Tax powers to Stormont.

The Prime Minister replied to us on 3 November stating it is important that these issues are considered further before a decision can be taken.

We also wrote to the Prime Minister on the same day, stressing the urgency with which the Executive wishes to pursue the proposal to devolve Corporation Tax powers and seeking to identify the steps required to take the work to the next stage without delay. We are pleased that the Government has announced a Working Group to take this forward. However, we remain disappointed that a decision has been put off until next year instead of the Autumn.

The first meeting of the Ministerial Working Group is scheduled to take place on 15 December 2011 to agree the Terms of Reference and programme of work over the coming months to resolve any outstanding issues around implementation. We will continue to press for an indication of the date when the Government expects to make a final decision on the devolution of Corporation Tax.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at Maze/Long Kesh

Mr Murphy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide an update on the funding application to the Special EU Programmes Board for the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at Maze/Long Kesh.

(AQO 729/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A grant application for EU funding under the Peace III Programme has been made to Special EU Programmes Body to support the capital costs for the proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at Maze/Long Kesh. The application is currently being processed and a decision is expected late November 2011.

We are unable to disclose the details requested until a decision on the funding application is made later this year. The reason for this is that the EU Programmes Body treat funding applications as confidential and it is their standard practice not to release papers until a decision is made.

Child Poverty Delivery Implementation Plan

Mr Brady asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide an update on the Child Poverty Delivery Implementation Plan.

(AQO 731/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: During the third meeting of the re-established Ministerial-led Poverty and Social Inclusion Stakeholder Forum, which took place on 27 October 2011, members considered a draft version of an Outcomes Model to drive progress of the Plan towards eradicating child poverty here.

Some further development work will now be undertaken by the Junior Ministers, departmental officials and stakeholders in advance of a draft Action Plan and Outcomes Model being issued for public consultation.

10-year Strategy for Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what proposals are being considered for improving the delivery of the 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People in order to increase cross-departmental support, co-operation and ownership.

(AQO 732/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are now at the half-way point of the 10 Year Strategy and we are keen to take this opportunity to consider how best we can support and streamline work across government to deliver improved outcomes for children.

A key element of this work is reviewing the structures we have in place to support delivery.

We recognise that many children and young people's issues are cross-cutting and require co-operation across Executive departments and that is why we want to ensure there is a strong Ministerial Sub-Committee to drive forward priorities and link key areas of work.

In order to inform discussion, Junior Ministers are having bilateral meetings with Ministerial colleagues in DOJ, DE, DHSSPS, DSD and DARD to discuss how we can better link work on strategies and policies specific to children and their contribution to the delivery of the 10 Year Strategy.

Junior Ministers will be discussing further options with the full Ministerial Sub-Committee at the next meeting which is currently being scheduled.

Budget Review Group

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the success of the Budget Review Group.

(AQW 4669/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Budget Review Group has played an important role in developing the Budget 2011-15 and in the identification and continuing assessment of initiatives which have the potential to provide additional resources for the Executive.

We are committed to sustaining the work of the Group and its contribution to the Executive's economic and financial considerations.

Programme for Government

Mr Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the development of a financial capability strategy to support individuals, encourage resilience and build consumer confidence, has not been included in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 4717/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The draft Programme for Government (PfG) (2011-15), which was published on 17 November 2011, represents a visible commitment by the Executive to address the issues facing our society. In this way it will provide the groundwork for economic and social recovery.

Addressing poverty and disadvantage is a priority in the PfG which includes a number of commitments and programmes to address need. Consultation on these programmes will identify the range and types of services required.

By its nature, the PfG is strategic and focuses on key issues. The PfG cannot, therefore, include specific references to every initiative which is being undertaken.

The draft PfG has now been published for public consultation and we welcome input from consultees.

Programme for Government

Mr McCallister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the findings of the Final Delivery Report on the 2008-2011 Programme for Government.

(AQW 4719/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A draft of the final delivery Report in respect of the Programme for Government 2008-11 is currently under consideration by Ministers across all departments. Once comments have been received, the draft will be considered by the Executive. Subject to the Executive's agreement, the report would then be made available on the Executive's website.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

National Ploughing Championships in the Republic of Ireland

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 2780/11-15, whether she had use of the Ministerial vehicle to bring her to the National Ploughing Championships in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 4033/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): As I was on official business I had the use of my Ministerial car to travel to and from the National Ploughing Championships.

Common Agricultural Policy Reform

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what representations her Department intends to make to the European Union on Common Agricultural Policy reform.

(AQW 4149/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The publication of legislative proposals on 12 October 2011 marked the beginning of the formal negotiations on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2013. Currently, I am consulting with stakeholders with a view to informing my position for the negotiations ahead. I want the views of stakeholders in the north of Ireland to be clearly heard throughout the CAP debate. This requires building alliances within the EU and influencing the EU Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

I have already taken a number of steps to influence the negotiations. This includes attending the October and the November EU Agriculture Council meetings, which marked the beginning of the formal consideration of the proposals. I have also met Commissioner Ciolos and was able to raise concerns with him about 'greening' and implementing the 'active' farmer test. Other important issues were raised including the need for a more adequate share of Pillar II funding. This was a very beneficial discussion, but we are at an early stage of the CAP reform process and more work needs to be done in order to obtain the necessary improvements to the reform proposals.

I am building a good relationship with my counterpart in the south of Ireland, Simon Coveney TD. The CAP reform proposals will continue to be discussed at the North South Ministerial Council and it is quite likely that the final reform negotiations in Europe will take place during Ireland's Presidency of the EU.

I have also held a number of meetings with Defra, Scottish and Welsh Ministers to discuss the reform proposals. The relationship between the Defra and Devolved Ministers is developing and this has seen a mature approach being taken in the negotiations thus far. We recognise that where we are in agreement, the ability to speak with one voice carries more weight.

The EU Parliament will have a co-decision role in the CAP reform process and so I will also be working with our MEP's from both the north and the south as I seek to use every avenue open to me in getting the best deal possible from the CAP negotiations.

All of the above interactions are replicated at official level and my officials are also feeding detailed views through to the EU Council Working Groups as we push our case on all fronts.

I will continue to promote our local interests in Europe robustly and am keen to receive the input of stakeholders to our recently launched consultation to assist me in this process.

UK Catch Quota Trials

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the recent UK Catch Quota trials; and what plans she has to build on the results of these trials to address the issue of fish discard.

(AQW 4185/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The catch quota trials have been held in the North Sea and do not involve the local fishing fleet. The focus for our fleet has been on research into selective fishing gear for prawn trawlers that allows for the release of untargeted fin fish such as cod, haddock and whiting. This fleet already employs a large Square Mesh Panel in excess of EU requirements to reduce catches of unwanted fish. Our research to date has identified improved gear that will result in even greater reductions in the catch of haddock and whiting in particular. The programme of selective gear trials will continue throughout 2012.

Invoices for Construction Work

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what proportion of invoices for construction work have been paid on time by her Department, and its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4330/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The proportion of invoices for construction work paid on time by my Department and Arms-Length Bodies is as follows:

	Financial Year 2009/10	Financial Year 2010/11	Financial Year 2011/12 (to end Oct 11)
DARD	93.46%	94.57%	96.44%
Arm's Length Bodies	71.15%	90.71%	96.61%

Rural Crime

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) types of rural crimes committed in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4335/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not hold statistics on rural crime. All statistical information on crime is held by the PSNI.

My officials wrote to the PSNI who stated that they do not hold specific statistics in relation to rural crime. They indicated that currently crime is recorded in line with National Recording Standards irrespective of where it occurs and therefore they cannot extract data on crimes which occur in rural areas.

Rural Crime

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps are being taken to reduce rural crime, particularly the theft of agricultural machinery.

(AQW 4336/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware of the increasing number of thefts on farms and the concern it is causing amongst the farming community. My predecessor met with the Minister of Justice late last year to discuss issues relating to the increasing levels of rural crime including, in particular, agriculture related crime. My officials have liaised with colleagues in the Department of Justice to ensure that issues relating to rural crime are reflected in the development of the Rural White Paper.

I welcome local initiatives by Community Safety Partnerships to prevent rural crime, such as trailer marking and the forensic marking of sheep, and acknowledge the role Rural Watch schemes have in improving community safety. I am encouraged that following a recent meeting between the PSNI and the Ulster Farmers Union (UFU) a single point of contact has been established and that representatives from the UFU have addressed a training seminar for Crime Prevention Officers. I also welcome the work streams being developed by the PSNI and An Garda Síochána under the Cross Border Strategy to prevent rural crime.

I would encourage farmers to participate in these initiatives and continue to ensure that they secure their properties by taking steps to minimise the risk of theft from their farms

Velton Lawns, Laurelvale, Co. Armagh

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will provide funding for the construction of a flood defence wall to ensure the safety of property at Velton Lawns, Laurelvale, Co. Armagh.

(AQW 4337/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Following flooding at Laurelvale my Rivers Agency quickly carried out works to reduce the likelihood of flooding. Rivers Agency has also identified a flood alleviation scheme to further reduce the risk of flooding.

While I have made an additional £1m available for flood alleviation and my Rivers Agency continues to bid for funding as opportunities arise, we have to prioritise what limited funds are available. Given the Agency's existing capital programme, the current available capital allocation and competing priorities, the scheme at Laurelvale is unlikely to start construction within the current budget period which ends in 2015.

Single Farm Payments

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to ensure that exclusions from single farm payments as a result of acreage covered by trees and hedges do not lead to the uprooting of hedges and felling of trees.

(AQW 4380/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The rules relating to the eligibility of land when trees and hedges are present are different. In general, land covered by trees is ineligible for SFP purposes (though there are some circumstances when it can be eligible), while hedges are eligible for SFP provided their width does not exceed two metres from the centre measured at the base.

Measures are already in place to prevent the uprooting of trees and hedges.

The provisions of Good Agriculture and Environmental Condition (GAEC) 6 (Protection of Habitats (Wildlife Areas), Archaeological Sites and Permanent Pasture) prevents the reclamation without prior permission from DARD of semi-natural habitats. These include broad leaved woodland which is defined as areas where vegetation is dominated by broadleaved trees containing less than 15% conifers.

In addition, in relation to protection for hedges and trees that form part of a field boundary, under GAEC 5 (Field Boundaries) farmers must not remove field boundaries without prior written permission from DARD as field boundaries provide valuable shelter for stock, nesting cover for birds and food for wildlife.

If at inspection, breaches of scheme rules relating to eligibility or cross-compliance matters are identified, penalties will be applied.

Sea Fish Industry Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that the Sea Fish Industry Authority is a statutory body established under the Fisheries Act 1981 and that it is funded from fish landings across the UK, why has she not met with the organisation's Chief Executive.

(AQW 4404/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Defra and the Devolved Administrations have been involved in a discussion process with stakeholders on the future of Seafish which ended on 16 November. Ministers will consider and reflect on the views of Stakeholders before making final decisions. I will consider if a meeting is appropriate at that time.

Sea Fish Industry Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that the Sea Fish Industry Authority is a statutory body established under the Fisheries Act 1981 and that it is funded from fish landings across the UK, how she has co-operated with it for the benefit of the local fishing industry.

(AQW 4405/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department co-operates with Seafish through participation in joint governance arrangements for the Authority, with Defra and the other Devolved Administrations. My Department also co-funds a number of Seafish projects that are of benefit to the local fishing industry.

Sea Fish Industry Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) to outline any engagement that her Department has had with the Sea Fish Industry Authority over the last five years; (ii) whether her Department has made any financial contribution to the Authority's operation during this period; and (iii) whether any grants or other contributions have been made by the Authority to fishing operations in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 4407/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has engaged with Seafish in the following ways over the past five years. Officials have met with the Chair and Chief Executive on two occasions and participated in the recent discussion with industry on the future of Seafish that concluded on the 16th November. DARD has been involved, along with the other administrations, in approving the Authority's annual accounts and annual report. My Department is involved in the process of Board Appointments which are agreed jointly by Fisheries Ministers. In 2009, DARD led on the appointment process for a local representative to the Seafish Board.

My Department has also contributed to several Seafish projects that have local impact.

DARD does not provide financial support for Seafish's operational costs. These are met from a levy on the first sale of seafood landed in Britain and the north of Ireland. However the Department, over the last five years has contributed financially to nine Seafish led initiatives that benefit the local industry through the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) and European Fisheries Fund (EFF). This amounted to a total of £404k, of which £114k was national funding and £290k was European.

Seafish has not provided grants to our local industry but has contributed to 6 industry focused projects including fishermen's safety training, fisheries accreditation scheme and the fishing industry training programme. Seafish contributed a total of £134k to these projects over the last five years.

EU Infraction Fines

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the EU infraction fines, stemming from issues concerning agriculture, rivers and water, that could potentially be levied against her Department.

(AQW 4478/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In carrying out its functions the Department must ensure that it complies with the obligations of a broad range of EU Directives. Failure to transpose an EU Directive or failure to implement it in a way that the European Commission considers to be compliant could result in infraction proceedings.

Infractions are the legal process by which the European Commission takes action against a Member State for breach of its obligations under EU Law. Infraction fines are imposed by the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

DARD has never received a fine in relation to infraction proceedings.

Flooding at Beragh, County Tyrone

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much the review into the flooding at Beragh, County Tyrone is expected to cost.

(AQW 4496/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I consider that a quick review is essential while the events are fresh in people's minds. That is why I have asked my Assembly Private Secretary Pat Doherty MP, MLA to undertake the investigation into the October 2011 flooding, including that in Beragh, and report to me by 18 November 2011. As all of the data and analysis that will be required for the review is already being collated by my Rivers Agency as a matter of course, the only additional input of resource is the time devoted to this review by my Assembly Private Secretary. The cost of the review to the public purse will therefore be extremely low.

Beragh Flood Alleviation Scheme

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development from where the £1m funding for the Beragh Flood Alleviation Scheme will come.

(AQW 4605/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As a result of the flooding events during October 2011, I have asked that my department examine and re-prioritise its capital expenditure budget available for the next financial year. Consequently, the additional £1million funding will be made available to my Rivers Agency to help with flood defences for areas such as Beragh.

Agri-Food Sector

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the action he is taking to increase skills within the agri-food sector.

(AQO 818/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise the importance of increasing the skills level in the agri-food sector. The investment in education and skills is an essential ingredient to assist the industry in meeting the challenges and opportunities now and into the future.

My Department, through the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, continues to develop and deliver a portfolio of programmes designed to increase the skills of those entering and in the agri-food sector. These programmes include Further and Higher Education, Industry Training, Knowledge and Technology Transfer and Benchmarking.

I am pleased that there has been an increased demand for all of CAFRE's agri-food programmes. This year enrolments on agriculture and food FE and HE programmes are at historically high levels with over 1000 students enrolled. The Industry Training Programme has also had considerable support from industry with over 13,000 people participating.

CAFRE has also developed the skills level of people through encouraging the adoption of technology and benchmarking their business performance. This has resulted in 1250 businesses adopting new technologies 900 businesses benchmarking their performance last year.

The NI Rural Development Programme also provides opportunity for Farm Family members to increase skills through the Skills Training element of the Farm Family Options programme. Over £2 million is available over the lifetime of the Rural Development Programme. The Supply Chain Development Programme which supports farmers working together with others provides funding for training to help each group achieve its goals. £300,000 has been earmarked for this element of Supply Chain training.

I am committed to ensuring the agri-food sector is provided with highly skilled people to improve our competitiveness in the marketplace.

Rural Crime

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with the Minister of Justice on the levels of rural crime.

(AQO 790/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have recently written to both the Minister of Justice and the Chief Constable seeking meetings to discuss the results of the recent Rural Crime Survey which indicated that there has been a 28% rise in thefts from farms here over the last two years.

My predecessor also met with the Minister of Justice late last year to discuss a number of issues including rural crime and to seek to ensure that issues relating to rural crime are reflected in the development of the Rural White Paper Action Plan.

I have also written to the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána in relation to the recent attacks on Loughs Agency staff carrying out their enforcement duties in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

Single Farm Payments

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to her answer to a supplementary question on AQO 784/11-15, what measures she will introduce to ensure the efficient payment of Single Farm Payments; and what flexibility she will introduce to enable these payments to be made without the delays caused by mapping systems.

(AQW 4853/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have introduced a number of measures to ensure the efficient payment of Single Farm Payment. These include improvements to the on-line facility and the introduction of new technology and guidance to allow the assessment and processing of information found at inspection. Work is also underway to allow the use of satellite imagery for some inspections in 2012.

In addition, the new maps when combined with more frequent aerial photography will, in due course, increase the efficiency of payment processing.

As far as 2011 payments are concerned, I do not envisage that the new maps will delay these payments and I anticipate that last year's target of 83% of payments by the end of December will be equalled. I will be monitoring the situation very closely in regard to 2012 payments. The issue of new maps may challenge the efficiency of payments in that year to some extent; because of the need for adjustments to maps and the impact this would have on the speed with which payments can be validated. The Department will invest in additional resourcing to seek as far as possible to mitigate this.

Rural Anti-poverty Strategy

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when she intends to bring forward a Rural Anti-Poverty Strategy.

(AQO 788/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under DARD's Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Framework a package worth £10m was successfully implemented over the 2008 to 2011 budget period providing targeted support to the vulnerable in rural areas. The approval for the new budget period up until 2015 confirmed an enhancement to the commitment to tackling poverty and social isolation in rural areas raising expenditure to around £16 million over the budget period. £3 million of this support has been allocated to the current financial year, with the remaining £13 million allocated up to 2015, and it is this £13 million figure that has been reflected in the draft Programme for Government published last week.

My officials are working on a revised framework for this period. This will build on and enhance the good work carried out under the previous framework and I hope to have a draft of this by the end of the year.

Support for rural anti-poverty measures is currently being provided under the 2008-2011 framework in areas such as access to benefit and services, rural transport and support services to vulnerable groups such as the elderly and isolated. We hope to build on and enhance these measures in the updated framework.

Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the benefits of the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme and how it will be progressed over the remainder of the Rural Development Programme period.

(AQO 789/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The agri-food processing sector has demonstrated an ability to continue to grow, even in the current economic downturn and it continues to be a major employer in the rural communities of the north of Ireland. I believe that there are further opportunities for growth within the sector, and the capital support provided through the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme will help agri-food processing companies to invest in their buildings and plant and machinery to develop their businesses and remain competitive, growing their market share and maintaining employment levels.

For the current CSR period to 31 March 2015, I was successful in securing national expenditure of £5.7m which when matched with the EU contribution will provide grant assistance of £11.4million to 31 March 2015. I hope therefore that the funding which is currently available will be rolled out to the sector over the coming years with the scheme re-opening for new applications either towards the end of 2011 or early 2012.

Since the first applications for the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme were approved in July 2008, my Department has paid out grant of £5.3million. With a maximum grant rate of 40%, this represents investments by the companies of at least £13.25million.

Common Agricultural Policy: Greening

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the greening element of the Common Agricultural Policy proposals.

(AQO 791/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: First of all, I should point out that I totally agree that as well as supporting farm incomes, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must deliver for the environment. Indeed it already does so through Cross Compliance and our Agri-Environment Schemes. The main difficulty from the greening proposals stems from the fact that they are intended to be common across the EU. But agricultural practices and land use varies greatly from region to region. The greening proposals are aimed at the arable sector but in the north of Ireland, the arable sector is relatively small. The impact is likely to be that arable production will shrink further, creating a move towards a grass monoculture which would be undesirable from an environmental point of view. Some of the greening proposals such as the requirement to retain permanent grassland will unnecessarily restrict farmers in their ability to shape their business according to market needs and thereby have an adverse impact on agricultural competitiveness. Another concern is that there will be a significant administrative burden both for farmers and the Department in implementing these measures.

To sum up, I am not against a CAP that delivers for the environment, but the greening proposals need considerable work to ensure that they actually deliver environmental benefits, do not hinder the development of a competitive agricultural industry and can be implemented without disproportionate cost.

Agrifood

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the potential for the agri-food sector and its development on an all-island basis.

(AQO 792/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Despite the global recession, the agri-food sector has demonstrated continued growth and resilience with local food companies having increased export sales. It is this market in particular where I believe that the sector has the potential to grow further and to grasp the opportunities arising from the continued expansion of the global population.

To ensure that the sector is well placed to exploit these opportunities I, along with the DETI Minister, agreed that we need a strategic long term approach to plan the sector's expansion. This will be developed by a Food Strategy Board, which I hope will be in place in the New Year. It is worth pointing out that success will depend on a team effort and I envisage a key role for industry in helping to shape this strategy, identify challenging but realistic growth targets and finally, it will be important to monitor achievement of those targets.

Of course, on an all-island basis, the sector faces many of the same challenges and opportunities and where we have areas of common interest I believe that it makes sense to work together. In particular I believe there would be potential benefits to an all-island approach to the marketing of local products in the export market and I look forward to working closely with my Dublin counterpart Simon Coveney TD and Executive colleagues here to help create the right conditions for the development of the agri-food sector.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Arts and Creative Industries

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department has identified ways of working in partnership with the education sector to use the arts and creative industries to encourage adult and child literacy.

(AQW 4064/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Arts Council's 5 year plan (2007-2012) identifies education and lifelong learning as a particular focus. The Council supports a number of arts organisations and programmes which work in partnership with the education sector to use the arts to encourage adult and child literacy. Examples include:

- The Derry Playhouse Arts & Literacy Project – this was a 3 year project funded by the Department of Employment & Learning which was completed in March 2011. It targeted young people not in education or training and with literacy challenges, and prisoners aged over 19 in HMP Magilligan.
- The Derry Playhouse Mach 1 Achievers & Fountain Youth Project – this project provided training in theatre skills for 24 young people all of whom had experience of issues linked to suicide. Modules were delivered at Open College Network.
- Cahoots NI Math-a-Magic project directly links to the Curriculum Key Stage 2. It provides children with opportunities to develop numeracy and literacy skills.

DCAL provides annual funding, through NI Screen, for three Creative Learning Centres - the Nerve Centre in Derry; Studio On at Crossnacreevy, Castlereagh; and the SELB's Amma Centre in Armagh.

The Centres work closely with schools, teachers and the Education and Library Boards in providing support for the literacy agenda in schools. This is achieved through the development of critical skills in digital storytelling, film-making and other creative digital technologies. This literacy support is complemented by film screenings and workshops offered to schools, young people and community groups as part of the annual Cinemagic Screen Festival for young people and the Foyle Film Festival Education Programme. Both Festivals are funded by DCAL through NI Screen.

In addition, teachers are using film as a support for literacy as part of the after school FILMCLUB scheme. This initiative is part of a UK-wide scheme funded in the north of Ireland by DCAL through NI Screen. FILMCLUB allows children, in 68 Extended Service schools, to watch films each week and

to write film reviews which they upload to the FILMCLUB website to share with other young people. Teachers report that participation in FILMCLUB enhances literacy and ICT skills.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total cost incurred by her Department on air travel (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010; and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010.

(AQW 4412/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the period January to December 2010, my Department spent £10,464 on air travel between the North of Ireland and Heathrow Airport. In the same period, £7,997 was spent on air travel between the North of Ireland and other airports in England, Scotland & Wales excluding Heathrow.

Sport NI's Lottery Funding

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when Sport NI's Lottery funding will reopen for applications.

(AQW 4501/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The National Lottery is a Reserved matter and decisions on Lottery programmes rests with the individual lottery distributors. Sport NI advise that historical programmes which still receive funding from Lottery are closed to new applications. Sport NI is however currently developing new programmes to be funded from Lottery. These new programmes are expected to be launched in the years 2012-2014.

Funding for Sporting Projects

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for a breakdown of the funding her Department has earmarked for sporting projects in each Belfast constituency in the 2011-15 budgetary period.

(AQW 4503/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is the lead development agency for sport in the north of Ireland with responsibility for the distribution of funding. Sport NI does not hold information on a constituency basis, however, it has earmarked £110,601,621 in the 2011-15 budgetary period for sporting projects in the district council areas that make up the Belfast constituencies. A breakdown of this figure by council area is provided below:

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Programme	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Totals
Stadium Development	£1m	£20m	£20m	£69m	£110m
Stadia Safety Programme	£431,300	0	0	0	£431,300
Sport Matters Capital Equipment	£30,000	0	0	0	£30,000
Awards for Sport	£77,283	0	0	0	£77,283
Totals	£1,538,583	£20m	£20m	£69m	£110,538,583

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Programme	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Totals
Awards for Sport	£13,430	0	0	0	£13,430
Totals	£13,430	0	0	0	£13,430

LISBURN CITY COUNCIL

Programme	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Totals
Awards for Sport	£47,366	0	0	0	£47,366
Totals	£47,366	0	0	0	£47,366

NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Programme	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Totals
Awards for Sport	£2,242	0	0	0	£2,242
Totals	£2,242	0	0	0	£2,242

Furthermore, Sport NI has allocated a budget of £10.25m for its Community Capital Programme during the current CSR period. A total of 141 applications for funding were received under this programme, 31 of which are from the Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn and Newtownabbey council areas. Applications under this programme are currently being considered by Sport NI.

Illegal Fishing Activities in Upper Bann

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 3404/11-15, how many people have been identified as being engaged in illegal fishing activities in Upper Bann as a result of (i) regular patrols; (ii) intelligence led operations; and (iii) inspections of fish dealers' premises and businesses, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4519/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below details the number of persons convicted of fisheries offences in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last three years;

Year	Number of persons convicted
2008	6
2009	19
2010	16

The manner in which this information is recorded does not facilitate the designation of the original detection to either regular patrols or intelligence led operations.

There were no convictions in the Upper Bann constituency as a result of inspections of fish dealers' premises and businesses in those three years.

Líofa Campaign

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether as part of her preparations for the launch of the Líofa campaign what consideration she gave to its impact on the public perception of Irish that every word of Irish spoken is like another bullet being fired in the struggle for Irish freedom.
(AQW 4521/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Líofa initiative is about the present and the future of the Irish Language. It is intended to move the language forward in a positive, progressive and inclusive manner.

Arts Council's Support for Organisations Programme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support organisations in the North Down area have received from the Arts Council's Support for Organisations Programme in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4534/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The following support has been provided to organisations in the North Down area through the Annual Support for Organisation Programme:

Year	Amount
2009/2010	£110,550
2010/2011	£150,550
2011/2012	£150,550

Disciplinary Action

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the number of staff in her Department who have been subject to disciplinary action in this year to date; (ii) the nature of the disciplinary action; and (iii) the outcome of that action.

(AQW 4542/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has had one member of staff who has been subject to disciplinary action between 1 January 2011 and 16 November 2011. I am unable to supply the further information requested as this could lead to the possible identification of the officer concerned and would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Purpose-Built Weed Cutting Machine for Loughbrickland Lake

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to publish the business case for the purpose-built weed cutting machine used for Loughbrickland Lake; and for her assessment of this business case.

(AQW 4543/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department does not retain a copy of the business case for the weed cutting machine used at Loughbrickland Lake. The machine was purchased approximately 17 years ago, which was prior to the creation of DCAL.

Illegal Salmon Fishing in Lough Neagh

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any correspondence she has received about illegal salmon fishing in Lough Neagh in the last twelve months from (i) the Ulster Angling Federation; (ii) Lough Neagh fishermen; and (iii) other parties; and what action she has taken.

(AQW 4544/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I was appointed Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure on 16 May 2011 and since then I have received the following correspondence relating to illegal fishing in Lough Neagh from the following organisations:

- (i) Ulster Angling Federation:
One letter from the Ulster Angling Federation, ref. COR/1234/2011
One request for a meeting, ref. INV/1404/2011
- (ii) Lough Neagh Fishermen:
One letter from Lough Neagh Fishermen, ref. COR/1170/2011
- (iii) Other Parties:
One request for a meeting, ref. INV/1259/2011

I responded to all the letters and I was unable to meet with the UAF due to diary commitments. I agreed to meet with the other party but due to unforeseen circumstances I could not attend and the meeting went ahead with departmental officials.

Illegal Fishing

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what powers her Department has in relation to the removal of nets which are being used for illegal fishing; and whether she intends to seek further powers to tackle illegal fishing.

(AQW 4545/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department has a range of powers under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 and subsequent regulations in relation to the removal of nets involved in illegal fishing activities. These powers relate to the type and construction of nets, the manner in which they are used, the placement of nets, when they are used and the type and size of fish caught.

It is considered that the current powers for removal of nets are adequate but this position is reviewed periodically.

Lisnaskea Library

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) whether a new build for Lisnaskea library is a priority in her Department's capital budget for 2011/12; and (ii) to detail the libraries and related projects that are benefiting from this year's capital budget, including both new builds and refurbishments.

(AQW 4608/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Project to provide a replacement library in Lisnaskea is currently not included in Libraries NI's capital budget for 2011/2012. The Project remains a priority for Libraries NI if funding were to become available.

The following table details library projects that are benefiting from this year's capital budget;

Location	Project Cost (£)
Ardoyne Library	10,000
Ballymena Administrative Centre	15,000
Belfast Central	114,499
Brownlow Library	134,000
Dromore Library	6,000
Dungannon Library	498,000
Dungiven Library	21,867

Location	Project Cost (£)
Falls Library	306,000
Finaghy Library	17,100
Irvineestown Library	5,000
Larne Library	50,000
Lisburn Library	114,000
Lurgan Library	40,000
Maghera Library	5,000
Ormeau Road Library	170,000
Portadown Library	21,134
Shankill Library	319,000
Tandragee Library	5,900
Various – Fire Risk Assessment	64,000
Vehicle Replacement	387,500
Total	£2,304,000

Political Use of GAA Facilities

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given that some GAA grounds have been misused to commemorate terrorist activities, whether she will attach any conditions to future funding prohibiting the political use of GAA facilities.

(AQW 4630/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The use of GAA grounds, including determining whether misuse has occurred, is not a matter for me but entirely a matter for the GAA to determine in accordance with the policies of the Association. SportNI (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in the north of Ireland including attaching any conditions to current or future funding. SNI currently operates an equality scheme which requires all recipients of funding, including the GAA, to operate an equal opportunities policy and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that their facilities and services are run in an inclusive manner which will both aspire to and promote good relations. All applicants to SNI programmes, including the GAA, are required to adhere to these conditions in order to receive, and continue to receive, funding.

Salmon Catches on the North Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the returns made this year for salmon catches on the north coast by each boat licensed to operate drift nets.

(AQW 4637/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The catch returns for the 2011 season for each boat licensed by DCAL to operate drift nets off the north coasts are as follows:

Boat 1 – 192 salmon

Boat 2 – 35 salmon

Salmon Catches on the North Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the returns made this year for salmon catches on the north coast by people operating bag nets.

(AQW 4638/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The catch returns for the 2011 season for each bag net licensed by DCAL and operating off the north coast are as follows:

Ballyteerim – 345 salmon

Torr Head – 494 salmon, 1 sea trout

Funding for Sports

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding her Department has provided for the development and promotion of (i) rugby; (ii) soccer; (iii) Gaelic games; and (iv) motor sports in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4640/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is the lead development agency for sport in the north of Ireland with responsibility for the distribution of funding. In the last three financial years, Sport NI has allocated a total of £38,212,220 to rugby, association football, Gaelic games and motorsport. A breakdown of this figure is provided in the table below:

Sport	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Totals
Gaelic Games	£7,076,520	£8,790,721	£1,174,713	£17,041,954
Association Football	£5,566,342	£6,721,912	£3,452,905	£15,741,159
Rugby	£2,124,129	£362,080	£504,950	£2,991,159
Motorsport	£182,500	£2,087,240	£168,208	£2,437,948
Totals	£14,949,491	£17,961,953	£5,300,776	£38,212,220

Sport Matters Capital and Equipment Awards Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 4388/11-15 and given the fact that the Sport Matters Capital and Equipment Awards Programme will not be available until at least 2015, what advice she can give to sporting organisations who need funding for capital and equipment above the value of £10,000 in the interim period.

(AQW 4645/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is the body responsible for the development of sport in the north of Ireland. I would advise that sporting organisations seeking funding for capital and equipment above the value of £10,000 should contact Sport NI, who may be able to provide advice.

Protection of Fish Species

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 4112/11-15, to detail any of her Department's programmes for the protection of fish species which are currently outside safe biological limits, including (i) any reduction in the length of the fishing season; (ii) the use of barbless hooks; (iii) the introduction of catch and release schemes; and (iv) the ending of the use of netting.

(AQW 4679/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the DCAL jurisdiction there is evidence that salmon and eel populations are currently outside safe biological limits.

My Department's programme for the conservation of salmon is contained in the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) Implementation Plan. This has 3 Focus Area Plans which detail our approach to fisheries management, (including measures to limit exploitation), habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and introductions. These are published on the NASCO website at www.nasco.int/.

My Department's programme for the conservation of eels is contained in the 3 Eel Management Plans on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website at www.defra.gov.uk/ and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources website at www.dcenr.gov.ie/.

Fish Merchants

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 4110/11-15, to detail the number of fish merchants that are licensed to buy and sell (i) salmon; (ii) trout; (iii) eels; (iv) pollan; and (v) pike.

(AQW 4680/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are currently 169 Fish Dealers Licences issued by my Department.

These licences cover the holder to buy and sell all the types of fish specified in the question.

Inspections of Licensed Fish Merchants

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of (i) inspections of licensed fish merchants in each of the last five years; and (ii) instances where further action was required by her Department.

(AQW 4681/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The regulation of fish merchants was the responsibility of the Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) until it was abolished on 1 June 2009, when that responsibility moved to DCAL. No records of FCB inspections or follow up actions were transferred to the Department.

1 June 2009 - 31 March 2010

Number of Dealer Inspections - 47

Further Action - 8 Warning Letters regarding unlicensed dealing

1 April 2010 - 31 March 2011

Number of Dealer Inspections - 37

Further Action - 4 Warning Letters regarding unlicensed dealing;

1 Prosecution taken regarding non-production of dealers register (case dismissed on a point of law).

Unlicensed Selling or Buying Fish

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of prosecutions taken by her Department for the unlicensed selling or buying of (i) salmon; (ii) trout; (iii) pollan; (iv) eels; and (v) pike in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4682/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department has taken no prosecutions for offences of this type in any of the last five years.

European Union: Infraction Fines

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what level of infraction fines he is anticipating being levied against the UK by the European Union due to breaches of the Habitats Directive by the interception of mixed stocks of salmon by commercial nets, which have been licensed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, on the North Coast of Antrim.

(AQW 4683/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Please see answer to AQW 4106/11-15

Lisnaskea and Irvinestown Libraries

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of how the opening hours of Lisnaskea and Irvinestown libraries can be reduced without rural proofing being carried out, given that Co. Fermanagh has only three libraries.

(AQW 4701/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A draft Rural Impact Assessment and a draft Equality Impact Assessment have already been published as part of the consultation process. These documents are available on the Libraries NI website. Consultees are invited to comment on these documents as well as through questionnaires. I understand that contact is also being made with groups representative of the Section 75 categories and of rural interests.

DARD officials have provided training to Libraries NI in relation to its revised rural proofing guidance which was published on 8 February 2011. The Rural Impact Assessment will be reviewed following the end of the consultation.

I would encourage everyone to take part in the ongoing public consultation and would emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage.

Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the average cost to his Department to respond to written and oral Assembly Questions tabled by Jim Allister MLA, since May 2011.

(AQW 4734/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and so the information requested is not available.

Capital Budget for 2012/13

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) what is her Department's capital budget for 2012/13; (ii) which library will be the first to receive funding for a capital project in 2012/13; and (iii) whether Lisnaskea library is included in the proposed capital spend programme for 2012/13, and if so, to detail its position in the programme.

(AQW 4755/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) The Department's capital budget for 2012/13 is £34.7 million.
- (ii) From this amount Libraries NI has been set £4.166 million, broken down as follows:

Capital Investment	Total (k)
Electronic Libraries for NI(ELfNI)	£3,000,000
Essential Maintenance	£666,000
Other Capital	£500,000
Total	£4,166,000

The Board and Senior Management Team of Libraries NI has responsibility for deciding upon the utilisation of available capital funding. At this stage it is not possible to provide a sub-analysis of the £500,000.

- (iii) The bid for funding a library in Lisnaskea was not met in the four year Budget 2010 settlement, although this remains a priority for Libraries NI.

Department of Education

Children: Statemented

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what percentage of children have been statemented in each of the last three years, broken down by sector.

(AQW 4050/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The information requested is detailed in the table below.

Percentage of statemented pupils by school management type, 2008/09 – 2010/11

School management type	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Controlled	5.8	5.9	6.0
Voluntary	0.7	0.8	0.9
RC Maintained	3.6	3.7	3.7
Other Maintained	3.1	3.0	3.0
Controlled Integrated	3.8	4.1	4.2
GMI	4.7	5.1	5.6
total	4.1	4.2	4.3

Source: NI school census

Note:

Figures relate to pupils in nursery, primary, special and post primary schools.

Figures for the controlled sector are higher because it contains 39 of the 41 special schools.

In addition to the numbers in schools listed above, there were: 0.3% of pupils in funded places in voluntary and private preschool centres statemented in 2008/09; 0.2% of pupils in funded places in voluntary and private preschool centres statemented in 2009/10; and, 0.1% of pupils in funded places in voluntary and private preschool centres statemented in 2010/11.

Free School Meals

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education whether he will consider making free school meals available to children from families in receipt of Universal Credit.

(AQW 4104/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Universal Credit will replace a number of existing benefits which are currently used to determine eligibility for free school meals and clothing allowances. These include Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Income-related Employment and Support Allowance. It will be necessary therefore, in due course, to amend the eligibility criteria to incorporate the Universal Credit.

My Department is working closely with the Department for Social Development, which is responsible for bringing forward the necessary legislation to give effect to Universal Credit, to ensure that, as far as possible, families here are not disadvantaged by any changes.

Bangor Central Primary School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether he would consider using the large area of open space at Castle Street, Bangor, for a new build for Bangor Central, Primary School.

(AQW 4160/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my Statement to the Assembly on Monday 26 September 2011 I announced that I have commissioned the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs), working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors, to co-ordinate a strategic area planning process based on each ELB area to shape the future pattern of education provision.

Previously identified projects, including that for Bangor Central Integrated Primary School, will be critically assessed alongside all other potential projects as part of the area planning process in order to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed. Such projects may re-emerge if identified as a priority to support the area plan. No school building project will be looked at in isolation but will be considered in the context of the wider area.

Should a project for Bangor Central Primary School come forward as a result of the area planning process, all available options to deliver a new school will be considered at that stage.

Football Coaches in Schools

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how many football coaches in schools are currently funded by his Department and what is the level of funding.

(AQW 4188/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not provide any direct funding to schools specifically for football coaching. Schools may of course use their own delegated budgets to employ football coaches but the Department does not hold this level of detail.

GAA Coaches in Schools

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how many GAA coaches in schools are currently funded by his Department and what is the level of funding.

(AQW 4189/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not provide any direct funding to schools specifically for GAA coaching. Schools may of course use their own delegated budgets to employ GAA coaches but the Department does not hold this level of detail.

Rugby Coaches in Schools

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how many rugby coaches in schools are currently funded by his Department and what is the level of funding.

(AQW 4190/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not provide any direct funding to schools specifically for rugby coaching. Schools may of course use their own delegated budgets to employ rugby coaches but the Department does not hold this level of detail.

Hockey Coaches in Schools

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how many hockey coaches in schools are currently funded by his Department and what is the level of funding.

(AQW 4191/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not provide any direct funding to schools specifically for hockey coaching. Schools may of course use their own delegated budgets to employ hockey coaches but the Department does not hold this level of detail.

Netball Coaches in Schools

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how many netball coaches in schools are currently funded by his Department and what is the level of funding.

(AQW 4192/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not provide any direct funding to schools specifically for netball coaching. Schools may of course use their own delegated budgets to employ netball coaches but the Department does not hold this level of detail.

New Payroll System

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to design and procure a new payroll system.

(AQW 4217/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current contract with Northgate Arinso (NGA) covering the payrolls for non teaching staff (5 ELBs) and teachers (DE) ends in March 2013. Initial analysis on the steps required to implement a full procurement to replace the Education Sector Workforce payrolls is being considered.

The scope of the project is very wide, potentially taking in all the Finance and HR/Payroll functions within the ELBs, CCEA, CCMS, the Youth Council and the Staff Commission as well as the Teachers Payroll and the Substitute Teachers Register (NISTR).

Development Proposal 218

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of responses received in relation to Development Proposal 218 to establish a co-educational, post-16 provision at Portora Royal School, Enniskillen; and (ii) of these how many were (a) for; and (b) against the proposal.

(AQW 4218/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department received three written responses to Development Proposal 218 during the statutory two month consultation period, which ran from 4 May 2011 to 4 July 2011. All three of the responses were against the Development Proposal.

Having considered all the facts pertinent to the proposal I approved this Development Proposal primarily because it offers increased choice to girls that they would not otherwise have.

Schools Audit

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the schools in the North Down constituency that (i) will; and (ii) will not form part of the proposed schools audit.

(AQW 4261/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The viability audit announced in my statement to the Assembly on 26 September applies to all grant-aided primary and post-primary schools of all management types in the North Down area, including any with special units. At this stage, it does not apply to nursery schools or special schools.

P1 Pupils

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education whether it is widespread practice that pupils in P1 do not stay in school during lunchtime.

(AQW 4273/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Regulations prescribe the minimum hours pupils should attend school. In the case of primary schools, Regulation 20 of the Primary Schools: General Regulations 1973 No. 402 sets out the position. The regulations state that the minimum hours pupils should attend school on any day under instruction is 3 hours for pupils enrolled in a class of pupils most of whom were under the age of 8 at

the start of the school year and 4.5 hours for other pupils. Boards of Governors are allowed flexibility in setting their school's starting and finishing times, as long as they comply with the regulations.

It is not a widespread practice for Year 1 pupils not to stay in school during lunchtime. The Department understands that some schools may admit pupils on a phased basis as part of their induction process in the first few weeks of the new school year. Evidence gathered through school inspections has found that a well planned and well delivered phased entry is helpful to children, however, the Department would not expect these arrangements to continue for a prolonged period. Parents should be informed of the primary school's policy on settling in as part of the application/admission process to allow them time to make suitable arrangements.

The Department is also aware that, typically, Year 1 children are introduced to school lunches during September with some waiting until after the Hallowe'en break.

P1 Pupils: Free School Meals

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education whether a free school meal entitlement for pupils in P1 could be transferred to a mid-morning snack in schools which do not offer a lunch to pupils in P1.
(AQW 4275/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Free school meals are provided as part of the Arrangements for the Provision of Milk, Meals and Related Facilities made under Articles 58 and 59 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986.

These arrangements require Education and Library Boards and other school authorities to provide a school dinner which is "adequate in quantity and quality so as to be suitable as the main meal of the day for a pupil". A midmorning snack would not meet this description and the free school meal entitlement would not therefore be transferrable in these circumstances.

Schools should make arrangements to ensure that all pupils entitled to free school meals, including those in Year 1, are able to avail of this entitlement.

Naíscoil Bheann Mhadagáin, North Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposal for Naíscoil Bheann Mhadagáin, North Belfast.
(AQW 4278/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In April 2011, my predecessor, Catríona Ruane MLA, conditionally approved the provision of a 26 full-time place nursery unit at Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin.

The conditions of approval stipulate that, by September 2012, the school must fill a minimum of 20 places with children in their immediate pre-school year and my Department must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place to accommodate the proposed nursery unit.

Parental Engagement

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education, in light of research which shows that parental engagement improves a pupil's performance regardless of socio-economic background, (i) how he plans to encourage parental engagement; and (ii) how much his Department has spent on the promotion of parental engagement in each of the last five years.
(AQW 4338/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Every School a Good School, the policy for school improvement, sets out my commitment to encouraging and supporting schools to engage parents more effectively. Count, read: succeed sets out some of the practical steps schools can take to engage parents in supporting their child's development of literacy and numeracy and includes a commitment to providing guidance to help parents of pre-school and school-age children.

The Department has supported the Bookstart programme, which provides free books to babies and toddlers, with advice for parents on reading with their child. The Sure Start Programme works jointly with both parents and young children. In recognition of the importance of a parent's role in the development of a child, a range of parenting programmes and activities are offered.

The Extended Schools programme enables schools to provide additional services aimed at raising attainment levels as well as empowering children and their families to access appropriate or specialist support to overcome the challenges that may lead to underachievement. An increasing number of extended schools have introduced a range of innovative ways to engage and involve parents more effectively in the work of the school.

The Department also funds the Belfast Education and Library Board and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools to pilot two Full Service School programmes in North and West Belfast. These programmes aim to work in partnership with parents and communities to encourage and support children to realise their full potential.

The Department is in the processing of revising existing reporting regulations to bring forward new arrangements for reporting pupil's progress to their parents so that they are better informed about their child's performance and to help support their child in school.

£250k per annum has been provided, via the Education and Library Boards, in support of Bookstart programme over the years 2008/09 - 2010/11. A bid to continue funding in 2011/12 is currently being considered.

It is not possible to identify specific funding for the promotion of parental engagement within the funding allocated for the other policies and programmes mentioned above.

Education and Library Boards: Surplus Land

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail any surplus land held by each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 4358/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have provided the following details on surplus land:

Board	Land relating to the former Asset
BELB	School of Music Building
BELB	Porters Annex
BELB	Grove Primary School
BELB	Forthriver Primary School
BELB	Old Cavehill
BELB	Denmark Street Nursery School
BELB	Mersey Street Primary School
BELB	Mount Gilbert Community College
BELB	Cedar Lodge Special School
BELB	Orangefield Campus
BELB	Mount Gilbert Caretakers residence
BELB	Fallswater Drive
BELB	Land adjacent to Ligionel Primary School
BELB	Laburnum Playing Fields

Board	Land relating to the former Asset
BELB	Kircubbin Sailing Club
BELB	Shore Road Playing Fields
BELB	Cairn Lodge Youth Club
BELB	Turf Lodge Youth Club
BELB	Trinity Drop-in Centre
BELB	Sydenham Youth Club
BELB	Donegall Pass Youth Club
BELB	Shankill Youth Club
WELB	Burnfoot Primary School
WELB	Dungiven Primary School
WELB	Duke of Westminster High School, Ballinamallard
WELB	Duke of Westminster High School, Kesh
WELB	Faughan Valley High School
WELB	Faughan Valley High School Kitchen and Dining Hall
NEELB	Antiville Primary School
NEELB	Ballypriormore Primary School
NEELB	Carnalridge Primary School
NEELB	Garvagh Primary School
NEELB	Glenarm Primary School
NEELB	Maghera High School
NEELB	Roddensvale
SEELB	Drumbo Primary School
SEELB	Hillhall Primary School
SEELB	Lambeg Primary School
SEELB	Lower Ballinderry Primary School
SEELB	Gransha High School
SEELB	Killard House General
SEELB	Ballykillaire Site
SEELB	Ballylesson site
SEELB	Newtownbreda Primary School
SEELB	Kindle Primary School
SEELB	Hilden Primary School
SEELB	Newport Primary School
SEELB	Lisnasharragh High School

Board	Land relating to the former Asset
SELB	Minterburn Primary School
SELB	Tamnmore Primary School
SELB	Clogher Regional Primary School

Commissioners that Replaced the South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to his Department, to date, of the Commissioners that replaced the South Eastern Education and Library Board in 2005.

(AQW 4366/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has provided the following costs which include daily fees, travel, subsistence and all other expenses, made to the commissioners from 6 July 2006, when they were first appointed.

Financial Year	Costs
2006/07	£81,472
2007/08	£108,637
2008/09	£79,472
2009/10	£83,717
2010/11	£76,935
2011/12	£43,104 (up to 30 September 2011)

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry Regeneration Programme

Mr Eastwood asked Minister of Education, with regard to the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme, to detail (i) the funds from his current budget that have been committed to projects under this programme; (ii) the projects that are being funded; and (iii) the start dates for these projects.

(AQW 4390/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I met recently with Sir Roy McNulty, Chair of the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company, to discuss the plan and the contribution education can make. Rather than fund short term projects, I am continuing to implement a range of policies aimed at ensuring more of our young people leave school with the skills they need to gain employment and contribute to our economic regeneration. These policies, including the school improvement policy, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the promotion of STEM subjects, the revised curriculum and entitlement framework and work to finalise strategies for early years and special educational needs and inclusion, will support the objectives of the One Plan for Derry.

Within the Derry area, schools, pre-school and youth settings are supported by the Western Education and Library Board (WELB), and its partners, in implementing these policies through the Achieving Derry-Bright Futures programme, which was introduced in September 2007. The Department provided funding of £360,000 in 2011/12 for the programme, which was in addition to the funding already allocated to schools and to the WELB.

Area Learning Community Programme Participation

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 3985/11-15, to detail where he said or implied in his Ministerial Statement on 26 September 2011 that ‘collaboration is not an end in itself’.
(AQW 4474/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The whole thrust of my Statement on 26 September related to putting the needs of pupils first; not the needs of an institution. This is the paramount objective which was clearly articulated in my Statement – and I did not set out to achieve or to advocate collaborative working as an end in itself. I accept that schools may collaborate and support each other in order to enrich the curricular offer but I am clear that the interests of pupils remain the driving force behind the introduction of the Entitlement Framework. The Sustainable Schools policy sets out an expectation that a pupil should spend at least 80% of their time in their home school.

Sentinus Programme

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education (i) what training is given to those responsible for selecting successful candidates for the Sentinus Programme; and (ii) whether the training is mandatory for all those responsible, including a Board of Governors which may be required to make a judgement if an appeal is lodged.

(AQW 4540/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: I refer the member to my answer to his previous question AQW 3271/11-15 published in the Official Report on 21 October 2011, in which I advised that the Department has no involvement in this process and the selection of pupils to represent participating schools is entirely a matter for schools to determine.

Pupil Profile System

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the effectiveness of school reports from teachers using the electronic Pupil Profile System.

(AQW 4546/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: As you will be aware, there was some confusion and misinformation around the potential role of the Pupil Profile, which some incorrectly saw as playing a major role with schools in informing decisions on transfer. Therefore, to minimise confusion, since 2009 the Department has referred to “the annual report to parents” and has used that terminology in circulars to schools and parents’ leaflets.

While there is no statutory requirement for the format of the annual report, the legislation specifies the minimum content which schools must include. Report writer software is available within the Assessment suite of software supplied for schools by C2K, however schools are free to use this, any other software, word processing or to handwrite reports, provided the minimum statutory content is made available to parents. C2k have offered training to all schools in the use of the report writer.

Pupils in Kinship Care

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how his Department looks after the needs of pupils in Kinship Care, including (i) pastoral care; and (ii) parent/guardian consent for extra-curricular activities.

(AQW 4547/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: As well as their statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils’ learning, schools have pastoral responsibilities towards their pupils, including those in kinship care. Pastoral care arrangements must include and be reflected through specific policies on child protection, pupil discipline and anti-bullying. My Department has provided guidance on what these policies should address. The operation and effectiveness of pastoral care arrangements is monitored through the regular cycle of school inspections undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

Health and Social Services Trusts are responsible for the delegation of authority to foster carers in Northern Ireland. DHSSPS circular CCPD01/10 sets out the guidance that Trusts are required to follow

in considering the delegation of authority to foster carers including kinship and respite carers. A 'Trust Authority to Delegate Consent' is individually assessed for each case and a signed copy should be made available to a child/young person's school and may cover many extra-curricular activities.

Statistics show that looked after children continue to be significantly outperformed by their peers in the general school population. Educational attainment is an important predictor of success in later life and one of the key education priorities is closing the gap and increasing access and equity.

My Department, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Health and Social Care Board, Health and Social Care Trusts and the Education and Library Boards, with the support of a number of voluntary sector organisations, have been working together to develop a standardised regional personal education plan for all looked after children of statutory school age. This Plan will establish clear targets and actions to respond effectively to each child's needs and provide a continuous record of their achievements. The introduction of these plans will begin in December 2011. It is hoped that these children and young people will be facilitated to fully develop their individual educational capacity, which will help with their future employability and general well-being.

Cost of Transporting Pupils Between Schools

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to 4097/11-15, why his Department does not hold the information requested on the cost of transporting pupils between schools.

(AQW 4560/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department delegates a budget to schools for which Principals are accountable, including how best they can meet the needs of their pupils in the planning and delivery of the statutory curriculum. This delegated authority enables Principals, having full regard to their responsibility to their pupils, to determine when their pupils will benefit from accessing a course in another school, taking account of individual pupil needs and any transport requirements.

My Department does not hold information requested on the number of pupils being transported between schools or the associated costs and has no wish to add to the administrative burden of schools by requesting it.

Pupils Transported Between Schools

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils transported between schools in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) mode of transport; and (ii) areas of partnership.

(AQW 4561/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department delegates a budget to schools for which Principals are accountable, including how best they can meet the needs of their pupils in the planning and delivery of the statutory curriculum. This delegated authority enables Principals, having full regard to their responsibility to their pupils, to determine when their pupils will benefit from accessing a course in another school, taking account of individual pupil needs and any transport requirements.

My Department does not hold information requested on the number of pupils being transported between schools or the associated costs and has no wish to add to the administrative burden of schools by requesting it.

Free School Meals

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what percentage of children in primary schools in the controlled sector, in each of the last four years (i) received; and (ii) qualified for free school meals.

(AQW 4580/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WHO RECEIVED AND QUALIFIED FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2007/08 – 2010/11

Year	Controlled primary (excluding controlled integrated)		Controlled Integrated primary		Total Controlled primary	
	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified
2007/08	11.4	14.8	13.5	16.9	11.5	14.9
2008/09	11.5	14.2	11.1	17.3	11.5	14.3
2009/10	12.3	15.8	9.7	19.1	12.2	15.9
2010/11	14.8	18.9	16.7	22.0	14.9	19.0

Source: NI school census and NI school meals census

Notes:

- 1 Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes in grant-aided primary schools.
- 2 The number of children taking school meals varies from week to week. Information collected annually from the School Meals Census provides a snapshot of the numbers receiving meals on the day on which census information is gathered. The information presented in the table under the heading of “received” therefore includes only those children who received a school meal on that day.
- 3 The free school meals eligibility criteria were extended in 2010/11, on a phased basis, to include Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils in primary schools, whose parents were in receipt of Working Tax Credit and who had an annual taxable income not exceeding £16,190.
- 4 Some Nursery units of Primary schools had not introduced all pupils to school by the Census date, so, although counted in the enrolment figures, the numbers taking a school meal may be lower than if collected later in the year.
- 5 Reception and Primary 1 pupils in some schools only attend for a half-day session until the end of October which may not include time for a midday meal.

Free School Meals

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what percentage of children in primary schools in the maintained sector, in each of the last four years (i) received; and (ii) qualified for free school meals. **(AQW 4581/11-15)**

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

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WHO RECEIVED AND QUALIFIED FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2007/08 – 2010/11

Year	Catholic Maintained primary		Other Maintained primary		Total Maintained primary	
	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified
2007/08	18.6	21.3	16.2	27.8	18.6	21.5
2008/09	18.1	20.7	15.9	26.6	18.0	20.9
2009/10	19.2	22.3	15.5	28.3	19.1	22.5
2010/11	22.0	25.4	24.5	33.9	22.1	25.7

Source: NI school census and NI school meals census

Note:

- 1 Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes in grant-aided primary schools.
- 2 The number of children taking school meals varies from week to week. Information collected annually from the School Meals Census provides a snapshot of the numbers receiving meals on the day on which census information is gathered. The information presented in the table under the heading of “received” therefore includes only those children who received a school meal on that day.
- 3 The free school meals eligibility criteria were extended in 2010/11, on a phased basis, to include Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils in primary schools, whose parents were in receipt of Working Tax Credit and who had an annual taxable income not exceeding £16,190.
- 4 Some Nursery units of Primary schools had not introduced all pupils to school by the Census date, so, although counted in the enrolment figures, the numbers taking a school meal may be lower than if collected later in the year.
- 5 Reception and Primary 1 pupils in some schools only attend for a half-day session until the end of October which may not include time for a midday meal.

Free School Meals

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what percentage of pupils in post-primary schools in the controlled sector, in each of the last four years (i) received; and (ii) qualified for free school meals.
(AQW 4582/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WHO RECEIVED AND QUALIFIED FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN CONTROLLED POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2007/08 – 2010/11

Year	Controlled Post-primary (excluding Controlled Integrated)		Controlled Integrated Post- primary		Total Controlled post-primary	
	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified
2007/08	9.9	14.6	13.1	22.0	10.1	15.0
2008/09	9.6	14.1	13.2	18.6	9.7	14.3
2009/10	10.3	15.2	8.8	20.0	10.2	15.4
2010/11	11.1	15.9	12.0	20.5	11.2	16.2

Source: NI school census and NI school meals census

Note:

- 1 The number of children taking school meals varies from week to week. Information collected annually from the School Meals Census provides a snapshot of the numbers receiving meals on the day on which census information is gathered. The information presented in the table under the heading of “received” therefore includes only those children who received a school meal on that day.

Free School Meals

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what percentage of pupils in post- primary schools in the maintained sector, in each of the last four years (i) received; and (ii) qualified for free school meals.
(AQW 4583/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WHO RECEIVED AND QUALIFIED FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN MAINTAINED POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2007/08 – 2010/11

Year	Catholic Maintained post-primary		Other Maintained post-primary		Total Maintained post-primary	
	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified	% received	% qualified
2007/08	24.1	30.5	25.9	39.5	24.1	30.6
2008/09	22.4	29.8	24.0	35.3	22.4	29.9
2009/10	24.3	30.8	20.1	32.6	24.2	30.8
2010/11	24.5	31.1	27.1	33.1	24.5	31.2

Source: NI school census and NI school meals census

Note:

- 1 The number of children taking school meals varies from week to week. Information collected annually from the School Meals Census provides a snapshot of the numbers receiving meals on the day on which census information is gathered. The information presented in the table under the heading of “received” therefore includes only those children who received a school meal on that day.

Free School Meals

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last four years, what percentage of pupils, with five GCSEs or less, in post-primary schools in the controlled sector (i) received; and (ii) qualified for free school meals, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 4584/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Department does not hold information on the uptake of free school meals in any pupil level examination dataset that would be required to answer part (i) of the question. Therefore this information is unavailable.

The answer to part (ii) is in the tables below.

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE CONTROLLED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSEs A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2006/07

	Controlled		Controlled Integrated		Total Controlled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	#	#	*	*	40	40.8
Belfast North	33	37.5	0	0	33	37.1
Belfast South	26	48.1	0	0	26	47.3
Belfast West	23	41.8	0	0	23	41.8
East Antrim	27	30.0	0	0	27	30.0
East Derry	17	25.0	0	0	17	25.0
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	25	22.9	0	0	25	22.9
Foyle	44	30.6	0	0	44	30.6
Lagan Valley	#	#	*	*	26	44.1

	Controlled		Controlled Integrated		Total Controlled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mid Ulster	14	33.3	0	0	14	33.3
Newry And Armagh	12	34.3	0	0	12	34.3
North Antrim	35	28.0	0	0	35	28.0
North Down	14	25.5	7	58.3	21	31.3
South Antrim	20	24.4	0	0.0	20	21.3
South Down	9	27.3	5	83.3	14	35.9
Strangford	#	#	*	*	18	23.1
Upper Bann	19	33.3	8	33.3	27	33.3
West Tyrone	29	56.9	0	0.0	29	56.9
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	10	30.3	0	0.0	10	29.4
Total	434	32.4	27	36.5	461	32.6

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE CONTROLLED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSEs A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2007/08

	Controlled		Controlled Integrated		Total Controlled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	#	#	*	*	32	28.3
Belfast North	35	35.4	0	0.0	35	35.4
Belfast South	18	34.6	0	0.0	18	34.6
Belfast West	9	25.7	0	0.0	9	25.7
East Antrim	20	29.4	0	0.0	20	29.4
East Derry	16	26.7	0	0.0	16	26.7
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	14	16.5	0	0.0	14	16.5
Foyle	24	35.3	0	0.0	24	35.3
Lagan Valley	#	#	*	*	17	25.8
Mid Ulster	14	15.7	0	0.0	14	15.7
Newry And Armagh	#	#	*	*	11	28.2
North Antrim	41	37.6	0	0.0	41	37.6
North Down	17	26.2	*	*	20	27.8
South Antrim	15	23.1	0	0.0	15	21.7
South Down	*	*	0	0.0	*	*
Strangford	15	19.7	0	0.0	15	19.7

	Controlled		Controlled Integrated		Total Controlled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Upper Bann	21	29.2	10	66.7	31	35.6
West Tyrone	14	37.8	0	0.0	14	37.8
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	#	#	*	*	11	44.0
Total	342	27.7	19	47.5	361	28.4

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE CONTROLLED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSES A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2008/09

	Controlled		Controlled Integrated		Total Controlled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	#	#	*	*	34	40.0
Belfast North	25	27.8	0	0.0	25	27.8
Belfast South	13	33.3	0	0.0	13	33.3
Belfast West	17	39.5	0	0.0	17	39.5
East Antrim	23	31.9	0	0.0	23	31.9
East Derry	26	49.1	0	0.0	26	49.1
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	11	19.3	0	0.0	11	19.3
Foyle	24	33.8	0	0.0	24	33.8
Lagan Valley	#	#	*	*	10	27.8
Mid Ulster	11	15.9	0	0.0	11	15.9
Newry And Armagh	6	18.8	0	0.0	6	18.8
North Antrim	22	27.2	0	0.0	22	27.2
North Down	10	31.3	0	0.0	10	27.0
South Antrim	16	22.2	0	0.0	16	19.5
South Down	5	31.3	0	0.0	5	31.3
Strangford	14	35.9	0	0.0	14	35.9
Upper Bann	#	#	*	*	26	44.1
West Tyrone	7	38.9	0	0.0	7	38.9
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	9	36.0	0	0.0	9	34.6
Total	301	31.0	8	23.5	309	30.7

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE CONTROLLED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSES A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2009/10

	Controlled		Controlled Integrated		Total Controlled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	#	#	*	*	30	31.9
Belfast North	25	41.0	0	0	25	41.0
Belfast South	18	40.9	0	0	18	40.0
Belfast West	8	47.1	0	0	8	47.1
East Antrim	10	18.9	0	0	10	18.9
East Derry	14	36.8	0	0	14	36.8
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	7	46.7	0	0	7	46.7
Foyle	7	43.8	0	0	7	43.8
Lagan Valley	#	#	*	*	13	28.9
Mid Ulster	10	34.5	0	0	10	34.5
Newry And Armagh	7	33.3	0	0	7	33.3
North Antrim	18	28.1	0	0	18	27.3
North Down	6	17.1	*	*	#	#
South Antrim	*	*	#	#	12	21.1
South Down	7	38.9	0	0.0	7	38.9
Strangford	12	26.1	0	0.0	12	26.1
Upper Bann	#	#	*	*	17	30.9
West Tyrone	8	40.0	0	0.0	8	40.0
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	*	*	0	0.0	*	*
Total	219	31.8	15	26.8	234	31.5

Source: School Leavers Survey

* Denotes fewer than 5 pupils

Figure greater or equal to 5 has been treated to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Free School Meals

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last four years, what percentage of pupils, with five GCSEs or less, in post-primary schools in the maintained sector (i) received; and (ii) qualified for free school meals, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 4585/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold information on the uptake of free school meals in any pupil level examination dataset that would be required to answer part (i) of the question. Therefore this information is unavailable.

The answer to part (ii) is contained in the tables below.

Number and percentage of school leavers entitled to free school meals as a proportion of all school leavers in the maintained sector with fewer than 5 GCSEs A*-G (inc. equivalents), by parliamentary constituency of pupil residence 2006/07

	Catholic Maintained		Other Maintained		Total Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	10	90.9	0	0	10	83.3
Belfast North	39	43.8	0	0	39	43.3
Belfast South	17	70.8	0	0	17	70.8
Belfast West	#	#	*	*	75	46.3
East Antrim	*	*	0	0	*	*
East Derry	15	28.3	0	0	15	28.3
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	20	33.9	0	0	20	33.9
Foyle	125	66.5	0	0	125	66.5
Lagan Valley	5	38.5	0	0	5	38.5
Mid Ulster	29	37.2	0	0	29	37.2
Newry And Armagh	51	47.2	0	0	51	47.2
North Antrim	9	52.9	0	0	9	52.9
North Down	*	*	0	0	*	*
South Antrim	8	23.5	0	0	8	22.9
South Down	40	32.5	0	0	40	32.5
Strangford	*	*	0	0	*	*
Upper Bann	26	34.2	0	0	26	34.2
West Tyrone	46	46.9	0	0	46	46.9
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	27	45.0	0	0	27	45.0
Total	#	#	*	*	546	44.8

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE MAINTAINED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSEs A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2007/08

	Catholic Maintained		Other Maintained		Total Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	6	75.0	0	0	6	75.0
Belfast North	#	#	*	*	22	45.8
Belfast South	13	81.3	0	0	13	81.3
Belfast West	70	42.2	5	50	75	42.6
East Antrim	*	*	0	0	*	*
East Derry	25	50.0	0	0	25	50.0

	Catholic Maintained		Other Maintained		Total Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	21	34.4	0	0	21	34.4
Foyle	85	58.6	0	0	85	58.6
Lagan Valley	*	*	0	0	*	*
Mid Ulster	*	*	0	0	*	*
Newry And Armagh	30	37.5	0	0	30	37.5
North Antrim	47	48.0	0	0	47	48.0
North Down	*	*	0	0	*	*
South Antrim	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
South Down	5	33.3	0	0	5	33.3
Strangford	27	24.8	0	0	27	24.8
Upper Bann	*	*	0	0	*	*
West Tyrone	24	52.2	0	0	24	52.2
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	18	37.5	0	0	18	37.5
Total	#	#	#	#	410	43.2

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE MAINTAINED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSES A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2008/09

	Catholic Maintained		Other Maintained		Total Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	*	*	0	0.0	*	*
Belfast North	#	#	*	*	14	33.3
Belfast South	8	44.4	0	0.0	8	44.4
Belfast West	#	#	*	*	48	41.7
East Antrim	*	*	0	0.0	*	*
East Derry	8	40.0	0	0.0	8	40.0
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	12	40.0	0	0.0	12	40.0
Foyle	101	68.7	0	0.0	101	68.7
Lagan Valley	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mid Ulster	*	*	0	0.0	*	*
Newry And Armagh	22	37.3	0	0.0	22	37.3
North Antrim	41	40.2	0	0.0	41	40.2
North Down	9	40.9	0	0.0	9	40.9
South Antrim	*	*	0	0.0	*	*

	Catholic Maintained		Other Maintained		Total Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
South Down	8	29.6	0	0.0	8	29.6
Strangford	36	50.0	0	0.0	36	50.0
Upper Bann	*	*	0	0.0	*	*
West Tyrone	31	39.7	0	0.0	31	39.7
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	10	38.5	0	0.0	10	38.5
Total	#	#	*	*	360	45.0

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE MAINTAINED SECTOR WITH FEWER THAN 5 GCSES A*-G (INC. EQUIVALENTS), BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF PUPIL RESIDENCE 2009/10

	Catholic Maintained		Other Maintained		Total Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belfast East	*	*	*	*	*	*
Belfast North	#	#	*	*	29	63.0
Belfast South	7	46.7	0	0	7	46.7
Belfast West	#	#	*	*	53	41.7
East Antrim	*	*	0	0	*	*
East Derry	9	40.9	0	0	9	40.9
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	13	40.6	0	0	13	40.6
Foyle	60	65.2	0	0	60	65.2
Lagan Valley	*	*	0	0	*	*
Mid Ulster	21	45.7	0	0	21	45.7
Newry And Armagh	45	46.9	0	0	45	46.9
North Antrim	*	*	0	0	*	*
North Down	*	*	0	0	*	*
South Antrim	6	23.1	0	0	6	23.1
South Down	28	48.3	0	0	28	48.3
Strangford	*	*	0	0	*	*
Upper Bann	15	38.5	0	0	15	38.5
West Tyrone	23	32.9	0	0	23	32.9
Missing/Invalid Postcodes	8	47.1	0	0	8	47.1
Total	#	#	*	*	330	44.8

Source: School Leavers Survey

* Denotes fewer than 5 pupils

Figure greater or equal to 5 has been treated to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Child Psychologists

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education how many (i) full-time; and (ii) part-time child psychologists are currently employed by his Department.

(AQW 4586/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education is not the employing authority for Educational Psychologists. However, a total of 151 Educational Psychologists are currently employed by the 5 Education and Library Boards, ie (i) 84 full time and (ii) 67 part time.

Home-To-School Transport Policy

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the Home-To-School Transport Policy for pupils with learning difficulties; and (ii) whether these pupils lose transport provision once they reach 18 years old.

(AQW 4618/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The arrangements for transporting pupils with learning difficulties and who are in possession of a statement of special education needs are set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of Departmental Circular 1996/41 (updated September 2009). The Circular is available on the Department of Education's website.

The arrangements indicate that where an Education and Library Board maintains a statement of special education needs of a pupil under Article 16 of the Education (NI) Order 1996, the decisions about that pupil's placement, including his or her entitlement to free home to school transport, will have been made by the Board. The general arrangements made for other pupils may not, therefore, apply in the case of a statemented pupil. The Circular also states that placements for such pupils, and any transport assistance provided, are subject to the efficient use of resources.

Pupils qualifying for this transport assistance do not lose it once they turn 18. The final year in which assistance with school transport is provided is that in which the pupil reaches the age of nineteen years. The year begins on 2nd July and ends on the succeeding 1st July.

Maintained Sector

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education whether the Catholic Church places any additional requirements on applicants seeking to work in the maintained sector in comparison with the current state requirements to work in the controlled sector.

(AQW 4629/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Catholic Church does not employ staff within maintained schools.

The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school here. CCMS have approved a number of providers, based upon the nature of the syllabi and content of the particular course, for student and qualified teachers to access Certificate in Religious Education, including St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College, Iona Retreat Centre and a Life-light Home Study Course.

My Department is currently engaged in a review to assess the impact of the requirement of a religious certificate on current and future recruitment opportunities in the teaching sector, including any course accessibility issues. It is anticipated the review will be finalised in 2011 and its outcome will be shared with the Education Committee.

There are no additional requirements on those applying for non teaching posts in Catholic Maintained schools.

Cross Border Co-operation within the Education System

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to detail the level, and to give some examples, of cross border co-operation within the education system.

(AQW 4665/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In recent years much excellent work has been carried out on an cross-border basis in the education sector.

Part 1 of a comprehensive study on North/South co-operation in the education sector has been agreed and finalised by the Department of Education and the Department of Education and Skills.

The two departments will commence Part 2 of the report and will identify areas with the potential for future practical co-operation.

I will arrange for a copy of Part 1 of the report to be placed in the Assembly Library.

South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of days the South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners have met in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4685/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board's standing orders require that the Commissioners should meet as a group on at least 6 occasions per year. The Board has advised that, since their appointment in July 2006, the Commissioners have held meetings as follows:

2006 – 6 meetings

2007 – 12 meetings

2008 – 10 meetings

2009 – 11 meetings

2010 – 10 meetings

2011 – 10 meetings up to October

These meetings generally extend over 2 days.

The numbers quoted above do not include other meetings which Commissioners attend individually in the course of exercising their responsibilities.

South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what is the current daily rate of pay of the South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners.

(AQW 4691/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners are paid at a daily rate of £500.

South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) travel costs; and (ii) accommodation expenses of the South Eastern Education and Library Board Commissioners in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4693/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised me that the Commissioners' travel costs and accommodation expenses were as follows:

Financial Year	Travel	Accommodation
2006/07	£4,447	£ 850
2007/08	£8,195	£1,266
2008/09	£4,909	£1,258
2009/10	£5,994	£1,324
2010/11	£4,727	£ 280
2011/12	£2,251	£ 0

Education and Skills Authority

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail the ‘assets and liabilities’ of (i) the Education and Library Boards; (ii) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (iii) the Staff Commission; and (iv) the Youth Council, which the Education and Skills Authority will ‘subsume’, according to the Statement on the ‘Heads of Agreement’ made by the First and deputy First Minister on 16 November 2011.

(AQW 4720/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The assets and liabilities of education organisations are set out in their respective resource accounts, copies of which are available from the Assembly Library.

In relation to the Education and Library Boards, Staff Commission, and Youth Council, my intention is that all of the assets and liabilities of those organisations will be transferred to the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) on the appointed day, that is, the day on which the ESA is established.

Certain assets of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) were paid for by the Catholic Church. Those assets will be transferred by my Department to the Church prior to the appointed day. The remainder of the assets and liabilities of CCMS will be transferred to the ESA on the appointed day.

Development and Promotion of Sports

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail the funding his Department has provided for the development and promotion of (i) rugby; (ii) soccer; (iii) Gaelic games; and (iv) motor sports in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4737/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: Funding for sport would fall under the remit of the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure. My Department has not provided funding specifically for the development and promotion of rugby, soccer, gaelic games or motor sports in the last three years.

The Department has provided funding for the Curriculum Sports Programme which is delivered by the Irish Football Association and the Gaelic Athletics Association. However, this programme does not focus on the skills associated with either soccer or gaelic games, but aims to develop the generic physical literacy skills of our youngest pupils. A total of £1.5m per year has been made available for this programme in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Schools may of course use other funding from the Department that is delegated to them under the Local Management of Schools arrangements for such sports but the Department does not hold this level of detail.

Most Deprived Wards

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list the 10 percent most deprived wards; and what percentage of children in post-primary schools living in these wards attend a grammar school.

(AQW 4757/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE POST-PRIMARY PUPILS RESIDENT IN THE 10 PERCENT MOST DEPRIVED WARDS WHO ATTENDED GRAMMAR SCHOOLS IN 2010/11

Ward Name	% pupils attending grammar schools
Ardoyne	21.4
Ballee	13.9
Ballybot	29.9
Ballycolman	10.1
Ballymacarrett	8.4
Ballymote	19.6
Beechmount	21.3
Blackstaff	15.3
Brandywell	26.5
Callan Bridge	15.8
Carn Hill	34.7
Castlederg	37.8
Central (Coleraine)	37.2
Clonard	18.4
Coalisland South	38.3
Collin Glen	14.1
Coole	13.5
Coolessan	20.2
Court	18.8
Creggan Central	23.2
Creggan South	23.2
Cross Glebe	28.6
Crossmaglen	32.6
Crumlin (Belfast)	9.4
Daisy Hill	28.8
Devenish	24.0
Drumgask	4.9
Drumnamoe	23.5
Dunanney	7.8
Duncairn	14.8
East	14.1

Ward Name	% pupils attending grammar schools
Falls	11.0
Farranshane	22.8
Glen Road	34.7
Glencairn	13.6
Glencolin	22.4
Greystone (Limavady)	17.6
Legoniel	24.3
New Lodge	9.5
Northland	14.0
Old Warren	12.4
Rosemount	26.5
Shaftesbury	17.8
Shankill	6.2
Shantallow East	28.8
Shantallow West	36.6
Strand (Derry)	34.4
Sunnylands	24.1
The Diamond	30.1
The Mount	13.4
Twinbrook	15.8
Upper Springfield	18.4
Victoria (Derry)	35.0
Water Works	16.7
Westland	27.6
Whiterock	13.2
Woodstock	13.3
Woodvale	7.2

Source: NI school census

Note:

- 1 The deprivation ranking of wards is based on the Multiple Deprivation Measure rankings outlined in the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 report published in May 2010.

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Least Deprived Wards

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list the 10 percent least deprived of wards; and what percentage of children in post-primary schools living in these wards attend a grammar school.

(AQW 4758/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE POST-PRIMARY PUPILS RESIDENT IN THE 10 PERCENT LEAST DEPRIVED WARDS WHO ATTENDED GRAMMAR SCHOOLS IN 2010/11

Ward Name	% pupils attending grammar schools
Ardeevin	57.4
Ballycrochan	64.5
Ballydown	49.3
Ballyhanwood	67.4
Ballyholme	84.5
Ballyloughan	65.3
Ballymacash	71.3
Ballymaconnell	61.4
Ballynure	57.8
Ballyrobert	44.8
Bluefield	55.8
Boneybefore	44.8
Broadway	71.7
Bryansburn	66.1
Burleigh Hill	51.3
Cairnshill	70.4
Carncastle	42.6
Carryduff West	77.9
Cherryvalley	70.9
Collinbridge	60.2
Comber West	67.4
Craigavad	88.6
Crawfordsburn	86.9
Cultra	88.6
Doagh	52.3
Drumbo	81.5
Dundonald	56.0
Finaghy	76.1

Ward Name	% pupils attending grammar schools
Galgorm	71.2
Galwally	76.7
Gilnahirk	82.5
Hillfoot	77.0
Hillsborough	77.4
Hollywood Priory	83.2
Jordanstown	71.2
Knockagh	76.4
Knockbracken	76.5
Knocklynn	70.4
Lisbane	74.7
Lisnagarvy	55.1
Magheralave	64.0
Magheralin	52.8
Mallusk	54.3
Malone	96.3
Moirra	67.0
Moneyreagh	75.3
Movilla	56.2
Princetown	86.1
Saintfield	70.2
Spring Hill	53.0
Stormont	86.9
Strand (Coleraine)	79.4
Stranmillis	95.6
Templepatrick	84.8
Wallace Park	73.1
Waringstown	50.1
Waterside	79.3
Whitespots	59.6

Source: NI school census

Note:

- The deprivation ranking of wards is based on the Multiple Deprivation Measure rankings outlined in the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 report published in May 2010.

Pupils from Ballymoney

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what percentage of pupils living in each ward in Ballymoney attends a grammar school.

(AQW 4759/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE OF POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS RESIDENT IN BALLYMONEY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA WHO ATTENDED GRAMMAR SCHOOLS IN 2010/11

Ward Name	% pupils attending grammar school
Ballyhoe And Corkey	26.4
Benvardin	41.3
Carnary	48.5
Clogh Mills	48.5
Dervock	59.6
Dunloy	53.1
Fairhill	39.7
Glebe (Ballymoney)	56.6
Killoquin Lower	41.8
Killoquin Upper	33.1
Knockaholet	39.1
Newhill	30.3
Route	62.1
Seacon	47.8
Stranocum	32.3
The Vow	48.4

Source: NI school census

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education (i) why, as part of the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority, sectoral support bodies will be created for the controlled and maintained sectors, but will not be created for the integrated sector; and (ii) what are the proposed roles and functions of a Trustee Support Body for (a) Catholic schools; and (b) the controlled sector.

(AQW 4761/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) will continue to be the representative body for the integrated sector. The roles of all sectoral bodies will be determined following examination of business cases by my Department.

Lisanelly Shared Education Campus, Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed education campus at the Lisanelly site in Omagh.

(AQO 800/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Can I say from the outset that I believe the Lisanelly Campus provides the people of Omagh with a unique opportunity to lead the way in developing a new shared state-of-the-art campus capable of servicing the needs of all its young people for generations to come.

The Executive also see the potential of this project and for that reason it has been included as a priority in the Draft Programme for Government.

In April this year the Lisanelly site transferred into the ownership of the Department of Education which represents a significant step towards this project becoming a reality.

A Master Plan has been produced and approved by my Department and exemplar designs are nearing completion.

This has helped to bring the project to life for the pupils, parents, teachers and the wider community. It provides a better understanding of what a shared education campus might look like. What could be achieved and the facilities that could be provided to meet the needs of all young people in Omagh and surrounding areas.

These designs have been the subject of extensive public consultation and feedback from the community has been very positive, particularly from the young people.

This project, like every other potential project, must be considered within the context of the needs of the area identified through the area plan.

While the current financial climate is challenging I am committed to progressing with the full exploration of the potential of a shared education campus at Omagh.

Schools: Viability Audit

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education what steps have been taken to ensure that the viability audit of schools is rural proofed.

(AQO 798/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The viability audit includes all primary and post-primary schools and focuses on enrolments, quality of education and financial stability. The purpose is to identify those schools facing significant challenges in remaining educationally viable, to identify the root causes of the problems, and to present proposals to protect the education of their pupils.

The Sustainable Schools Policy is the Department's framework for assessing the viability and long term sustainability of schools. The policy addresses the issue of rural schools and it was rural-proofed before publication in 2009. The viability audit draws on the relevant criteria and indicators set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy.

The viability audit is only the first step in the move to the more strategic, area based approach to planning the schools estate. It is necessary in order to develop the effective, sustainable and affordable pattern of schools we need to provide the broad and balanced curriculum that pupils need and deserve.

Schools: Vocational Education

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to ensure that the post primary schools which are best placed to offer pupils vocational education, are maintained in regional towns.
(AQO 799/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My focus is to provide all our pupils with access to the highest quality education possible rather than focusing on individual institutions.

The Area Planning process I have commissioned will result in an effectively planned, sustainable and affordable pattern of schools here. This will ensure that we have the right type and size of schools, in the right places, to meet the needs of our pupils and young people.

In addition, my Department's Entitlement Framework guarantees equality of access for all young people to a broad, balanced and more economically relevant curriculum. They will have access to at least 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 courses post-16. Regardless of the school which a young person attends or where they live.

Special Schools: Viability Audit

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education why Special Needs Schools have not been included in the schools audit.

(AQO 801/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The schools viability audit key criteria are enrolments, standards and financial viability as outlined in the Sustainable Schools Policy.

Special Needs Schools are not covered by the Sustainable Schools Policy. However, Special Needs Schools will be included as part of the long-term Area Planning Process.

Teachers: Redundancies

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have been made redundant since June 2010.

(AQO 802/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 568 teachers have been made redundant since June 2010. Over 95% of these were voluntary redundancies.

Newly Qualified Teachers

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the impact of the measures taken by his Department to maximise the employment opportunities for newly qualified teachers.

(AQO 803/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has repeatedly urged employers to give preference to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) when filling vacancies, including those of a temporary nature.

From September 2010 my Department has monitored the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers on a monthly basis. Schools and employing authorities are routinely challenged when such employment occurs, and an explanation sought as to why such teachers are being re-employed in preference to NQTs or other non-retired teachers. From September 2011 my Department has introduced a flat rate of pay, based on the salary levels applicable to NQTs, for prematurely retired teachers who return to teaching, and made complementary amendments to the Common Funding Scheme for the Local Management of Schools (LMS), which will encourage schools to give preference to newly or recently qualified teachers.

It is too early at present to make an assessment of the impact of these measures. However, my Department will assess the effectiveness of these measures at the end of the current academic year and annually thereafter.

Education and Library Boards: Ministerial Meetings

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education how many meetings he has had with the Chief Executives of each of the Education and Library Boards since taking up office.

(AQO 804/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since taking up office, I have met with each of the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards once.

Each Chief Executive is designated as the Board's Accounting Officer and is personally accountable to the Department's Accounting Officer (the Permanent Secretary) for safeguarding the public funds for

which he/she has charge; for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for the day to day operation of the Board.

The Permanent Secretary meets Chief Executives of the Boards on a regular basis.

I have also met with the Chairpersons of each of the Boards. They are accountable to me as Minister, their key role being to provide leadership and good governance, and to ensure that Boards deliver the policies set by me.

Schools: Budget

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to re-profile the education budget, especially in relation to the Aggregated Schools Budget.

(AQO 805/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Following decisions on Budget 2010, which present major challenges for education over the period to 2014-15, my predecessor formulated a Savings Delivery Plan to realise the significant savings required. The intention was to protect front-line services as much as possible. Because of the scale of the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) it was impossible to protect it totally and the Savings Delivery Plan predicated savings of £27m / £85m / £114m / £180m. I have been conscious of the challenge this will pose for Boards of Governors under the Local Management of Schools framework. I have looked again at the ASB and have reallocated £10m / £15m / £15m into the schools budget over the next three years. I am however not relenting on exploring the scope for further savings and have asked officials to carry out a review right across the education budget with the primary focus being to deliver additional funding for the classroom to benefit our children and young people. I will continue to argue the case for further investment in the future to help alleviate pressures on the education budget.

Preschool Provision

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Education how many children benefit from free pre-school provision.

(AQO 806/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the time of the 2010 Schools Census there were 22,504 children in funded pre-school places available across the north of Ireland; 14,408 in statutory nursery schools and units attached to primary schools; and 7599 in settings in the voluntary/private sector; and 497 in Reception classes in primary schools.

These numbers have increased in 2011/12 to over 23,000 children, and will be detailed in the 2011 Schools Census which took place on 7 October 2011 and which will be published in February 2012.

Institutional Child Abuse

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education what role his Department will play in the forthcoming inquiry into institutional child abuse.

(AQO 807/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I welcome the decision by the Executive to proceed with an inquiry into historical institutional abuse as soon as possible.

The Department of Education was actively involved at senior level on the interdepartmental Taskforce, which was set up to consider the nature of the inquiry and bring forward recommendations to the Executive. My Department will work closely with other departments to move forward with establishing the inquiry and will assist and co-operate with the inquiry, when established, in any way it can.

I understand preparations are underway through the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and my Department will respond positively to any request for assistance in supporting the work of the inquiry.

Department for Employment and Learning

Regional Colleges: Religious Balance of Students

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the current religious balance of students in each of the six Regional Colleges.

(AQW 4023/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Professional and Technical enrolments by religious background in the Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges for the 2009/10 academic year are detailed in the Annex attached.

FE College	Catholic	Protestant	Other/No Religion	Total Known	Not Stated/ Not Known
Belfast Metropolitan	13,198 (47%)	11,622 (41%)	3,547 (13%)	28,367 (100%)	14,200
Northern Regional	5,732 (31%)	10,992 (60%)	1,482 (8%)	18,206 (100%)	3,448
South Eastern	5,301 (28%)	11,137 (60%)	2,216 (12%)	18,654 (100%)	7,390
Southern Regional	14,702 (58%)	8,771 (35%)	1,696 (7%)	25,169 (100%)	7,670
South West	9,231 (69%)	3,594 (27%)	624 (5%)	13,449 (100%)	6,556
North West	12,564 (76%)	3,572 (22%)	350 (2%)	16,486 (100%)	3,755
Total	60,728 (50%)	49,688 (41%)	9,915 (8%)	120,331 (100%)	43,019

Source: Further Educational Statistical Record

Notes:

- 1 The percentages stated in brackets relate to row proportions i.e. make-up within each college and exclude those enrolments where it is not stated or not known. They may not add to 100% due to rounding.
- 2 It should be noted that a sizeable proportion of those enrolling with FE colleges in Northern Ireland do not disclose their community background.
- 3 The latest available full-year data are for the 2009/10 academic year.

Step Ahead Employment Initiative

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact of the Step Ahead employment initiative being halted.

(AQW 4051/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is regrettable that it has been necessary to introduce a pause on recruitment to the Step Ahead strand of the Steps to Work (StW) programme. When the then Minister, Sir Reg Empey, initially introduced Step Ahead in September 2009 it was announced that it was a temporary initiative for a two year period. In view of the ongoing economic situation I would have wished to have been in a position

to continue with the Step Ahead initiative but regrettably the funding was not available to enable me to do so.

The pause in recruitment will delay access to Step Ahead opportunities both for jobseekers and voluntary and community sector organisations offering temporary employment. Any adverse impact of the pause in recruitment will be mitigated by the fact that those jobseekers who can no longer avail of Step Ahead will be eligible for support through the full range of provision on the Steps to Work programme. This includes work experience placements, training opportunities, help with the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, assistance for those seeking to enter self-employment and mentoring.

Similarly, participating organisations within the voluntary and community sector will be able to offer work experience opportunities, within the Steps to Work programme, to anyone interested in gaining work experience within their sector.

Should additional resources become available later this year I would intend to restart recruitment to Step Ahead, though this may be on a more selective and targeted basis.

I would also wish to advise you that my Department is seeking funds from other sources for a variant of Step Ahead which would aim to assist young unemployed, those affected by the re-assessment of Incapacity Benefit and lone parents affected by changes in benefit regulations.

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry Regeneration Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, with regard to Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme, to detail (i) the funds from his current budget that have been committed to projects under this programme; (ii) the projects that are being funded; and (iii) the start dates for these projects.

(AQW 4138/11-15)

Dr Farry: The following European Social Fund project is receiving funding under the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme:

Project Name	Start & Finish date	ESF	DEL	Other Match	Total
Triax Derry 2020	1/4/11 – 31/3/14	£990,587	£619,118	£866,763	£2,476,468

Stranmillis University College's Annual Income

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what percentage of Stranmillis University College's annual income comes from his Department; and what percentage comes from earned sources.

(AQW 4225/11-15)

Dr Farry: Stranmillis University College has informed me that based on its last published financial statements (2010), 54% of non-capital annual income was provided by the Department and 19% related to earned sources.

Learning and Teaching Areas at St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much was spent on enhancing or refurbishing the learning and teaching areas at (i) St Mary's University College; and (ii) Stranmillis University College, Belfast, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4320/11-15)

Dr Farry: The university colleges have informed me that the amount spent in the last three academic years on enhancing or refurbishing their learning and teaching areas is as shown in the table below;

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
St Mary's University College	£58,557	£501,555	£523,494	£1,083,606
Stranmillis University College	£382,297	£969,694	£599,161	£1,951,152

Students Studying Psychology

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students (i) are currently studying Psychology at university; and (ii) have graduated from a Psychology course in each of the last five years, broken by down (a) university; and (b) constituency where the student resides.

(AQW 4341/11-15)

Dr Farry: The numbers of Psychology students that enrolled and qualified from Northern Ireland (NI) Higher Education Institutions in each of the last five years, broken down by Higher Education Institution and Parliamentary Constituency Area are provided in the attached tables at the annexes.

ANNEX 1 ENROLMENTS ON PSYCHOLOGY COURSES AT NI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FROM 2005/06 TO 2009/10 BROKEN DOWN BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Parliamentary Constituency Area	2005/06			2006/07			2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total
Belfast East	35	10	50	30	10	40	20	10	30	25	5	30	30	10	35
Belfast North	30	30	60	25	25	45	20	20	40	20	15	35	15	10	25
Belfast South	115	25	135	75	15	90	35	15	50	40	10	55	55	15	70
Belfast West	50	30	75	40	30	70	25	25	50	25	20	50	30	25	55
East Antrim	30	30	60	30	25	55	20	25	45	15	20	35	15	25	45
East Londonderry	15	100	115	15	95	115	10	90	100	10	85	95	15	105	120
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	30	30	65	35	25	60	25	25	50	25	20	45	20	25	50
Foyle	25	160	180	25	150	175	25	130	160	30	120	145	35	130	165
Lagan Valley	50	25	80	45	35	80	55	40	95	60	40	100	50	50	95
Mid Ulster	30	40	70	30	40	65	35	45	75	30	35	65	35	50	85
Newry and Armagh	40	45	85	45	40	90	45	35	75	35	35	70	30	35	65
North Antrim	20	70	90	20	75	95	20	75	95	15	70	85	20	70	90
North Down	45	20	60	35	20	55	30	20	50	35	15	50	25	15	40
South Antrim	40	45	80	45	35	80	40	35	70	45	25	70	35	25	60

	2005/06			2006/07			2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total
Parliamentary Constituency Area															
South Down	35	25	60	30	25	55	35	25	55	35	20	55	35	20	50
Strangford	50	20	70	35	20	55	30	20	50	35	15	50	40	15	60
Upper Bann	35	35	70	40	25	65	35	35	70	35	35	70	40	30	70
West Tyrone	25	50	75	35	60	95	25	60	85	20	55	75	20	60	80
Ni Domiciled Enrolments With Unknown Postcodes	0	0	0	25	0	25	5	10	15	5	25	25	0	20	20
Non Ni Domiciled Enrolments	75	155	230	70	140	205	70	135	205	55	115	175	60	115	175
Total	780	940	1,720	730	885	1,615	610	860	1,470	590	790	1,380	610	850	1,460

ANNEX 2 QUALIFIERS FROM PSYCHOLOGY COURSES AT NI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FROM 2005/06 TO 2009/10 BROKEN DOWN BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Parliamentary Constituency Area	2005/06			2006/07			2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total
Belfast East	5	0	5	5	0	10	5	5	10	5	5	10	10	0	10
Belfast North	0	10	10	5	5	10	10	5	10	5	5	15	0	0	5
Belfast South	15	5	20	15	5	20	10	5	15	10	0	10	15	5	15
Belfast West	10	5	20	10	5	15	10	10	20	5	5	15	5	10	15
East Antrim	5	5	10	10	5	15	10	15	25	5	5	10	5	5	5
East Londonderry	5	15	20	5	20	20	10	25	30	5	25	30	0	25	25
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5	5	15	10	5	15	5	5	15	10	5	15	5	5	10
Foyle	5	30	35	5	40	45	5	30	35	10	35	40	10	35	45
Lagan Valley	10	5	15	10	5	15	15	10	25	10	5	15	20	15	35
Mid Ulster	5	10	15	10	10	15	10	10	20	5	10	10	15	15	25
Newry and Armagh	5	10	15	10	15	25	10	10	20	10	10	20	15	10	20
North Antrim	5	20	25	5	10	15	10	20	30	5	30	30	5	15	20
North Down	5	5	10	10	5	15	10	5	15	10	5	15	10	5	15
South Antrim	5	10	15	10	5	15	10	10	20	20	10	30	10	10	20

Parliamentary Constituency Area	2005/06			2006/07			2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Total
South Down	10	10	15	10	5	15	5	5	10	15	10	25	10	5	15
Strangford	10	0	10	10	5	15	10	10	20	5	0	5	10	5	15
Upper Bann	10	15	25	10	5	15	10	5	15	10	10	20	10	10	20
West Tyrone	5	5	10	10	10	20	10	20	30	10	10	20	5	20	20
Ni Domiciled Qualifiers With Unknown Postcodes	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	0	5
Non Ni Domiciled Qualifiers	10	45	60	25	30	55	30	55	80	15	45	65	20	40	60
Total	130	215	345	175	200	375	195	260	455	170	230	400	175	225	405

Sources: Higher Education Statistics Agency and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (for Parliamentary Constituency analysis).

Notes:

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2009/10.
- (3) Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and therefore may not sum to totals. Religious Background of Students

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide a breakdown of the religious background of students at university in the last term of the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQW 4432/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information by term is not available from the Higher Education datasets that are held by the Department and the latest year available relates to the 2009/10 academic year.

The religious background of Northern Ireland domiciled students at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2009/10 is detailed in the table overleaf. These figures exclude the religious background of students from Northern Ireland who attend University in Great Britain as this information is not collected by those institutions.

Religious Background	Enrolments	% of known enrolments
Protestant	14,415	38%
Catholic	20,995	56%
Other	2,270	6%
Total Known	37,680	100%
Not Known	5,990	

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- (4) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (5) Information on religion is only collected for NI domiciled students studying at NI HEIs and therefore the above tables do not include students from outside NI.
- (6) It should be noted that it is not mandatory to disclose religious background when enrolling with HEIs in Northern Ireland and therefore religious affiliation can have a high non-response rate.

European Social Fund Programme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) how much funding his Department has received from the European Social Fund Programme since 2007; (ii) how much of this funding was spent on (a) Higher Education Institutions; (b) Further Education Colleges; and (c) Essential Skills Schemes; (iii) how much funding his Department is due to receive under the Programme by 2013; and (iv) where his Department will allocate this funding.

(AQW 4451/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Northern Ireland European Social Fund (ESF) Programme 2007-2013 was allocated €165,770,300 of ESF assistance by the European Commission, of which €45,742,494, equating to £38,527,938, has been received to date. The amount of ESF support offered to project applicants includes: £195,794 offered to a University, and £2,194,477 offered to Colleges of Further Education. No funding was directly offered to applicants specifically for Essential Skills Schemes. The Department is due to receive a further €120,027,806 of ESF assistance under the programme, which will be allocated among 82 projects selected for support under Priority 1 of the Programme, government programmes such as ApprenticeshipsNI which is currently supported under Priority 2, and also to minor technical activities undertaken by the Department and funded under Priority 3.

Potential Public Liability Insurance Claims

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he would consider assuming responsibility for the payment of potential public liability insurance claims by participants of his Department's apprentice and back to work programmes, in order to encourage greater uptake of programmes by employers.

(AQW 4456/11-15)

Dr Farry: Responsibility for the payment of potential Public Liability Insurance claims by participants on ApprenticeshipsNI lies with his or her employer in line with the employer's obligations to all employees. An apprentice is employed from day one and is subject to the employer's and/or training supplier's public liability insurance when availing of directed training.

The ApprenticeshipsNI package on offer remains very attractive to employers. The cost of off-the-job training is fully funded by my Department and an employer incentive payment is available depending on the occupational area and on completion of the apprenticeship.

There is currently a record number of 12,647 apprentices on the programme which is a substantial and encouraging achievement in these challenging economic times.

Training Suppliers delivering the Department's Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme must ensure that each participant is fully insured during their period in training. Training Suppliers have a contractual obligation to ensure that each participant is fully covered by Public Liability Insurance at all times.

Steps to Work (StW) is the main adult return to work provision. Participants must be fully insured at all times during their participation on StW. When a participant is on placement or directed training, the Lead Contractor must ensure that full Public and Employer's liability insurance is in place either through their own insurance, or the sub-contractor or placement provider's insurance.

Vocational Postgraduate Courses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what funding his Department offers for vocational postgraduate courses, such as the bar and solicitors' courses, at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQW 4575/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not provide funding for vocational postgraduate courses at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's University Belfast.

Departmental funding for Northern Ireland domiciled students pursuing postgraduate diplomas and certificates, including those for legal practice, in the United Kingdom has not been available since September 2005.

At that time, my Department reviewed its priorities in light of the Government's 2002 Science, Engineering and Technology Strategy "Investing in Innovation" and decided that its limited postgraduate support budget should be targeted at funding Masters and PhD courses at the higher levels recommended in that report.

Chair of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the recent interview given by the Chair of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College, Belfast, including the accuracy of his remarks, the public reaction to the interview, and the impact on staff, students and the general public.

(AQW 4844/11-15)

Dr Farry: Any statements or interviews given by the Chair of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College are a matter for the Governing Body. I found the comments interesting and am not in a position to comment on any reaction to the interview nor would I wish to do so.

Step Ahead Initiative

Mr Molloy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when his Department will resume recruitment to the Steps to Work employment initiative, Step Ahead.

(AQO 819/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is regrettable that it has proved necessary to implement a pause on recruitment to the Step Ahead strand of the Steps to Work programme. Should additional resources become available I would be able to resume recruitment to Step Ahead later this financial year, though this may be on a more selective and targeted basis. Alternatively, the Department will consider its re-introduction at the beginning of next year.

I am also awaiting the outcome of a bid to the Social Protection Fund which would enable me to introduce a variant of Step Ahead targeted at assisting young unemployed, lone parents and those affected by the Incapacity Benefit re-assessment process.

Information and Communication Technology

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he is taking to address the skills shortage in the Information and Communication Technology sector.

(AQO 816/11-15)

Dr Farry: Senior executives from the Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) sector and their representative bodies have advised me that they currently have hard to fill vacancies in their companies. I am currently establishing an ICT Working Group made up of key stakeholders to identify the specific skills issues and to find a way forward to address them.

My Department has much experience in dealing with skills shortages in the ICT industry. In 2007 we established a Future Skills Action Group, this led to an increase in the number of applicants to computer engineering courses at the two universities and colleges through an extensive media campaign and school based activities; an increase in the number of people available to work in the sector through the provision of a conversion course for non-ICT graduates; an improvement in the compatibility of the courses offered by universities with the needs of industry and completion of new research into the future skills needs of the ICT sector in Northern Ireland.

Further Education Colleges

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps are being taken to enhance the role of further education colleges in providing training and employment opportunities.

(AQO 814/11-15)

Dr Farry: The development of FE Means Business and the establishment of six large regional colleges has positioned them at the heart of workforce and economic development. Each college has increasing involvement with employers and businesses. Colleges are the first choice training provider for the Department's Skills Solutions service. This has led to an increased role for them in the delivery of industry-relevant training. In addition, the capacity building element of the Department's Assured Skills programme along with the lecturers into industry initiative has supported the up-skilling of college lecturers in priority areas for economic development, including: information and communications technology, financial services and renewables.

While training cannot directly create jobs, indirectly the role of my Department through its further education colleges in providing training and employment opportunities supports the competitiveness and growth of the economy and business.

Graduate Employment

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the current and future employment opportunities for local graduates.

(AQO 815/11-15)

Dr Farry: The recession and difficulties in the labour market have made it more difficult for many people – graduates and non-graduates alike – to find and keep a job. This is true in Northern Ireland, for the UK as a whole, and for the Republic of Ireland.

The latest data shows that seventy-three percent (73%) of full-time students from Northern Ireland who graduated in 09-10 were in work six months after graduation. This compares to 71% for the UK as a whole.

Future prospects will be linked to the performance of the labour market, particularly at the local level. I trust that the initiatives outlined last week in the draft Programme for Government and in the draft Economic Strategy and supported by all parties in the Executive will enhance people's job prospects, not least those of graduates. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that many commentators remain apprehensive about prospects for the local, national and European economies.

Consequently, my Department will continue to actively support graduates to find employment. For example, more than 700 graduates have participated in the Department's Entry to Management Programme (INTRO) and 89% of those completing the programme went on to attain full time employment.

In addition, 193 graduates have gained relevant work experience on the Graduate Acceleration Programme since it was introduced last year.

Queen's University, Belfast and Stranmillis University College: Merger

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the proposed merger between Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQO 817/11-15)

Dr Farry: As the member will be aware, as the merger was endorsed by the previous Minister, a public consultation was carried out on the proposed merger earlier this year and the responses received were discussed with the Committee for Employment and Learning. Several key stakeholder groups subsequently requested meetings with me to discuss the proposal. . I have met with the Transferor Representatives' Council, members of the governing body and senior staff from Stranmillis, members of management from Queen's University, members of the governing body and senior staff of St. Mary's University College, and elected representatives from a number of political parties. These meetings have been useful in helping me consider the next steps to be taken in this process.

I will be in a position to make an announcement on the way forward on the proposal by the end of this month.

St Mary's University College, Belfast: Liberal Arts Degree

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the Liberal Arts degree course provided by St Mary's University College, Belfast.

(AQO 820/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has a duty to ensure that the higher education teaching provision that it funds in Northern Ireland's universities and university colleges is of good quality and meets agreed standards. My Department discharges this duty by contracting the Quality Assurance Agency to devise and implement quality assurance methods.

St. Mary's, as a University College of Queen's University, was last subjected to an Institutional Audit by the Quality Assurance Agency during 2009. The judgements made were:

- Confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards.
- Confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

On this basis, I am content that the Liberal Arts Degree Course at St. Mary's meets the required academic standards. The provision of Liberal Arts at St. Mary's is, however, in addition to the main business of the College, which is as a provider of teacher education.

Universities: Student Numbers

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, following his decision on student tuition fees, for an update on his discussions with the university sector about increasing student numbers.
(AQO 821/11-15)

Dr Farry: As the member will be aware, the Executive has made available a total of £3m for additional higher education places by 2014/15. From this my Department has to meet the institutional grant to the higher education institutions and cover the costs of servicing student support costs. The recently published Programme for Government sets out that my Department will provide an additional 540 student places by 2015 and all of these places will be in the important areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. My officials are working with the higher education providers, including those in further education, on the detail of how the additional places will be allocated.

South Eastern Regional College: Capital Investment

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what capital investment projects for the South Eastern Regional College will be supported in the next three years.
(AQO 822/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no capital investment specifically earmarked for the South Eastern Regional College in the next three years. The South Eastern Regional College has however, had recent investment, valued at £50m, across its campuses in Lisburn, Downpatrick, Newcastle, Ballynahinch and Newtownards. The South Eastern Regional College now has one of the best estates in the UK. A Performing Arts Centre project which had been earmarked for funding was put on hold at January 2010, due to a shortfall of capital funding in the 10/11 year.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the average cost to her Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.
(AQW 3444/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): My Department does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

Go for It Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she expects the legal challenge from Enterprise NI against InvestNI's tendering process for the Go For It programme to be resolved; and when the contract will be awarded to a provider.
(AQW 4041/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is expected that the challenge will be heard by the High Court in February 2012, with judgement being given several weeks later. There is however the possibility that the court date might move or that the decision would be subject to an appeal. The award date for the contract for the Business Start Programme cannot therefore be known with certainty.

Go for It Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, with regard to the current legal challenge by Enterprise NI against InvestNI's tendering process for the Go For It programme and the

interim measures put in place by InvestNI, to detail whether the interim service provided by InvestNI will be subject to independent monitoring; and if so, what the independent audit procedure will entail.

(AQW 4042/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The interim service that Invest NI has put in place is to utilise existing Invest NI staff that would, as part of their normal duties, already be providing business advice and guidance to businesses and those wishing to start a business.

Invest NI is not delivering a Business Start Programme nor engaging a delivery agent. Invest NI is prevented from delivering a fully functional programme, unless Enterprise Northern Ireland withdraw their legal action, or until the legal process runs its course.

Therefore independent monitoring and an independent audit procedure are not required nor are they appropriate in this instance.

Of course, the activities carried out by Invest NI staff are subject to the normal audit and review requirements of a non departmental public body.

Go for It Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, with regard to the current legal challenge by Enterprise NI against InvestNI's tendering process for the Go For It programme, to detail the interim measures put in place by InvestNI in the Derry City Council area in terms of (i) the resources allocated; (ii) the experience of delivery staff; and (iii) the service provided.

(AQW 4043/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) In the Derry City Council area, Invest NI has 3 existing staff that would, as part of their normal duties, already be providing business advice and guidance to businesses. This includes advice to those wishing to start their own business. In addition, and as part of our ongoing work on the Jobs Fund, 1 further staff member will work on outreach/development activities in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and for individuals Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs).
- (ii) The individual staff involved have many years of experience in providing advice and support to those individuals requiring business support.

The interim service provides 1:

- (iii) 1 advice, business clinics and business plan support, delivered at Invest NI North West Office at Timberquay, and at other local locations subject to demand. Invest NI continue to advertise to stimulate the public interest in starting a business and will respond directly to all enquiries generated.

New Airline Routes to Northern Ireland

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department is seeking to attract new airline routes to Northern Ireland.

(AQW 4126/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is seeking to maximise the opportunities presented by the recent reduction in the rate of Air Passenger Duty applied to Northern Ireland for direct long haul flights operating in band B. This has sent a positive message to airlines that Northern Ireland is a viable option for long haul business.

In addition, I have asked Tourism Ireland to seek to identify potential new carriers and routes, both long haul and short haul, into Northern Ireland which may be eligible for co-operative marketing assistance. For example, Tourism Ireland is working closely with bmibaby to promote its new Belfast/ Amsterdam route and has launched a co-operative campaign to drive demand for the new service in the Netherlands.

Tourism Ireland also plans to hold an Access Workshop in the near future involving all Northern Ireland airports and air (and sea) carriers.

London 2012 Olympics

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether companies in Northern Ireland have benefited from the London 2012 Olympics; and to what extent.

(AQW 4133/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Companies in Northern Ireland have benefited both directly and indirectly from the London 2012 Olympics. Invest Northern Ireland is aware of around 40 local businesses that have:

- Won direct contracts with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA)
- Won supply chain contracts
- Won business through CompeteFor (the official 2012 business brokerage website) which they might not have been aware of otherwise

The value of these contracts is estimated to exceed £40m. A precise value is difficult to establish given the strict publicity restrictions imposed by the ODA and LOCOG on disclosing information about contracts won. With over £200m worth of contracts still to be procured by The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) there are still opportunities for Northern Ireland based companies to benefit further. In addition, significant opportunities also exist through other 2012 related commissioning bodies and various supply chains.

As well as direct business won, Invest NI has undertaken considerable capability development work with many companies in Northern Ireland. To date, more than 200 companies have received specific advice to assist with areas such as quality management, tender preparation, etc. This will assist them to present robust tender submissions for future projects, which increasingly require a professional approach to tendering.

London Olympics 2012

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance her Department has given to companies and businesses to help them to benefit from the London Olympics 2012.

(AQW 4134/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI, as Northern Ireland's business development agency, has responsibility for helping local companies in their efforts to win Olympics contracts. Invest NI has been promoting and raising awareness of 2012 business opportunities and assisting companies to become better prepared and fit to win contracts by increasing skills, competitiveness, capacity and capability.

Invest NI continues to offer support to companies by:

- Promoting the official CompeteFor business brokerage website
- Organising events to promote business opportunities and business skills development
- Distributing opportunity bulletins issued by The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Ltd (LOCOG) directly to relevant companies, business representative organisations and local councils.
- Advising companies on how to strengthen their representations to buyers in key areas such as professional tendering, quality management, health and safety, equal opportunities, website design.
- Facilitating meetings with key buyers in London and Belfast
- Providing one-to-one consultancy support with bid preparation to selected companies
- Negotiating preferential rates for managed offices in London for clients.

- Working with LOCOG on the remaining opportunities.

Invest NI's most recent 2012 business support initiatives focus on developing Northern Ireland based companies' tendering skills with the production of a comprehensive guide to professional tendering and on supporting companies' efforts to develop links with major contractors in London.

Forthcoming Spectrum Auction

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what representations she has made to Ofcom or the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in relation to the potential use of revenue received from the forthcoming spectrum auction under the 4G licence award.

(AQW 4144/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Representations were made in responding to the consultation document published by OFCOM earlier this year. Details of my Department's response are available on OFCOM's website in which it was suggested that funds should be used to improve mobile coverage especially in rural areas or commercially unattractive areas. Use of proceeds from the auction is not a matter for Ofcom but rather it is a matter for the UK Government. Revenue received from the auction will be paid to Her Majesty's Treasury. Currently there is no indication that funds raised by the auction will be used directly to improve mobile coverage in any part of the UK, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer did announce that £150 million had been earmarked to improve mobile coverage especially in rural areas. DETI is already in discussions with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on how this fund should be used in Northern Ireland.

NI Screen Money

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 3048/11-15, (i) what strategy is in place to influence where NI Screen money is spent; (ii) whether InvestNI has sought to prioritise geographical areas where NI Screen spend money on productions; and (iii) for a breakdown of what the money awarded to (a) Foyle; and (b) London was spent on.

(AQW 4151/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Screen Commission's current strategy 'Driving Global Growth' 2010 – 2014 is designed to grow and develop Northern Ireland as a production centre for film, television and digital content. It is a progression of its last strategy 'Building on Success' which attracted some of the world's largest production companies including HBO and Universal. KPMG and Oxford Economics during their appraisal of this strategy, described the NI Screen Fund as having performed excellently, with strong additionality and having exceeded its headline targets.

NI Screen's current strategy 'Driving Global Growth' which builds on the achievements of the previous strategy is focused on continuing the growth of the positive productivity impact of the screen industry in Northern Ireland so as to optimize the impact on the local economy and ensure value for money, through a balanced portfolio of investment and the development of the local skills base. Invest NI does not seek to prioritise geographical areas within Northern Ireland where NI Screen funding is utilised; this is largely dependent on the location of the production company and funded project.

My Department through Invest NI has allocated funding of £6.3m for the current year 2011 – 2012 for development of the screen industries. The following table illustrates Invest NI funding allocated by NI Screen to production companies in the Foyle constituency and to those based in London. It should be noted that in relation to those respective companies based in London we will only offer support for production activity that occurs in Northern Ireland and provides economic benefit in Northern Ireland. The level of production taking place on Northern Ireland will be negotiated by NI Screen; however, it will be negotiated on the basis that the return to the NI economy will not be less than 3.5:1 as an agreed target minimum for any individual project.

List of productions funded	Company	Constituency/ Location of production Company	Amount Awarded
Archeology Portal	360 Production	Foyle	25,000
Digging for Britain	360 Production	Foyle	100,000
Dig World War 2	360 Production	Foyle	70,000
Dog Fighter	Dark Water Studios	Foyle	105,384
Things You Need to Know	360 Production	Foyle	200,000
Titanic and Me	360 Production	Foyle	80,000
Cherrybomb	Generator Entertainment	London	282,951
City of Ember	Pipeworks Productions Ltd	London	765,307
Coming Up	Touchpaper Productions	London	50,000
Five Minutes Of Heaven Aka Reconciliation	Reconciliation Ltd	London	250,000
Freak Dog AKA Red Mist	Generator 1 Ltd	London	247,737
Game of Thrones (GoT)	Fire & Blood Ltd	London	1,600,000
Ghost Machine	Generator 1 Ltd	London	247,737
GoT Series 1	Fire & Blood Ltd	London	1,600,000
GoT Series 2	Fire & Blood Ltd	London	2,850,000
Grabbers	Erin Island Ltd	London	59,000
Hunger	Blast Films Ltd	London	300,000
Killing Bono	Cinema Three SPV3	London	400,000
Man on the Run	Running Man Ltd	London	500,000
Messiah	Great Meadow Messiah V	London	300,000
Mo	ITV Studios Ltd	London	250,000
Occupation	Kudos (Occupation) Ltd	London	500,000
Small Island	Television Ruby (Small Island) Ltd	London	600,000

Ballymena Business Centre

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many (i) initial business advice sessions; (ii) training sessions and (ii) business plans have been completed in the Ballymena area since the Ballymena Business Centre transferred to InvestNI on 1 October 2011.

(AQW 4183/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The award of contract for Invest NI's Business Start Programme, which was due to commence on Oct 1st 2011, has been delayed as a result of a legal challenge by Enterprise NI. Since 1st October 2011, Invest NI Regional Offices dealt with over 600 new enquiries from individuals wishing to establish their own business. The North Eastern Regional Office received over 75 new enquiries, 11 of which related to Ballymena District Council Area. The North Eastern Regional Office is awaiting postcode verification for 8 of its enquiries and it is likely that a number of these also relate to Ballymena Council Area.

25 initial advice sessions have been held and 7 individuals have attended group business clinics. To date no Business Plans have been completed.

Strategic Energy Framework

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the commitment in the Strategic Energy Framework to 'contribute' to the UK's annual 1 percent energy consumption reduction target, to detail her Department's target for annual energy consumption in Northern Ireland by 2020.

(AQW 4199/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Energy End Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive was implemented in 2008 and requires all member states to reduce total energy demand by 1% per annum to 2016. In line with the current Strategic Energy Framework my officials have been collating information from the main providers of energy efficiency programmes in Northern Ireland. Accessing this information and ensuring that there is no double counting of energy savings has been a slow process since there is often a nine month time lag on data provision from the various contributors.

Interim results for 2009/10 will shortly be available and should indicate progress against the 1% target.

Public Contracts

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list all the current public contracts within her Department, including to whom each contract was awarded; how the contracts were advertised; and when each contract is next due for tender.

(AQW 4215/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

Title of Contract	To Whom Contract was Awarded	How Contract was Advertised	When Contract is next due for tender
Assessment of the Future Prospects for Improving the Quality of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to NI	fDi Intelligence Ltd	Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) Website, Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter	This is a one-off piece of research so will not be re-tendered
Telephone Debt Advice Helpline 2009/11 (contract has been extended for 1 year until 31 March 2012)	A4e	CPD Website	All 3 debt advice contracts will expire on 31 March 2012. In late 2011, the Department plans to launch a new public tender exercise.

Title of Contract	To Whom Contract was Awarded	How Contract was Advertised	When Contract is next due for tender
Face to Face Debt Advice Service 2009/11 (contract has been extended for 1 year until 31 March 2012)	Advice NI	CPD Website	All 3 debt advice contracts will expire on 31 March 2012. In late 2011, the Department plans to launch a new public tender exercise.
Face to Face Debt Advice Service 2011/12	Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux	CPD Website	All 3 debt advice contracts will expire on 31 March 2012. In late 2011, the Department plans to launch a new public tender exercise.
Wayleaves Technical Consultancy	DMD Consultants (NI) Ltd	CPD Website	March 2012
Offshore Grid Strategic Environmental Assessment	Aecom Ltd	CPD Website	N/A
Onshore Renewable Electricity Action Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment	Aecom Ltd	CPD Website	N/A
Isles Project consultancy (NI/ ROI and Scottish Governments) technical feasibility study re development of offshore transmission network linking potential sites for the generation of renewable energy in the coastal waters of NI, Western Scotland and Ireland.	RPS Group plc	Via Public procurement by Scottish Government as lead partner	N/A
Energy Specialist Legal Advice	Arthur Cox NI	CPD Website	Jan 2014 if option to extend current contract for a 3rd year is exercised.
Supplier Obligation Study	AEA	CPD Website	N/A
Advertising & Related Services in support of Uniting Sustainable Energy Messaging in NI	Navigator Blue	CPD Website	Possible re-tender 2015 if option to extend contract for further 2 yrs exercised.

Title of Contract	To Whom Contract was Awarded	How Contract was Advertised	When Contract is next due for tender
Renewable Heat Incentive Admin – Feasibility Study	Ofgem	Approved Single Tender Action	N/A
Business Case appraisals	RSM McClure Watters	CPD Website	N/A
IT Consultancy services to design and create website and e zine magazine and site hosting and maintenance	Kevin McGrath Starfish Web Consulting Ltd 1a Wellington Park BELFAST BT9 6DJ	CPD Website	N/A
Impress (Registry) Support – File Management Software	ICS Equity	CPD Website	Not to be renewed
Insolvency System Case Management Software	BT	CPD Website	Tender 2013/14
Escrow Agreements	NCC Services	Approved Single Tender Action	Tender 2012/13
Multi Function Devices - Lease	Xerox Finance	CPD Website	Tender 2011/12
HSENI Case Management System maintenance	Singularity	CPD Website	Tender 2013/14
Trading Standards (Flare) Licence Management Software	Civica	CPD Website	Tender 2012/13
DETI Working Mines	Atkins	CPD Website	30 April 2013
DETI Airborne Geophysical Survey 2011	Sander Geophysics Ltd	Through CPD in NI and ROI press and European Journal	One-off contract, not to be repeated.
Agreement for the Provision of Remote Broadband Services in NI	Avanti	CPD Website	Replacement contract currently being procured.
Consultancy support to monitor the Remote Broadband Services Contract 2009-2012	Analysys Mason	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.

Title of Contract	To Whom Contract was Awarded	How Contract was Advertised	When Contract is next due for tender
Agreement for the Provision of an International Telecommunications Service	Hibernia Atlantic Cable Systems	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
North West International Connectivity (Project Kelvin) Consultant Support during (a) Project Roll out Phase and (b) Operational Phase	Analysys Mason	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
DETI Broadband Support Service aimed at the NI SME Community	Commendium	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
DETI Broadband Support Service aimed at the NI SME Community – Mid-Point Review	Ekosgen	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
Agreement relating to the Provision of Next Generation Broadband Access to Business in NI	BT	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
Technical Consultant Support for Next Generation Network Access	Analysys Mason	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
DETI NGBP Extension 1a	BT	Competitive fund	No plans at present to repeat contract.
WiMAX Fixed Wireless Access Distribution Infill (Northeast and Southern regions)	North West Electronics	Competitive fund	No plans at present to repeat contract.
Economic Appraisal for Improvement in Telecommunications Networks	RSM McClure Watters	CPD Website	No plans at present to repeat contract.
Analysis of Continental Airlines Belfast/ Newark Route	AviaSolutions	Direct award contract	Contract will cease when work has been completed. There will not therefore be a requirement to re-tender.

Vulnerable Village and Corner Shops

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department can take to protect vulnerable village and corner shops from closure due to the increasing number of multi-national stores that are opening.

(AQW 4222/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive as a whole has a clear interest in ensuring the continuing success of small local businesses and I continue to liaise with my Ministerial colleagues to keep the overall environment within which they operate under review.

The Finance Minister recently consulted on proposals for rebalancing the non-domestic rating system which included expanding the small business rate relief scheme, funded through a levy on large retail properties with a rateable value of £500,000 or more. While these proposals were not designed specifically to arrest the growing trend for out of town retailing, the measures are likely to do more for town centres than edge of town and out of town developments.

The Finance Minister has also indicated that, in order to improve the vitality of shopping areas, he would be examining the feasibility of providing a rates concession to assist the reopening of shops that have been empty for a long time.

My Department, or the Executive as a whole, cannot address directly the specific issue of competition between local shops and large chain stores. This is because competition policy is a matter reserved by the UK Government under the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the assessment that hydraulic fracturing caused the recent earthquakes in Blackpool, what impact this may have on her Department's future plans for hydraulic fracturing.

(AQW 4226/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Measurements made on thousands of hydraulic fracture treatments have shown that these may trigger minor earthquakes, usually with a magnitude less than 0 on the Richter scale, which cause no damage at the ground surface. The two seismic events recorded near Blackpool (magnitude 2.3 and 1.5) are attributed to injected fluids penetrating and causing minor slip on a fault zone. Whilst the Blackpool seismicity is linked to unusual site-specific geological conditions, the specialists' report makes a number of recommendations for the evaluation and mitigation of seismic hazard. My Department will discuss these with DECC before making any decisions on seismic monitoring and mitigation protocols for Northern Ireland.

Petroleum Licence Awarded to Tamboran

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of the amount of shale gas that is available as part of the Petroleum Licence awarded to Tamboran; (ii) what is the wholesale value of that gas at current market prices; (iii) where Tamboran plans to export the gas if it is extracted; and (iv) to outline the benefits to the residents of County Fermanagh of the award of this licence, given that there is no existing gas infrastructure in Fermanagh.

(AQW 4228/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At this stage of exploration, before the shale gas potential of the licence area has been tested or Tamboran has fully developed their plans, it would be inappropriate and unrealistic for me to provide the information requested.

Fuel Prices

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what her Department is doing to ensure that fuel prices are kept at a fair level.

(AQW 4266/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Wholesale fuel costs are set by international markets and, in addition, my Department has no direct role in the determination of electricity and natural gas retail tariffs. However, my officials do work closely with the Utility Regulator and the energy industry to establish, where possible, measures to put downward pressure on prices through promoting effective competition, enhancing interconnection, and improving market integration with other regions.

Among the tangible steps taken has been the opening to competition of the natural gas supply market in Greater Belfast and the electricity supply market across Northern Ireland. The creation of the Single Electricity Market since November 2007 has provided greater transparency, and an increased number of electricity suppliers in the retail electricity market, thus acting to put downward pressure on retail electricity tariffs.

This year's energy price increases by Power NI, Phoenix Supply in Greater Belfast, and firmus energy in their "10 towns" gas licensed area outside Belfast, have been subject to rigorous review by the Utility Regulator and are largely due to cost increases in wholesale energy markets.

My Department has also supported the mutualisation of energy assets such as the Scotland to Northern Ireland gas pipeline, the Moyle electricity interconnector, and the Belfast gas transmission pipeline which has helped to reduce costs to gas and electricity consumers, through the use of profits and reserves to help off-set energy costs.

Coal, home heating oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and road fuels all operate within mature and competitive markets and are not subject to formal regulation by any government body in Northern Ireland.

Retail prices for refined fuels in Northern Ireland respond to fluctuating wholesale prices and are set internationally. These and the tax levied on road fuels are outside the control of my Department.

Village Redevelopment Area of South Belfast

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any communication that has been received by the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the Village redevelopment area; and any action that has been taken in response.

(AQW 4294/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since 12 September 2011, HSENI has received a total of twelve telephone calls and emails raising safety concerns, arising amongst other things, from the theft of bricks from houses being demolished as part of the Village redevelopment scheme. Although HSENI has no powers to act in such circumstances, it has met with the key stakeholders in an attempt to find a workable solution.

Strategic Energy Framework Implementation Plan

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that action number 42 in the Strategic Energy Framework implementation states 'to extend the availability of natural gas as a lower carbon fuel, where it is economically viable to do so, and where not, maximise other alternatives such as renewable heat and/or biomass', why she has prioritised the development of gas over and above that of renewable heat sources.

(AQW 4371/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I consider that natural gas continues to provide fuel choice for consumers, and that this choice should be extended, where it is economically viable, to other areas in Northern Ireland. I am also keen to explore how gas infrastructure can be utilised in future for bio-gas.

You will be aware my Department has recently consulted on the development of the renewable heat market in Northern Ireland and outlined appropriate measures that could stimulate the growth of renewable heat to a market share of 10% by 2020.

The extension of the gas network and the incentivisation of the renewable heat market will support the development of a more secure, sustainable and diverse heat market which isn't overly reliant on one

particular fuel and provides greater choice for consumers and businesses. I look forward to exploring how both energy sources can be developed in a complementary way.

Cultural Sector

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what additional resources her Department will put in place to promote the cultural sector as an attraction for tourists.

(AQW 4377/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The next two years represent an unprecedented opportunity to highlight Northern Ireland culture to a global audience. Additional funds have therefore been allocated to the “NI 2012 Our Time Our Place” campaign which will focus on our culture and heritage. It is expected that this programme will significantly boost visitor numbers well beyond 2012 and provide a great lead in to 2013 when Londonderry becomes City of Culture and Belfast hosts the World Police and Fire Games.

With respect to specific project funding, the cultural sector can apply for assistance from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board’s Tourism Development Scheme and Tourism Events Funding Programme.

To help prepare for 2012 and 2013 Tourism Ireland has been raising Northern Ireland’s cultural profile through the promotion of Belfast City of Music and Londonderry UK City of Culture, implementing an Ulster-Scots campaign in the Southern States of the US, highlighting Northern Ireland’s Christian heritage, promoting the Belfast Festival at Queens and showcasing Northern Ireland food.

In addition, over the next 12 months Tourism Ireland will invest in the most extensive global marketing programme ever undertaken for Northern Ireland. This will showcase the diverse and unique cultural events which will take place throughout Northern Ireland during 2012 and 2013.

Feasibility of Social Tariffs for Electricity Supplies

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she will examine the feasibility of social tariffs for electricity supplies to social housing schemes.

(AQW 4399/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am already on record as stating that the introduction of a social tariff would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the total cost incurred by her Department on air travel (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010; and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010.

(AQW 4411/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The total cost incurred by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment on air travel, January to December 2010:

- (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport - £17200
- (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain - £21524

(excluding Heathrow Airport)

InvestNI’s Funding to the Carbon Trust

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the removal of InvestNI’s funding to the Carbon Trust.

(AQW 4454/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Some £30 million of support has been provided to Carbon Trust since it established an office in Northern Ireland in 2002 but I wish to clarify that Invest NI has not “removed” funding from the Carbon Trust. In 2011/12 Carbon Trust has been offered £2.6 million which includes: £1 million capital for an energy efficiency loan fund, £746,000 to support applied research projects and almost £1 million to provide energy efficiency support to business in Northern Ireland.

It is Invest NI’s intention that Carbon Trust would continue to manage the existing Energy Efficiency Loan Fund between now and 2014/15 but this is currently the subject of negotiation. Regardless of the outcome of those negotiations, Invest NI is planning to ensure that a loan fund will continue to be available to local businesses and is planning to provide an additional

£1 million per annum up to 2014/15 to the loan fund which currently has of the order of £8.5 million vested in it.

An offer has also been made to Carbon Trust to extend a previous offer that will allow expenditure on applied research projects to be supported until 31 March 2013.

In terms of its forward plans, Invest NI has undertaken an independent appraisal which was informed by industry representations and input from relevant stakeholders. This appraisal recommended that resource efficiency support for business be simplified and simplification is what Invest NI is striving to achieve.

In planning to implement this recommendation and in line with government procurement policy, Invest NI has recently tendered for the provision of resource efficiency expertise embracing the full arena of energy, water, waste and materials. Carbon Trust has had the opportunity to bid in this tender which closed in October but no bid was received.

I am assured by Invest NI that the successful delivery of services in this area will be maintained and I would urge all Members to exert their influence on businesses to encourage them to avail of the support on offer from Invest NI, which could make the difference in these challenging economic times.

Introduction of Social Tariffs

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if he intends to prioritise the introduction of social tariffs in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 4457/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am already on record as stating that the introduction of a social tariff would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Telecommunications

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the powers her department has in relation to telecommunications.

(AQW 4471/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In February 2011 my Department distributed a fact sheet to all MLAs and District Councils in which it set out the powers under which it has the ability to intervene in the telecommunications market.

Telecommunications policy is a reserved matter for which the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in Whitehall has lead responsibility. Furthermore, the UK Telecommunications market is both fully privatised and competitive and operates primarily on a UK-wide basis.

Primary legislation for telecommunications matters is the Communications Act 2003. Section 149 of this legislation gives DETI a general power to make payments to persons engaged in or in commercial activities connected with:

- (a) the provision of electronic communications networks and electronic communications services in Northern Ireland; or

(b) improving the extent, quality and reliability of such networks or services

Over the last number of years DETI has exercised those powers to make a series of strategically important investments, working with the private sector, to ensure that broadband services are available across all of Northern Ireland, to strengthen international communications links and, to ensure that the opportunities available through the better use of the facilities provided by these investments are being exploited by Northern Ireland businesses.

Earlier this year, the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport announced that a review of the Communications Act 2003 was to be undertaken. It is understood that proposals for the amendment of the Act are currently being developed by DCMS and will, in due course, be subject to a public consultation.

Fuel Poverty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether he plans to help low-income families alleviate fuel poverty by encouraging energy companies to offer fairer social tariffs to low-income customers.

(AQW 4477/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am already on record as stating that the introduction of a social tariff would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Cost to Respond to Written and Oral Assembly Questions

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an estimate of the average cost to her Department to respond to written and oral Assembly Questions tabled by Jim Allister MLA, since May 2011.

(AQW 4664/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and so the information requested is not available.

Introduction of Social Tariffs

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the introduction of social tariffs.

(AQW 4709/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am already on record as stating that the introduction of a social tariff would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Public Appointments

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the public appointments both she and her predecessor have made since May 2007.

(AQW 4752/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Public appointments made by DETI Ministers since May 2007 are detailed in OFMDFM, Central Appointment Unit's Public Appointments Annual Report for 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and their Public Bodies and Public Appointments Annual Report 2009/2010.

The Public Bodies and Public Appointments Annual Report for 2010/2011 will be published in due course in the normal manner.

The reports are available on the OFMDFM website under the heading 'Making Government Work' – 'Public Appointments'.

Tourism Ireland

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on how Tourism Ireland plans to market Northern Ireland within Great Britain in 2012.

(AQO 829/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Sustaining growth in the Great Britain market will be a top priority in 2012. ni2012 represents an unprecedented opportunity for Northern Ireland. I have secured additional funds to enable Tourism Ireland to deliver the most extensive programme of marketing activity ever undertaken for Northern Ireland in Great Britain. This will include media, cinema advertising, online campaigns, social media activity and promotional events and publicity.

Tourism Ireland will be launching their Marketing Plans for 2012 on 1st December, when further details of the plans for Great Britain will be outlined.

Agrifood: InterTradeIreland Report

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she will publish InterTradeIreland's report 'Agri-Food: A Study for Cross-Border Cooperation'.

(AQO 830/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer the Member to the answer I gave to AQO 681/11-15.

Economic Strategy

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the Northern Ireland Executive Economic Strategy will be implemented.

(AQO 831/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The draft Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, which deals with the period up to 2030, was published for full public consultation on Thursday 17 November 2011. The Strategy has been developed by an Executive Sub-Committee on the economy which I chair. It includes commitments from all Executive Departments.

Go For It Programme

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the full complement of services offered by the Go For It programme will be restored.

(AQO 832/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is prevented from delivering a fully functional Business Start Programme as a result of legal action taken by Enterprise Northern Ireland.

It is expected that the legal challenge will be heard by the High Court in February 2012, with judgement being given several weeks later. There is, however, the possibility that the court date might move or that the decision would be subject to an appeal. The award date for the contract for the Business Start Programme cannot, therefore, be known with certainty.

Economy: MTV Music Awards

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the economic benefits generated by the MTV Europe Music Awards.

(AQO 833/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The event is anticipated to generate £10 million into the economy and industry reported 95% occupancy in the Greater Belfast area over the MTV weekend.

I am pleased to report that an online travel company has reported that online searches for Belfast have dramatically increased following last weekend's MTV European Music Awards in the city. Figures show

that searches have risen by 300% in Germany, 200% in France, 61% in GB and 17% in US compared to the same period last year.

Research and Development

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, following the announcement that Research and Development spend has increased, how she plans to promote further Research and Development activity which, historically, has been low.

(AQO 834/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Research and Development is a key driver of economic growth and is central to our attempts to rebalance the Northern Ireland economy. We therefore need Northern Ireland companies to continue to invest in R&D, particularly in those niche markets identified by Matrix, where we have the potential to develop a competitive global advantage. I am therefore committed to enhancing the programmes that can offer support to companies, particularly SME's, to make the decision to invest in R&D. The recent record expenditure of £521.4 million on R&D in 2010 is very positive and over the next four years Invest NI will commit over £117million to support continued business investment in R&D.

Foreign Direct Investment: East Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is InvestNI's estimate of the number of Foreign Direct Investment visits that it will have promoted to the East Londonderry constituency in the current calendar year.

(AQO 835/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has facilitated 3 visits by international companies to East Londonderry in the current calendar year. There are no current plans for any upcoming visits in the East Londonderry constituency between now and the end of this current calendar year; Invest NI will, however, continue to pursue any opportunities to secure further visits as the opportunity arises.

The objective of an inward investor visit is to demonstrate to the visiting company how locating in Northern Ireland will help its business to grow and thrive. Invest NI works closely with the company to develop a programme which is driven by the specific requirements of the potential project. The potential investor will then make the final decision about which locations to visit.

Invest NI works closely with councils and other stakeholders to review the features and benefits of each local area in order to maximise opportunities for economic growth. For example, Invest Northern Ireland attended a stakeholder event with members of Coleraine Borough Council's Economic Development team and local businesses at the Flowerfield Arts Centre on 30 March 2011 as part of its annual sales conference.

Tourism: Rory McIlroy

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she has taken to capitalise on the tourism potential of Rory McIlroy's recent achievements in China at the Shanghai Masters and at the HSBC World Championship event.

(AQO 836/11-15)

Mrs Foster: With Rory McIlroy now achieving a player ranking of number 2 in the world, this can only increase the potential for golf tourism in Northern Ireland.

Tourism Ireland has highlighted Northern Ireland golf in key golfing publications in China such as Golf Vacation, Golf Digest and Golf Magazine. In September, golf writers from Golf Digest China and Golf Magazine China travelled to Northern Ireland to play the courses where Rory McIlroy, Graeme McDowell and Darren Clarke perfected their skills.

Invest NI: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether InvestNI has any plans to focus more on small and medium-sized enterprises.

(AQO 837/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the last five years, over 11,000 offers have been issued to SMEs, generating almost £950 million of investment in the local economy and accounting for 84% of Invest NI's offer activity.

Support for companies of this size will continue to be a key focus for my Department and Invest NI. SMEs which qualify for full Invest NI support have access to the agency's extensive Business Development Solutions portfolio. This consists of professional advice, assistance, both financial and non-financial and support for businesses across a range of key areas including Strategy Development, People Development, R&D and Exporting.

Those SMEs that do not qualify for Invest NI financial support can still continue to benefit from many of the agency's wider services. These include export development programmes for both first-time exporters and more experienced exporters, energy and environmental efficiency support, comprehensive business information services and information and communications technology support.

Invest NI's information website, nibusinessinfo.co.uk, provides free access to key information, advice, funding and training. With over 5,000 pages of relevant information, the site is written by business people for business people and offers extensive knowledge in one online location.

Department of the Environment

PPS 24

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of his decision not to proceed with PPS 24, how he intends to ensure that economic factors are taken into account in the consideration of planning applications.

(AQW 1807/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Economic factors have always been key related material considerations to be considered in the determination of a planning application and they continue to be so.

A range of measures also exists to ensure that the Department prioritises economic factors when considering planning applications. These include, but this is not exhaustive:

Two Strategic Project teams within the Strategic Projects Division (SPD) manage planning applications across NI for all large scale investment proposals including all applications designated under Article 31 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. They also process other economically significant applications, which, while not classified by Article 31, are nevertheless important to the NI economy.

Guidance on consistency in decision making with particular emphasis on economic considerations issued to planning staff in May 2011. The purpose was to ensure a consistent approach in the consideration of the economic merits of planning applications by the Department so that local communities are treated equally and not disadvantaged.

Further guidance for prioritising planning applications in Local Planning Division issued in May 2011 stating clearly the types of applications that should be considered for prioritising. These include applications with employment implications, social/community benefit or a public interest dimension and applications which are grant funded.

The Executive's ongoing priority to create a vibrant economy facilitating increased employment, economic recovery and improved future wealth is set out in this guidance and it is stressed that the planning system has a key role to play in achieving this high level government objective.

In addition, PPS 4, PPS 5, PPS 6, PPS 18, PPS 21, PPS 16 (draft), PPS 23 (draft) and various plans also assist in making positive planning decisions with economic benefits.

Moreover, as Minister, I plan to leave no stone unturned in identifying all and any measures to ensure proper and quick planning industry: revision of the HR plan; active management of Article 31 applications; new regulations around planning appeals; tighter timelines for decisions; proper flexibilities around PPS 21 decisions; appropriate interventions to assist renewable energy applications etc; ensuring that environmental and traffic issues are properly assessed, based on good evidence and not raised late in the application process on a piecemeal basis.

Planning Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment how he intends to ensure that the Planning Service prioritises economic factors when considering planning applications.

(AQW 2036/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A range of measures already exist to ensure that the Department prioritises economic factors when considering planning applications. These include:

Two Strategic Project teams within the Strategic Projects Division (SPD) manage planning applications across NI for all large scale investment proposals including all applications designated under Article 31 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. They also process other economically significant applications, which, while not classified by Article 31, are nevertheless important to the NI economy.

Economic and resource factors have always been key related material considerations to be considered in the determination of a planning application and they continue to be so.

Guidance on consistency in decision making with particular emphasis on economic considerations issued to planning staff in May 2011. The purpose was to ensure a consistent approach in the consideration of the economic merits of planning applications by the Department so that local communities are treated equally and not disadvantaged.

Further guidance for prioritising planning applications in Local Planning Division issued in May 2011 stating clearly the types of applications that should be considered for prioritising. These include applications with employment implications, social/community benefit or a public interest dimension and applications which are grant funded.

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In addition, PPS 4, PPS 5, PPS 6, PPS 18, PPS 21, PPS 16 (draft), PPS 23 (draft) and various plans also assist in making positive planning decisions with economic benefits.

As Minister, I plan to leave no stone unturned in identifying all and any measures to ensure proper and quick planning industry: revision of the HR plan; active management of Article 31 applications; new regulations around planning appeals; tighter timelines for decisions; proper flexibilities around PPS 21 decisions; appropriate interventions to assist renewable energy applications etc; ensuring that environmental and traffic issues are properly assessed, based on good evidence and not raised late in the application process on a piecemeal basis.

Applications for Multiple Wind Turbines

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many applications for multiple wind turbines have been submitted in the past two years; (ii) how many of these applications were approved; and (iii) what is the potential electricity output of the turbine applications awaiting approval.

(AQW 2338/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) Six wind farm applications in 2010 and 15 in 2011 have been submitted.
- (ii) None of these applications have been determined to date. These are complex applications accompanied by environmental statements. Consultations are wide ranging and the time required to prepare and consider further environmental information in support of each application causes the processing time to be extended. I established a small group of people in the renewables industry to identify how the Planning Service could better assist the processing of renewable applications.

It should be noted that in the same 2 year period [2010-2011] 16 other windfarm applications have been approved with a potential electricity output of 292MW

- (iii) These 21 applications have a potential electricity output of 400 MW.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will consider introducing legislation to update the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 to enhance the record keeping requirements for people buying and selling scrap metal.

(AQW 2631/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The theft of metal is an international problem with unprecedented demand from the Far East pushing up worldwide prices of metals to an all time high. Whilst the big majority scrap metal dealers are legitimate and law-abiding, there are a few unscrupulous dealers who are facilitating the theft of metals.

In Great Britain, the Home Office has set up a working group tasked with recommending how this crime can be tackled effectively. The Group is chaired by British Transport Police and comprises representatives from law enforcement, the utilities sector and government departments.

In the first instance, the working group will focus on the prevention of metal theft. However, it is accepted that resolution of the problem may also require amendment of waste management legislation. I have asked Departmental officials to keep me informed of developments; I can then assess whether existing NI waste management legislation needs to be changed.

External Consultants and External Media Services

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 2147/11-15, whether tendering and procurement procedures were followed by local councils in relation to the spend on external consultants and external media services, in particular those councils which have a high spend.

(AQW 2954/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The information was sought directly from the 26 District Councils. Each council advised that their own internal procurement and tendering process was adhered to in the procurement of external consultancy and media services. I am looking further into this matter.

Townland Addresses

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what action he intends to take to ensure that residents living in Co Fermanagh can continue to use their townland as their principal address without the need for a road or street name being implemented.

(AQW 2985/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Under the current law, Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 sets out the powers of district councils in relation to street names. At present, townlands are not included in the definition of “street”.

“Pointer” is the address database being developed for NI with the support of the Land and Property Services (DFP) and Royal Mail, in conjunction with local councils. Pointer will provide the common standard address for every property in NI and is intended to provide infrastructure support to private and public sector organisations. Currently, there are over 200 different address datasets in use within the NICS, all maintained and managed separately. Pointer will include a townland name for every address held on the database. There is a website dedicated to this project.

The Department of the Environment, in line with all other Departments, supports the policy of using and promoting townland names in all government correspondence and official documents which is in line with those relevant motions passed in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The use of townland names is being facilitated, with the Pointer process leading to the townland being part of addresses in NI.

I can confirm that I value the use of townlands in describing places and areas of residence. This brings character and a sense of place to address forms and is part of local identity.

Slurry Spreading

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment, following his announcement on the 11 October 2011 in relation to slurry spreading, to detail (i) what constitutes a ‘reasonable excuse’ to spread slurry after 15 October; (ii) what constitutes ‘all reasonable steps’; and (iii) why his statement included the expression ‘penalties may not apply’ rather than penalties will not apply.

(AQW 3355/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I fully appreciate that farmers have faced difficult circumstances over the past few weeks preventing them from spreading slurry. I provided a written statement to the Assembly on 18 October 2011 and took an urgent oral on the matter.

- (i) ‘Reasonable excuse’ has an accepted legal meaning of something beyond the control of, and not foreseeable by an individual. In the context of slurry spreading, wet weather is something a farmer would normally be expected to anticipate. Farmers are required to have sufficient storage both for the closed period and for periods of adverse weather conditions when, due to extended wet weather, spreading of organic manure is not permitted.
- (ii) NIEA would regard ‘all reasonable steps’ as including that the farmer had sufficient slurry storage in accordance with the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations, and had been properly managing slurry outside the closed period. Clean storm water, e.g. roof water, should be diverted from slurry storage tanks. Farmers should also have exhausted reasonable alternatives such as renting extra storage space or using straw bedding.

In addition, it will be expected that slurry had been spread on low risk land, and that steps had been taken to protect watercourses. It would also be expected that farmers would not totally empty tanks – they should only remove enough slurry to provide adequate containment for immediate needs.

- (iii) It must be emphasised that farms will be looked at on a case-by-case basis, as individual circumstances will vary considerably. I have made it clear that my Department will work to the full to assist farmers with ‘reasonable excuse’. However, farmers who do not have an excuse and who do not act reasonably may not expect to have the assistance of my Department.

Staff Cars Provided by Department

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many departmental staff currently have cars provided by his Department; and the cost of providing cars in each of the last three years.

(AQW 3982/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department does not provide staff with cars for private use.

However, the Department does own 136 vehicles which are used for Departmental operational purposes, such as driver examiner training and roadside enforcement, and functions relating to country parks, nature reserves, state care monuments, etc.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether the current regulations in place require that companies wishing to conduct or who are conducting hydraulic fracturing make a full declaration of all hazardous materials being used in the process; and to detail any hazardous materials that are exempt from declaration.

(AQW 4019/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have been advised by officials that any proposal for shale gas fracturing would require planning permission separate to any licences granted by DETI. DOE Planning & Local Government Group has not received any planning applications for shale gas fracturing in Northern Ireland to date.

Any planning application for shale gas fracturing would be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. EIA is the process for identifying the environmental effects of proposed developments before planning permission is granted.

The EIA process and the consultation inherent to the planning process requires full disclosure of hazardous materials required for hydraulic fracturing.

Before any of the Company's proposals can be progressed, they would need to have a consent to discharge, under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and a licence for water abstraction under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 from NIEA Water Management Unit (WMU). NIEA WMU will enforce the conditions of any issued consent or licence in line with NIEA's Enforcement and Prosecution Policy.

Other permissions and assessments may be required from NIEA depending upon the activities proposed by the company and their exact location in relation to sensitive environmental receptors.

Planning Policy Requirement

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will review the planning policy requirement that people who live on farms are required to have a farm ID number before they can apply to build a domestic dwelling in the countryside.

(AQW 4072/11-15)

Mr Attwood: An applicant need not have a farm ID number to be eligible for a farm dwelling under the provisions of PPS21 (CTY 10), provided he or she can adequately demonstrate that the farm business is active and has been established for at least 6 years, and the proposal satisfies all other relevant policy criteria. There is, therefore, no need to review PPS21 on this matter.

Planning Applications for Renewable Energy Related Proposals

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for renewable energy related proposals have been refused in each of the last four years.

(AQW 4172/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the year 2007/08 8 applications were refused, in 2008/09 18 applications were refused, in 2009/10 25 applications were refused and in 2010/11 24 applications were refused. In the first quarter of the current business year 2011/12, 7 applications have been refused.

PPS 16

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on PPS 16.

(AQW 4216/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following public consultation on draft PPS 16, there was close engagement with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board over the summer.

The Environment Committee will consider the outcome of the consultation on 24th November and I will take account of the Committee's comments in finalising PPS16 for submission to the Executive.

Dog Fouling

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to address further the problem of dog fouling.

(AQW 4227/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Under Article 4 of the Litter (NI) Order 1994 ("the 1994 Order") it is currently an offence to permit a dog to foul. A person found guilty of this offence shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500). Under Article 6 of the 1994 Order a person may be offered the opportunity to discharge that liability by the payment of a fixed penalty which is currently £50.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 ("the 2011 Act") will strengthen the law in relation to dog fouling by the introduction of a new system of dog control orders. Breach of a dog control order will be an offence and the penalty on summary conviction will be a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000). The 2011 Act will also give a district council the flexibility to set the amount of fixed penalty payable in its district within the range £50 to £80. If a council does not set an amount, the default will be £75.

It is intended to bring the provisions of the 2011 Act into operation in April 2012.

Listed Buildings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many listed buildings have been demolished in the last three years without the permission of the Planning Service and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

(AQW 4229/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of cases investigated in each of the last 3 business years categorised on the Departments IT data base with a breach type of Works to Listed Buildings involving demolition is set out in the table below.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
Number of Works to Listed Building cases involving demolition	3	4	0	7

I have asked for an update on what further action has been taken in each of the seven cases. I will update the Member in due course.

Land at the old Gransha Boys High School, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment, under the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, for what use is land at the old Gransha Boys High School, Bangor, designated.

(AQW 4231/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP), published in November 2004, designates the area of land which was formally the site of Gransha Boys High School predominately for education use i.e. Proposal BR 35 – Education Use – Clanmorris, Gransha Road.

The remainder of the site (approximately 4 hectares) which was previously used as playing fields, is zoned for housing in BMAP under Zoning BR 05/10 – Playing fields at Clanmorris Campus, Balloo Road.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) were consulted as part of the plan preparation process.

No objections were received to the Education Use proposal in the Draft Plan. However, the SEELB submitted an objection to the Housing Zoning proposal and stated that the land should be retained for education use. This objection was subsequently withdrawn.

In March 2009, planning permission was granted on the part of the site that is designated for education use, for the demolition of existing buildings; construction of a new 850 pupil grammar school; synthetic pitches with floodlighting; grass pitches with 9m high ball-stop netting behind rugby posts; tennis courts; site works; car parking and ancillary works.

In the absence of objections to these specific proposals within BMAP, it is likely that they will be contained in the final Plan.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to detail the number of archaeologists employed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in each of the last five years; and (ii) whether the Agency has an adequate number of staff to assess and protect archaeological sites and monuments to ensure that they are protected from inappropriate change or damage from development activity.

(AQW 4293/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Provided below is a break-down of the number of archaeologists employed in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of archaeologists in post (posts identified rise in rank from Curatorial Grade F to C)	12	11	12	13	13

These posts have been supported over most of the last five years by an Archaeological Support Contract. However due to budget difficulties in 2011/12 the support contract ended in May 2011 and was not replaced at that time.

This combination of in-house and contracted staff had been sufficient to meet the Department's prioritised responsibilities in archaeological matters.

A new contract has recently been awarded that focuses on planning-related archaeological work. Approximately eight people are involved in delivering this service through a private company, of whom seven are archaeologists.

In the intervening period the Agency was not able to meet its target for responding to Planning consultations. The new arrangement is expected to resolve this. The contract will be kept under review by NIEA.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total cost incurred his Department on air travel (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010; and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010.

(AQW 4343/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department incurred the following costs on air travel:

- (i) Between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010 - £20,304.

- (ii) Between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010 - £56,326.

European Union Birds Directive and the EU Habitats Directive

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is undertaking to ensure that Northern Ireland complies with the European Union Birds Directive and the EU Habitats Directive; and whether he has any concerns about compliance with these Directives.

(AQW 4370/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The European Commission has instigated infraction proceedings against a number of Member States including the UK for alleged deficiencies in how the 'Wild Birds' Directive has been transposed into national legislation. The infraction against the UK involves all of the devolved administrations and the Department is working closely with the other UK authorities in order to address the Commission's concerns. Amending Regulations made in June 2011 address one aspect of the complaint. I am confident that the work being undertaken by the Department on further amending Regulations will address the remaining issues and satisfy the Commission that we are fully compliant with the Directive.

In respect of the Habitats Directive the Commission previously instigated proceedings arising from concerns about deterioration of a designated feature in the Strangford Lough Special Area of Conservation, namely the Horse Mussel (*Modiolus*) Biogenic Reefs. A joint DARD/DOE 3 year project, known as the *Modiolus* Restoration Research Project (MRRP), undertaken by Queens University has recently been completed. The MRRP aimed to advance restoration of the *Modiolus* beds and a recent report from the MRRP recommended additional actions to protect; restore and monitor the restoration of the *Modiolus* beds. I am determined that an action plan will be developed to assist restoration. I continue to press DARD to bring this about, to mitigate the risk of infraction, to ensure no significant economic loss and to ensure the lough develops positively.

Hydro Powered Economy

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what action he is taking to help make Northern Ireland a hydro powered economy.

(AQW 4381/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am keen to promote hydroelectric developments as reflected in my Department's planning policy. PPS18 aims to facilitate all forms of renewable energy generating facilities in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and to realise the benefits of renewable energy. In addition, the associated Best Practice Guidance details all other consents and authorisations required.

Hydroelectric Power

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what regulations and guidelines he intends to put in place to ensure that hydroelectric power is installed in a manner that is representative of the relevant stakeholders' needs and views.

(AQW 4382/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Best Practice Guidance accompanying PPS18 'Renewable Energy' provides advice and information on hydroelectric developments and their installation. The views of stakeholders are sought through the public notices, neighbour notifications and consultations associated with any planning application.

Plastic Bag Levy in Wales

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the implementation of the Plastic Bag Levy in Wales; and if any lessons can be learned in relation to the collection of the Levy.

(AQW 4425/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The levy scheme introduced in Wales does bear some comparison to my proposals for Northern Ireland. Significantly, neither scheme is confined to single use plastic bags; they both apply to all single use bags, including those made of paper.

There are however a number of major differences. In Wales, retailers are expected to distribute the profits to good causes. In Northern Ireland retailers will be required to forward the proceeds of the levy to central government. It will then be used to fund environmental projects and other government priorities.

In addition, the Welsh levy covers only single use bags. In due course I plan to extend the Northern Ireland levy to certain types of reusable bags; this will require new primary legislation.

In spite of these differences, there is still a great deal we can learn from the expertise and experience of those responsible for the development of the levy in Wales. Departmental officials have already had significant contact with their Welsh counterparts prior to the implementation of the levy in Wales on 1 October; further meetings are planned as the Welsh scheme becomes established. Similar exchanges are taking place with colleagues in Ireland. This engagement will assist us greatly in preparing for the implementation of the Northern Ireland levy.

Northern Ireland's Blue Flag Beaches

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment whether any analysis has been carried out to establish how clean Northern Ireland's blue flag beaches are in comparison with the rest of the UK.
(AQW 4426/11-15)

Mr Attwood: All Blue Flag beaches across the UK must meet the 'Excellent' standard of the EC Bathing Water Directive. The percentage of Northern Ireland's bathing waters meeting the 'Excellent' standard in 2011 compares very favourably with the rest of the UK. Based on the water quality criteria, 20 of our 24 bathing waters (83%) are eligible to apply for the Blue Flag in 2012. The overall percentage of UK bathing waters meeting 'Excellent' standard was 77%, with only Wales bettering the Northern Ireland performance (93%).

In addition, all 24 of our bathing beaches met the mandatory standards, making the 2011 season our best performance for 15 years. Pollution prevention investment is really paying off.

The Blue Flag scheme, which is administered by Tidy Northern Ireland has 32 criteria that cover all aspects of beach management. Blue Flag is a quality mark for all of the facilities that beach users can expect including excellent water quality. Not all Bathing Water Operators apply to the Blue Flag Scheme even though they would be eligible under the water quality criteria. There may be deficiencies, for example in access or toilet provision that cannot easily be addressed. Just 7 of our local beaches were awarded the Blue Flag in 2011, although 9 others were awarded either the Seaside or the Green Coast Award.

I have recently hosted two Good Beach Summits. The four-strand Action Plan specifically identified that increased participation in award schemes would help to support the coastal economy. I have already written to all of our coastal councils and other beach operators to encourage increased participation in such schemes.

I firmly believe that in Northern Ireland improved environmental quality can go hand in hand with improved economic opportunity. The more both local and overseas visitors enjoy our great natural assets, the more will be spent locally and the stronger our economy will become.

Planning Management Board

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail how many planning application decisions have been referred to the Planning Management Board in each of the last five years, and of these, how many decisions have been overturned.

(AQW 4434/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below shows the number of planning applications referred to the Planning Management Board in each of the last five calendar years, and of those, the number of decisions which have been overturned.

	Number of applications referred for consideration as MBR	Number accepted as MBR	Number of MBRs where Decision Overturned
2010	39	1	0
2009	45	5	3
2008	44	10	5
2007	43	3	0
2006	62	3	0

Planning Management Board

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what is the average length of time it takes the Planning Management Board to consider a referral and make a decision.

(AQW 4452/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of applications referred to and accepted by the Management Board in the last five years along with the median length of time to process them for each year is shown in the table below.

Year	Number applications Accepted as MBR	Median Length of time to process (days)
2010	1	29
2009	5	313
2008	10	207
2007	3	265
2006	3	446

Planning Application for Beatrice Road, Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has met, or intends to meet, with representatives of Sammy Mellons in relation to the planning application for Beatrice Road, Bangor; and, if so, whether he would be willing to meet with representatives of SOS Bangor, a residents' group which is opposed to the development.

(AQW 4491/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have not met nor do I have any plans to meet representatives of S Mellon & Sons Ltd in relation to their current planning application. The application (Ref: W/2010/0132/F) remains under consideration.

Landfill Sites

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost of using landfill sites in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4524/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The cost of using landfill sites for the disposal of waste generally falls under Landfill Tax obligations and landfill site gate fees.

Landfill site operators are liable to pay Landfill Tax and may pass on the cost by way of increased charges to those disposing of waste at their sites. There are two rates of landfill tax – a standard rate (currently £56 per tonne) for active wastes such as household wastes which decay, and a lower rate (currently £2.50 per tonne) for inactive or inert wastes.

The standard and lower rates of landfill tax for the last three years are as follows:

Tax Year	Standard Rate of Landfill Tax (per tonne)	Lower Rate of Landfill Tax (per tonne)
2009/10	£40	£2.50
2010/11	£48	£2.50
2011/12	£56	£2.50

Landfill site operators may also charge a discretionary gate fee which may vary from operator to operator depending on market forces. The Department does not hold financial details on gate fees but the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Gate Fees Report 2011 gives gate fees in Northern Ireland (excluding landfill tax and haulage) as ranging from £24 to £41 per tonne.

Department for Transport's Consultation Document 'Developing a Sustainable Framework for Aviation: Scoping Document'

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of chapter 4 of the Department for Transport's consultation document 'Developing a sustainable framework for aviation: scoping document' in relation to George Best Belfast City Airport.

(AQW 4577/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My officials have provided comments to the Department for Regional Development (DRD) on certain noise aspects of the DfT scoping document. DRD is responsible for co-ordinating a Northern Ireland response to the consultation.

The comments provided were in relation to the impacts of aviation on local communities, sustainable surface access to airports, seeking clarification on the concept of a "noise envelope" around airports and new aircraft technology. DRD is facilitating this NICS wide consultation and the comments will feed into the overall response to DfT.

Legislation in Relation to Allotments

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to introduce legislation in relation to allotments.

(AQW 4603/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Legislation already exists regarding the provision of allotments. The Allotments Act (Northern Ireland) 1932 (as amended) enables district councils in Northern Ireland to provide, at their discretion, allotments for use by residents in their areas. In providing allotments, the 1932 Act requires councils to make regulations concerning the control and management of their allotments.

The Department, as part of a suite of provisions to relax controls over certain functions of councils under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, removed the need for councils to seek Departmental approval throughout the 1932 Act.

Planning Application for Wind Turbines

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment what is the average length of time the Planning Service takes to make a decision on a planning application for a wind turbine.

(AQW 4651/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The median length of time it took to reach a decision on a planning application for wind turbines in 2010/11 was 120 working days or 24 weeks.

Planning Applications for Renewable Energy

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for renewable energy are awaiting decision.

(AQW 4652/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department is currently processing 861 planning applications for renewable energy development.

Department of Finance and Personnel

INTERREG IVA Programme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the INTERREG IVA Programme; and when further calls for funding will be made.

(AQW 4062/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): INTERREG IVA has been slow both to commit and to spend resources. DFP, in liaising with SEUPB and the relevant accountable departments, has implemented a number of recent changes in an attempt to increase the speed of allocation and project spend of projects to ensure that EU spending targets are achieved and no funding decommitted.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is currently processing approximately forty applications for INTERREG IVA funding. It is expected that these will have been fully assessed by early 2012 after which there will be further calls until the remaining Programme budget has been allocated.

SEUPB will recommend on the number, value and thematic focus of envisaged calls once the current round of assessments is complete and the amount of resource still to be allocated has been confirmed.

Damages (Asbestos Related Conditions) Northern Ireland Act 2011

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what arrangements have been put in place for people to apply for compensation under the Damages (Asbestos Related Conditions) Northern Ireland Act 2011.

(AQW 4103/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am currently considering the arrangements for the commencement of the Act. However, I would wish to emphasise that the Act merely allows for certain claims for damages to be made. It does not provide for an automatic payment of damages and my Department will have no role with regard to individual claims. Accordingly, when the Act is commenced, each claimant will have to pursue his or her own claim and must seek his or her own legal advice, which will take account of his or her circumstances.

Energy Brokering

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has considered using energy brokering across the public sector to reduce energy costs.

(AQW 4120/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) of my Department are proposing to put in place suitable structure and resources to undertake pan-government contracts for the procurement of common goods and services. One of these categories will be energy procurement. As part of the development of a procurement strategy for energy, CPD will review future needs and demands along

with delivery options in consultation with the sector to ensure the agreed strategy provides the overall best value for money.

Unemployed People

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people have been unemployed for more than three years in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4152/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Labour Force Survey estimates detailing the number of people who have been unemployed, for three years or more, in each of the last five years can be found in the table below.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHO HAVE BEEN UNEMPLOYED FOR THREE YEARS OR MORE, 2007 - 2011.

Period	Total ¹
April - June 2007	5,000
April - June 2008	2,000
April - June 2009	6,000
April - June 2010	4,000
April - June 2011	7,000

1 Estimates for those unemployed for three years or more are based on a relatively small sample size and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey

Relocation of Government Offices

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, when considering options for the relocation of Government offices, particularly departmental offices, what account will be taken of the unused land and property holdings owned by his Department which have a maintenance budget to be met.

(AQW 4200/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The first stage in any business case to consider relocation of NICS Government offices is the identification of a 'long list' of options. In refining this list the department in question takes account of potential solutions from within the existing government estate including consideration of surplus land or property holdings.

Savings associated with reduced on-going maintenance costs related to the existing land/property holdings are taken into account in the financial analysis which forms part of the assessment of the shortlisted options.

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry Regeneration Programme

Mr Eastwood asked Minister of Finance and Personnel, with regard to the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme, to detail (i) the funds from his current budget that have been committed to projects under this programme; (ii) the projects that are being funded; and (iii) the start dates for these projects.

(AQW 4247/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Although supportive of the Ilex One Plan regeneration initiative and working in an advisory capacity, DFP has no direct involvement in terms of specific project delivery associated with the plan.

Rating of Vacant Properties

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an estimate of the amount that will be raised by the rating of vacant properties in the 2012/13 financial year.

(AQW 4258/11-15)

Mr Wilson: When the Executive agreed to introduce the rating of empty homes in Northern Ireland my Department estimated the figure to be up to £10 million for the first full year of operation, that is 2012/13.

The measure was introduced on 1 October and already, LPS has sent out bills totalling £10 million for the half year. However, this is a new taxation measure and the collectable amount will be significantly less than that due to a number of reasons.

- Firstly, some owners may be able to legitimately claim that their properties are not capable of habitation without substantial repairs being carried out; in which case, these properties will be removed from the valuation list.
- Secondly, there are a number of exclusions from this measure, such as the person entitled to possession (which is usually the owner) is in a nursing home. There are also exclusions for homes subject to probate, 'listed' properties and for the first owner of new never occupied properties.
- Finally, it is expected that a number of properties will be occupied, becoming liable for rates in the normal way and therefore may not be counted directly as revenue realised from the rating of empty homes.

Nevertheless, I remain reasonably confident that the predicted revenue levels will be achieved. Having said that, if this measure is successful in bringing properties on to the market for sale or let, the direct revenues from the rating of empty homes are likely to diminish over time as ratepayers make decisions that will ensure they are occupied rather than lying vacant and incurring rates. Either way, this will increase the overall tax base by an equal amount.

Rates Debt

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the debt from rates that has been written-off by his Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4259/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Land & Property Services Rating debt that has been written-off in each year for the last five years for which information is available and published in the LPS Annual Report & Accounts and the previous Rate Collection Agency Annual Report and Accounts is shown in the table below.

Year	Written-off as Irrecoverable (Millions)
2006-07	£1.3
2007-08	£0.9
2008-09	£5.8
2009-10	£10.2
2010-11	£15.2

Unpaid Rates

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the level of unpaid rates in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4260/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The amount of unpaid rates is available for the last two years (2009/10 and 2010/11) only. At the end of March 2011 a total of £89M was left unpaid for the rating assessments raised during the 2010/11 financial year. At the end of March 2010 a total of £95M was left unpaid for rating assessments raised during the 2009/10 financial year.

A5 Project

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the level of funding the Executive has allocated to the A5 project; and (ii) whether he can confirm that if the project is scrapped, given that the Irish Government has postponed its contribution to the project, the funds due to be spent in the North West will still be available for infrastructure projects in the North West.

(AQW 4296/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The spending profile of the A5 project is a matter for the DRD Minister to address. With regard to how the funds allocated to the A5 will now be used, the Executive is currently considering the implications of the RoI decision to defer payment and how these funds can be re-allocated.

Revised Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when the revised Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers will be published.

(AQW 4297/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A revised Code of Practice is being prepared and will be issued to departments in due course. At that point I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the Assembly library.

Social Clauses

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to what extent social clauses are being applied as conditions of procurement by the Central Procurement Directorate.

(AQW 4372/11-15)

Mr Wilson: All procurement contracts awarded by Central Procurement Directorate include standard clauses requiring compliance with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment, anti-discrimination and health & safety legislation.

For construction related contracts contractual obligations routinely include the provision of work opportunities for the unemployed, apprentices and students on construction related courses.

For supplies and services contracts the scope for including employment obligations is more limited as these contracts typically have a lower value. However they are applied where the scope exists.

VAT Rates and Regulations for Take-away Food

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he intends to make any representations to the Treasury in relation to the differences in VAT rates and regulations for take-away food in Northern Ireland compare to the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 4391/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rate of Value Added Tax (VAT) is a Reserved Matter for HM Treasury to determine. In announcing the increase in the standard rate of VAT to 20 per cent in Budget 2010, the Chancellor indicated that this was one of a series of measures to tackle the deficit.

In general, cold take away food is zero rated in both jurisdictions while a 9% reduced rate is applied to hot take away food in the Republic of Ireland compared to the standard rate of 20% which is applied to hot take away food in the UK.

There are no indications that the Government would be willing to consider reducing VAT on hot take away food to make it comparable with the rate in the Republic of Ireland. Therefore I have not had, nor do I intend to have any discussions with the Treasury in this regard.

VAT in the Republic of Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he intends to make representations to the Treasury in relation to companies that trade in Northern Ireland, but are registered for VAT in the Republic of Ireland, and pay VAT on profits at Republic of Ireland rates.

(AQW 4400/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Value Added Tax (VAT) is not chargeable on profits. It is a tax that is charged on most goods and services that VAT-registered businesses provide in the UK. It is also charged on goods and some services that are imported from countries outside the European Union (EU), and brought into the UK from other EU countries, including the Republic of Ireland.

The rules governing VAT registration and its payment are very detailed and cover many eventualities. The specific requirements in each instance depend on a number of factors, principally whether the trade is a supply of a good or service, the nature of that good or service and where that supply actually takes place.

Determining compliance with, and enforcement of these requirements is a matter for HM Customs and Revenue and therefore I do not intend raising this matter with the Treasury. Any specific concerns in this regard should be referred to HMRC together with the appropriate evidence.

British Government's £500 million Growing Places Fund

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the £50 million allocated to the devolved administrations from the British Government's £500 million Growing Places Fund (i) how much will be allocated to projects in Northern Ireland; (ii) how he will ensure that the relevant businesses and entrepreneurs receive the funding in a timely manner; and (iii) to outline the application process.

(AQW 4416/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Communities and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles and the Transport Secretary Justine Greening announced the details of the Growing Places Fund on 7th November 2011.

Of the £500million announced, £250 million is expenditure that is currently within existing budgets in England. However £250 million has been provided to the fund from the Treasury Reserve. As a consequence of this, the Northern Ireland Executive received £7,039,000 in additional capital expenditure funding for 2011-12, through the Barnett Formula.

However, any and all allocations received from the Barnett Formula are unhypothecated, that is to say that it is for the Executive to determine how best to deploy these funds in accordance with local needs and priorities.

The additional funding arising from this Barnett consequential will be included in the overall funding position considered by the Executive as part of the 2011-12 January Monitoring round.

Steps to Work Programme

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail his response to the Department for Employment and Learning's October Monitoring Round bid for an additional £9.2 million for the Steps to Work Programme, and an additional £3 million for the Step Ahead Programme to meet the demands being placed on these programmes as a result of rising unemployment.

(AQW 4418/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I was pleased that the Executive agreed to the allocation of an additional £5 million to the Department for Employment and Learning at the October Monitoring Round for the Steps to

Work Programme, which will go some considerable way to addressing the increased demand on the Programme. I had concerns based on the information provided to my Department by the Department for Employment and Learning that the additional £3 million sought for the Step Ahead Programme would not be

spent in this financial year, and given the competition for limited resources regrettably this bid could not be supported.

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme to date, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 4455/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of non-domestic properties in each constituency that have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only. The latest figures available, as at 13th November 2011, indicate that a total of 23,789 non-domestic premises have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. The table overleaf indicates the number of properties in each District Council area that have benefited.

District Council Area	Number of Properties at 13th November 2011 that have received SBRR
Antrim	613
Ards	1,076
Armagh	984
Ballymena	994
Ballymoney	476
Banbridge	650
Belfast	3,384
Carrickfergus	399
Castlereagh	389
Coleraine	947
Cookstown	566
Craigavon	1,223
Derry	1,211
Down	1,054
Dungannon & S.Tyrone	1,004
Fermanagh	1,274
Larne	536
Limavady	461
Lisburn	1,101
Magherafelt	780
Moyle	467
Newry & Mourne	1,372

District Council Area	Number of Properties at 13th November 2011 that have received SBRR
Newtownabbey	763
North Down	707
Omagh	783
Strabane	575
Total	23,789

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry Regeneration Programme

Mr Eastwood asked Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, with regard to the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme, to detail (i) the funds from his current budget that have been committed to projects under this programme; (ii) the projects that are being funded; and (iii) the start dates for these projects.

(AQW 4246/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The Ilex Plan identifies a number of priorities for Health, and Health and Social Care (HSC) Agencies have been closely involved in the Plan's development and are supportive of it.

The priorities that have been identified for health and social care are consistent with HSC priorities. Although not necessarily directly funded under the Ilex Plan, there are a wide range of projects, some of which have already been in place, which contribute to agreed priorities including:

- pilot Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme for which £350k per annum has been allocated
- Family Support Hubs (Early Intervention Family Support Partnerships) - £420k has been allocated to these Partnerships
- Surestart schemes in the Council area in Edenballymore (£534,517), Shantallow (£669,510) and Waterside (£424,933).

In addition the PHA are funding projects/ programmes in the Derry City Council amounting to an investment of £527,177. These are contributing to the following priority areas for action -

- Alcohol Culture - £124,000
- Sustainable Communities - £224,377
- Obesity - £56,500
- Mental Health/emotional wellbeing - £114,000 (£50k subject to approval)
- Promoting active ageing - £8,300.00

Derry also benefits from a number of programmes which are delivered more widely or regionally.

It is also notable that a number of CAWT projects are in place which relate to the Ilex agenda and consideration is being given to how these may be mainstreamed if they prove successful.

Public Contracts

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list all the current public contracts within his Department, including to whom each contract was awarded; how the contracts were advertised; and when each contract is next due for tender.

(AQW 4255/11-15)

Mr Poots: Public contracts within the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) fall into three broad categories:

- i those orders placed under 'centralised frameworks' drawn up and managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Central Procurement Directorate (CPD);
- ii. those specifically tendered for DHSSPS purposes; and
- iii. those pre-RPA contracts entered into by the Department when, through its Directorate of Information Systems, it had responsibility for IT systems in the health and social care sector.

The first category covers such consumables as stationery and ICT supplies, software support, catering and other ancillary supplies. As noted above, the base contracts are let by CPD; the Department simply 'calls off' an order as and when needed. The information requested is not, therefore, held by DHSSPS.

The second category essentially comprises administrative support and management consultancy, as follows.

Name of Contract	Awarded to	How Advertised	Renewal/Expiry Date
To review the transfer of prison healthcare	Cogent Management Consulting LLP	Tendered through CPD and advertised through their website	Not to be renewed
Media Monitoring and Evaluation	Kantar	Through Executive Information Service at OFMdfM on behalf all departments	Due for renewal in 2012 with an option for three more years
Asset/Property management system for buildings in the Health Estate	Oakleaf 3i	OJEU contract notice	To be re-tendered in May 2013
Obtaining Planning Permission for Downe Hospital Site	BDP	OJEU by CoPE Health Estates	March 2012 – not to be renewed
Obtaining Planning Permission for Belvoir Park Hospital Site	Drivers Jonas	OJEU by CoPE Health Estates	December 2011 – Not to be renewed
External Panel to the Review of HSC in Northern Ireland	5 Independent experts	STA	12 week duration – not to be renewed
Storage and distribution services for ambient pandemic or emergency pharmaceuticals	An exemption under Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has been applied.	OJEU	2015/16

Name of Contract	Awarded to	How Advertised	Renewal/Expiry Date
Finance, Procurement and Logistics system for the HSC Shared Services project within the HSC Business Services Transformation Project	Advanced Business Solutions	In compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (Amended) which implement the EU Public Sector Procurement Directive (2004/18/EC)	October 2021
Human Resources, Payroll and Travel and Subsistence system for the HSC Shared Services project within the HSC Business Services Transformation Project	AXON	In compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (Amended) which implement the EU Public Sector Procurement Directive (2004/18/EC)	October 2021
An evaluation of the Suicide Prevention Strategy	Moore Stephen	Tendered through CPD – open to all suppliers	31 May 2012
Strategic Adviser to BSTP	Grant Thornton	Tendered through CPD – open to all suppliers	31 March 2012
IT for oral hearings of the Hyponatraemia Enquiry	Wordwave International	Tendered through CPD – EU Open	31 December 2012
IT for oral hearings of the Hyponatraemia Enquiry	Wordwave International	Tendered through CPD – EU Open	31 December 2012
IT for oral hearings of the Hyponatraemia Enquiry	Internet Videocommunications	Tendered through CPD – EU Open	31 December 2012

The third category is the largest, both as regards number of contracts and value. All were procured in compliance with the public procurement requirements in force at the time eg notices, where applicable, in the Official Journal of the EU (or, for the older contracts, the Official Journal of the EC) and compliance with the principles of transparency and fair competition. The other details requested are shown in the table below

Name of Contract	Awarded to	Renewal/Expiry date
Development & Run Time Licences +support for Acucobol	Acucorp/Micro Focus	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Technical Support and Software Upgrade Agreement for ACE appliances.	BSS	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Regional theatre management system	BT	02/10/12
Licence Agreement -Paint Shop Pro & Animation Shop 3	Digital Workshop	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use

Name of Contract	Awarded to	Renewal/Expiry date
Provision of legal services in support of Northern Ireland Health & Social Care	DLA Piper UK LLP	24/10/2012
Provision of legal services in support of Northern Ireland Health & Social Care	DLA Piper UK LLP	24/10/2012
NI Child Health System	NI Child Health System	31/12/2011
Unidata	IBM - Unidata (ex Informix)	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Lotus Passport Programme	Lotus	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Facilities Management services	Fujitsu (ex ICL/CFM)	31/03/2013
EPES	HP	28/07/2014
Licence Agreement - Exceed	Hummingbird	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Unidata	IBM - Unidata (ex Informix)	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Lotus Passport Programme	Lotus	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Microsoft Services premier support	MICROSOFT	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Escrow agreement	NCC/Isoft	Expected termination 31/10/2015
Conductor32 Licence supply and support	ndl - metascybe	31/03/2012
Third Party Maintenance (peripherals & Data Comms)	Northgate IS (ex SX3/Aurora)	30/09/2012
Licence supply and support	Oracle	Software maintenance - paid each year while product in use
Software Support (FPS Dental, Pharmaceutical, BACS)	Parity	31/03/2014
HSC Payroll Support	Parity	07/09/2013
Business Object Maintenance Support and Renewal for Business Objects Enterprise Premium (regional licence)	SAP	31/10/2012
HostAccess Licence Supply and Support	Quovadx	Extended to 30/11/2011 and will be further extended
NIPACS	Sectra Ltd	29/09/2018

HostAccess Licence Supply and Support	Quovadx	Extended to 30/11/2011 and will be further extended
e-intranet software licence and support	Serengeti	31/01/2012
IBM Hardware Maintenance Agreement	ServiceSuite	30/06/2013
Licence Agreement-Sophos	Sophos	31/03/2015
Supply/support infrastuctural and managed services	Steria	Contractor may teminate without cause on or after 31/07/2013
Licence supply and support	Texthelp Systems Ltd	01/06/2012
Licence supply and support	Texthelp Systems Ltd	01/06/2012
Systems Supply (PAS)	Torex isoft (ex SMS)	31/10/2015
Software Support (PAS)	Torex isoft (ex SMS)	31/10/2015

Acute Stroke Patients

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last five years, to detail the percentage of acute stroke patients who were admitted directly to a Stroke Unit, broken down by each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 4263/11-15)

Mr Poots: Where possible the table below details the percentage of acute stroke patients admitted directly to a Stroke Unit in each of the last five years.

Health and Social Care Trust	% of patients admitted directly to a Stroke Unit				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Belfast	50%	47%	42%	42%	43%
Northern	26%	29%	31%	33%	36%
South Eastern	*	*	*	24%	42%
Southern	*	*	*	*	*
Western	37%	35%	35%	42%	32%

* Information for South Eastern Trust is not available for years before 2009/10 as patients were usually admitted to an assessment ward before being transferred to a stroke unit.

* Southern Trust are not able to provide this information as it has only started to be collated from April 2011.

Funding Allocated to Homelessness Organisations

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) the names of all homelessness projects funded by the Western Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) the level of funding (a) applied for; (b) granted to each project; and (iii) the total amount of funding allocated to homelessness organisations.

(AQW 4282/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details the funding provided in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area by HSC bodies for homelessness projects during 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Homelessness Organisation	2010/11	2009/10	Funding Provider
Damien House	£73,027	£155,004	Western HSCT
Ramona House	£102,232	£103,863	Western HSCT
House in the Wells	£15,026	£15,266	Western HSCT
Methodist City Missions.	£71,719	£72,863	Western HSCT
Foyle Haven	£99,000	£96,176	Public Health Agency
Solace-Arch Healthy	£86,000	£83,933	Public Health Agency
First Housing Aid and Support Services	£19,500	£11,987	Public Health Agency
Fermanagh New Horizons	£34,000	£33,620	Public Health Agency
NIHE in association with the Health & Social Care Board	£260,000	£260,000	Health & Social Care Board
Total Funding	£760,504	£832,712	

Details of funding for 2008/09 can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

All homelessness projects funded by the Western Health and Social Care Trust have contracts or service level agreements in place for the provision of services. The contract values are agreed and reviewed annually and in that context, funding is not applied for.

£2,316,959 was allocated to homelessness organisations across Northern Ireland in 2009/10 and £2,254,311 was allocated in 2010/11. Details of funding for 2008/09 can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Speech and Language Therapy Graduates

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to assist speech and language therapy graduates in finding employment.

(AQW 4304/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of student places commissioned by my Department each year reflects both the current and projected level of demand for newly qualified speech and language therapists. In this way the commissioning process aims to achieve a balance in supply and demand to ensure employment opportunity for the newly qualified. The commissioned number of places in 2011/12 is 30 and the overall vacancy headcount at 31 March 2011 for speech and language therapists is 10.

My Department carries out regular workforce reviews for each clinical professional group, including speech and language therapy. These reviews inform decision-making on issues impacting on workforce supply and demand.

Medical Reports of Young Children

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether it is protocol to withhold medical reports of young children from their parents; and if so, to explain the reasons.

(AQW 4312/11-15)

Mr Poots: The protocols on parental access to the medical records of their children are contained in the General Medical Council ethical guidance “0-18 years” and underpinned by the provisions of the Access to Health Records (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

Alternative Therapies Scheme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce the Alternative Therapies Scheme provided by Get Well NI, which was piloted in GP practices in Belfast and Derry in 2008.

(AQW 4315/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand the Complementary and Alternate Medicines (CAM) Pilot Project in 2007/2008 received very positive support from patient recipients. Since taking up my role as Health Minister I have been faced with taking many difficult decisions and in the light of the constrained budgetary environment I need to focus my resources on sustaining existing frontline health and social care services. As a result it is not possible to allocate any funding for CAM services during the current spending period.

Invoices for Construction Work

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what proportion of invoices for construction work have been paid on time by his Department, and its arm’s-length bodies, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4333/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department makes no payments in connection with construction work since it has no contracts for construction works and the Department is not aware of any issues in connection with the timeliness of payment for construction work.

The six Health and Social Care Trusts and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service were asked to provide information with regard to the proportion of invoices for construction work that have been paid on time in each of the last three years. These bodies have indicated that this information is not held in a form that permits ready access and that it would require significant resources to carry out a manual exercise to separately identify invoices for construction work from all other invoices so as to report on the proportion that have been paid on time in the past three years.

In light of this query my Department will write to the six Health and Social Care Trusts and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and ask if they have received any formal complaints, or are aware of any issues, in connection with the timeliness of payment for construction work.

Graduate Psychologists

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the level of funding allocated to train graduate psychologists; (ii) how many graduate psychologists have applied for (a) training posts; and (b) permanent posts; and (iii) how many graduates have been successful in being awarded a permanent post, broken down by (a) Health and Social Care Trust area; and (b) constituency.

(AQW 4342/11-15)

Mr Poots: Recruitment data is generally available for the last 3 years only. Prior to this, Trusts operated in “legacy” recruitment teams in line with the former Trusts, and co-ordinated information from this period is not readily available.

The Department currently spends £1.5 million per year in funding 13 places on the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology course at Queens University Belfast. Prospective students must hold a 2.1 degree in Psychology to be considered for a place.

Data on the number of applications for posts and those awarded to psychology graduates is not collected and hence is not available.

Final Salary Pension Scheme

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many health professionals (i) have been; and (ii) will be affected by (a) recent; and (b) future pension changes to the final salary pension scheme.

(AQW 4359/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department is currently consulting on proposed changes to member contribution rates for the HSC Pension Scheme and no decisions will be taken on the detail of changes to the Scheme until the result of the consultation has been considered.

Retired Health Service Workers: Pensions

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average pension paid to retired health service workers.

(AQW 4360/11-15)

Mr Poots: The average pension paid to retired health service workers is £7 900 per annum

Discussions with Public Sector Unions

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any discussions he has had with public sector unions to date.

(AQW 4361/11-15)

Mr Poots: I met with TUS Joint Secretaries shortly after taking up office and since then I have had a number of further meetings including a meeting with the partnership forum which is made up of TUS, Departmental Officials and Health Service Management. I have also met with Unison on 15 September and on Monday last I met with representatives from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. I have told TUS that my door is always open and I am happy to talk with them anytime.

Cardiac Surgical Operations

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current cost to the Health Service of cardiac surgical operations being carried on patients resident in Northern Ireland who have surgery in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) the Republic of Ireland; and (iii) Great Britain.

(AQW 4368/11-15)

Mr Poots: The latest available costs of cardiac surgical operations for patients resident in Northern Ireland are as follows;

- i) The 2009-10 cost for patients who have surgery in Northern Ireland is £17.2m.
- ii) The 2010-11 cost for patients who have surgery in the Republic of Ireland is £3m.
- iii) The 2010-11 cost for patients who have surgery in Great Britain is £0.7m.

Cardiac Surgical Operations

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average cost to the Health Service of a cardiac surgical operation, including patient and family travel and accommodation, for patients resident in Northern Ireland who have surgery in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) the Republic of Ireland; and (iii) Great Britain.

(AQW 4369/11-15)

Mr Poots: The latest available average unit costs of cardiac surgical operations, including patient and family travel and accommodation, for patients resident in Northern Ireland are as follows;

- i) The 2009-10 average unit cost for patients treated in Northern Ireland is £18,924.
- ii) The 2010-11 average unit cost for patients treated in the Republic of Ireland is £18,750.
- iii) The 2010-11 average unit cost for patients treated in Great Britain is £14,200.

Hospital's Paediatrics Department

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many consultants work at each hospital's paediatrics department; and what is the average daily number of patients they treat. **(AQW 4376/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The number of consultants working in paediatric departments by hospital is not centrally available from DHSSPS as staff may work across hospital sites and may provide both hospital and community services. Therefore the total number of consultants recorded as working in paediatric hospital and community services (excluding mental health) by HSC Trust is provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: CONSULTANTS WITHIN PAEDIATRICS SERVICES (EXCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH) AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2010

HSC Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	36	33.21
Northern	15	13.95
South Eastern	10	9.25
Southern	14	13.4
Western	15	14.7

Source: Human Resource Management System

Notes:

- Figures exclude staff with a whole-time equivalent (WTE) less than or equal to 0.03 and staff on career breaks.

Information is not collected centrally on all contacts a patient may have with a paediatric consultant. We are, however, able to provide information on the number of inpatient admissions and outpatient attendances within a paediatric specialty. These are provided in the form of average daily numbers in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF INPATIENT ADMISSIONS TO PAEDIATRIC SPECIALTIES DURING 2010/11

Hospital	Average Daily Number of Admissions
Altnagelvin	9.5
Antrim	8.6
Causeway	4.0
Craigavon	7.1
Daisy Hill	4.3
Erne	5.2
Lagan Valley	0.1
Mid Ulster	0
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	12.5
Royal Maternity	1.2
Royal Victoria	0
Tyrone County	0

Hospital	Average Daily Number of Admissions
Ulster	12.5

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Notes:

- 1 Paediatric Specialties have been defined as (142) Paediatric Dentistry, (171) Paediatric Surgery, (420) Paediatrics and (421) Paediatric Neurology.
- 2 It must be noted that the data presented in Tables 2 and 3 will not represent all patients that will come into contact with a paediatric consultant.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE DAILY OUTPATIENT ATTENDANCES (SEEN - NEW AND REVIEW) DURING 2010/11 - PAEDIATRIC SPECIALTIES

HSC Hospital	Average Daily Number of Attendances
Belfast City	0.2
Ards	2.7
Ulster	20.1
Royal Victoria	0.0
Royal Maternity	2.9
RBHSC	55.8
Muckamore Abbey	7.1
Lagan Valley	0.9
Downe	1.0
Causeway Hospital	11.5
Moyle	1.9
Whiteabbey	1.0
Mid Ulster	3.6
Antrim	15.3
Waveney	2.6
Armagh Community	5.2
South Tyrone	3.3
Banbridge	1.4
Lurgan	0.2
Craigavon Area	11.5
Daisy Hill	8.9
Bluestone (formerly Craigavon Area PNU)	0.8
Altnagelvin Area	20.4
Roe Valley (Outpatients)	0.4
Gransha	1.9

HSC Hospital	Average Daily Number of Attendances
Erne	7.9
Tyrone County	5.7

Source: Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR)

Notes:

- 3 Paediatric Specialties have been defined as (142) Paediatric Dentistry, (171) Paediatric Surgery, (420) Paediatrics and (421) Paediatric Neurology.
- 4 It must be noted that the data presented in Tables 2 and 3 will not represent all patients that will come into contact with a paediatric consultant.

Kinship Care

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the agreed definitions used by Social Services for Kinship Care arrangements, broken down (i) by Health and Social Care Trust area; and (ii) constituency.

(AQW 4384/11-15)

Mr Poots: The agreed definition of kinship care is that set out in the guidance, Definitions of private family arrangements, private fostering and kinship foster care, which was issued by the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board to all HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland in 2009. The guidance stipulates that kinship foster carers are 'relatives', as defined by Article 2 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995), or friends of looked after children. The guidance also directs Trusts that the full looked after children's provisions in listed Regulations apply to children, who are cared for under kinship arrangements. The listed Regulations are The Foster Placement Regulations 1996; The Arrangements for the Placement of Children Regulations 1996; The Review of Children's Cases Regulations; The Representation Procedures Regulation 1996; and The Children (Leaving Care) Regulations 2005.

Kinship Care

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what research his Department has carried out to assess the benefits of a child being placed with a Kinship carer as opposed to a child being placed in care.

(AQW 4403/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not carried out any comparative research in this area.

Musgrave Park Hospital: Orthopaedic Consultation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what procedure is followed at Musgrave Park Hospital when a GP refers a patient for an urgent orthopaedic consultation; (ii) what staff grade determines the priority in relation to the allocation of an appointment; and (iii) can the appointment priority status, as stated in the original GP referral, be downgraded.

(AQW 4420/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) & (ii) GP referrals to Musgrave Park Hospital are triaged by a senior nursing team; the senior nursing team also determines the priority in relation to the allocation of an appointment.
- (ii) The priority status of a referral can be downgraded; however, if there are any queries regarding this they are then passed to a Consultant. Decisions are based on clinical judgment and patients with the same clinical need are treated in chronological order on grounds of fairness, and to minimise the waiting time for all patients.

Kinship Carers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support, financial or otherwise, is available from his Department or the Health and Social Care Trusts for Kinship carers.

(AQW 4429/11-15)

Mr Poots: From the time the child is placed by social services carers, both kinship (family/friends) and non-kinship (stranger) foster carers, are paid the same allowances. The allowances from 1 April 2011 are detailed below. Some children may be entitled to enhanced allowances if they have particular needs and these are determined by individual assessment. All approved foster carers, kinship and non-kinship, are provided with a link worker support whose role is to support and advocate for the foster carer so that the needs of the child in placement can be fully met. In addition, the placing Trust provides a training programme delivered by a Senior Practitioner to meet specific assessed needs. Kinship and non-kinship foster carers also receive support from the organisation, Fostering Achievement, to meet the identified educational needs of the child and to facilitate participation in sport and other activities to promote the child's self-esteem and self-confidence. These additional supports have proved vital to those caring for children with additional needs.

Age Group	Per Week	Per 4 Weeks	Per Annum
0-4	£114.03	£456.12	£5929.56
5-10	£126.00	£504.00	£6552.00
11-15	£145.04	£580.16	£7542.08
16+	£168.00	£672.00	£8736.00

Foster Carers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support, financial or otherwise, is available from his Department or the Health and Social Care Trusts for foster carers.

(AQW 4430/11-15)

Mr Poots: From the time the child is placed by social services carers, both kinship (family/friends) and non-kinship (stranger) foster carers, are paid the same allowances. The allowances from 1 April 2011 are detailed below. Some children may be entitled to enhanced allowances if they have particular needs and these are determined by individual assessment. All approved foster carers, kinship and non-kinship, are provided with a link worker support whose role is to support and advocate for the foster carer so that the needs of the child in placement can be fully met. In addition, the placing Trust provides a training programme delivered by a Senior Practitioner to meet specific assessed needs. Kinship and non-kinship foster carers also receive support from the organisation, Fostering Achievement, to meet the identified educational needs of the child and to facilitate participation in sport and other activities to promote the child's self-esteem and self-confidence. These additional supports have proved vital to those caring for children with additional needs.

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16+	£168.00	£672.00	£8736.00

Children in Informal Kinship Care

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to provide health and dental care for children in informal Kinship Care.

(AQW 4468/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under Article 2 of the Health and Social Care Reform Act (NI) 2009 my Department is required to provide, or secure the provision of, health and social care to all persons in Northern Ireland, which by default extends to those in informal kinship care.

Kinship Care

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to introduce a Kinship Care policy.

(AQW 4469/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no plans to introduce a specific kinship care policy at this stage. However, it is intended to introduce standards and guidance for kinship foster carers early in 2012.

Foster Carers from the Travelling Community

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in order to preserve cultural identity, how many registered foster carers come from the Travelling Community.

(AQW 4526/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts are encouraged to recruit foster carers from the communities from which children enter the care system. There is a duty under Article 18 (b) and Schedule 2 of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, where it is in keeping with the child's best interests, to endeavour to place children within their family or wider family circle.

REGISTERED FOSTER CARERS FROM THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY

Trust	Registered Foster Carers from Travelling Community
Northern	Nil
Southern	Nil
South Eastern	1
Belfast	Nil
Western	Nil

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

Accident and Emergency Units

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the number of patients admitted to Accident and Emergency Units, particularly at weekends, as a direct result of alcohol consumption and the type of their injuries and illnesses (i) impacts detrimentally on staff and other patients; and (ii) is the cause of verbal and physical assaults on staff.

(AQW 4527/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not readily available in this format and can only be made available at a disproportionate cost. The current monitoring process under the Department's Zero Tolerance policy records the number of incidents at trust level relating to physical and verbal attacks against HSC staff by staff groups and location of the attack. For the year 2010/11 the total number of recorded incidents of physical and verbal abuse against HSC staff was 8136 – of which 330 (4.1%) occurred in Accident and Emergency Units.

Alcohol consumption of persons attending A&E units, particularly those who accompany patients, can often result in nuisance and disturbance behaviour which affects both staff and patients. To address this issue the Department has recently introduced clauses to the Criminal Justice and Immigration (CJI) Act 2008, which makes it an offence to cause nuisance or disturbance on HSC Premises.

The Act gives 'Authorised Officers' within HSC Trusts the 'power of removal' of persons causing disturbance, using reasonable force if necessary. These new powers enable HSC staff to deal with this behaviour before it escalates to more serious incidents, which will help ensure that hospitals are safer for both staff and patients.

Procedures for Carrying out an MSSU and Throat Swab

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the procedures for carrying out an (i) MSSU; and (ii) throat swab in the (a) Tyrone County Hospital; and (b) the Omagh Health Centre; and (iii) what is the timescale for the results in each.

(AQW 4590/11-15)

Mr Poots: An MSSU test, as the name suggests, requires the patient to collect a small sample of urine from mid-stream. A throat swab is taken by the doctor or nurse rubbing a small cotton swab on a stick over the back of the throat.

All specimens including MSSUs and throat swabs are sent to the Microbiology Laboratory in Altnagelvin Area Hospital.

Collection times from Omagh Health Centre are: 11:00 a.m., 12 noon, 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Specimens are collected and taken to the laboratory reception area in Tyrone County Hospital. These specimens along with specimens from the Tyrone County Hospital are forwarded to Altnagelvin at 10:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. to arrive in Altnagelvin at approximately 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. respectively. Specimens are processed on the day of arrival. This arrangement applies from Monday to Friday only.

Results for both MSSUs and throat swabs are normally available within three days.

The turnaround time is influenced by the type of specimen and the need for further confirmatory tests.

Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the average cost to his Department to respond to written and oral Assembly Questions tabled by Jim Allister MLA, since May 2011.

(AQW 4599/11-15)

Mr Poots: DHSSPS does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and the information requested is therefore not available.

Opt-Out System for Organ Donation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to creating an opt-out system for organ donation.

(AQW 4602/11-15)

Mr Poots: Organ donation is an issue I have a particular interest in and I am currently exploring all options for increasing organ donation, including the introduction of an opt-out system.

I am aware that Wales has issued a White Paper consultation on the possible introduction of an opt-out system of organ donation for Wales; I will wish to consider the documentation and look forward to hearing the outcome of the consultation in due course.

In the meantime, my officials will continue to work closely with colleagues in the other UK countries to increase the number of donated organs.

2001 Munby Judgement

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures, including financial provision, have been put in place to ensure that Social Services adhere to the terms of the 2001 Munby Judgement, broken down (i) by Health and Social Care Trust area; and (ii) constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4607/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has indicated that while there are no direct measures in place in terms of monitoring, all five Health and Social Care Trusts have indicated that they are compliant with the Munby judgement. Kinship foster carers are also members of Fostering Network which provides an independent voice for carers and a mechanism to raise issues and concerns.

Specific funding has not been allocated to enforce the Munby judgement in the last three years, rather Trusts are required to deliver all their legislative responsibilities from within their overall financial envelope.

Kinship Care

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what research has been funded by his Department into Kinship Care arrangements; and (ii) what plans, including financial provision, are in place to research such arrangements in the 2012/13 financial year, broken down by (a) Health and Social Care Trust area; and (b) constituency.

(AQW 4612/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been no research funded by my Department into kinship care arrangements and there are no plans at this stage to research such arrangements in 2012/13 financial year.

Kinship Care Arrangements

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the policy documents that have been drafted, approved and promulgated, by each Health and Social Care Trust, to inform staff of the circumstances in which Kinship Care arrangements are to be considered and what practices and procedures are to be adopted in such circumstances.

(AQW 4616/11-15)

Mr Poots: Policy documents, which have been drafted, approved and promulgated by all HSC Trusts to inform staff of the circumstances in which kinship care arrangements should be considered include: Children Order Regulations and Guidance, Volume 3 'Family Placement and Private Fostering' ;Handbook of Policy and Procedures, Volume 2 'Children Looked After'.

Also, all staff attend training in established practice and procedure and have full access to, and knowledge of, published documents.

Finally, staff will be made aware of the Kinship Care Standards and Guidance, which are due for publication and circulation in early 2012.

Agenda for Change

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the Health and Social Care Board and the Health and Social Care Trusts have reviewed and examined the Agenda for Change; and if so, (ii) what were the outcomes and problems identified; and (iii) what action he intends to take to address them.

(AQW 4622/11-15)

Mr Poots: Agenda for Change is being implemented by employers in partnership with Trade Unions. Whenever the implementation process is fully completed, a Pay Audit of Agenda for Change across all HSC employers will be undertaken, again in partnership with Trade Unions.

Bullying Cases Amongst Staff

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of bullying cases amongst staff reported in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in each year since 2007; and of these, how many related to sectarian harassment.

(AQW 4623/11-15)

Mr Poots: The details of reported formal cases of bullying at the Belfast HSC Trusts are set out in the table below. Information before 2009 is not readily available and informal cases are dealt with by line management.

Year	Number of Bullying cases	Number that were sectarian related
2009	6	0
2010	15	0
2011	14	1

Second Operating Theatre at the Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made towards the provision of a second operating theatre at the Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry.

(AQW 4646/11-15)

Mr Poots: In January 2010, the Southern Trust submitted a Strategic Outline Case in support of redevelopment of the Daisy Hill site which included provision of additional paediatric theatre capacity.

The Trust has recently met with Departmental officials to discuss theatre requirements and an indication of possible funding to support leasing of temporary theatre capacity in DHH from Cooperation and Working Together, a joint North/South initiative. However, initial analysis has concluded that this option would not represent value for money.

The Trust has been asked to prepare a business case specifically for the provision of additional theatre capacity to be funded from the Department's capital budget. The case for investment will of course need to take account of the service reconfiguration recommendations arising from the HSC Review,

Subject to consideration and approval of a robust business case for this investment, and taking account of other urgent priorities, I will consider making budgetary cover available to support this investment.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on (i) the treatment of; and (ii) research on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4650/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Information is not available for the cost of specific treatment for people living with ME. Patients suffering from ME are treated, for the most part, by their general practitioners; however, patients (both adults and children) have access to a wide range of care and support services in primary, secondary and community settings, including specialist medical, paediatric, neurology and mental health services in common with other patients.
- (ii) My Department has made no research funding available in the last five years for ME.

Capital Works Projects

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much his Department spent on capital works projects; and (ii) of this, how much was paid to building contractors, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4658/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not make any payments in relation to capital works. I provide capital allocations to HSC Trusts and other Arms Length Bodies within my departmental remit who are then responsible for making payments. The 6 Health and Social Care Trusts and the NIFRS have advised in response to a similar Assembly Question that the information required to answer your question is not held in a form that permits ready access and that it would require significant resources to carry out a manual exercise to separately identify construction work from all other invoices.

However, it is estimated that approximately £500m has been spent in the past 3 years on capital works of which almost £400m was paid to building contractors.

Injuries Resulting from Fireworks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of injuries resulting from fireworks which were treated in hospital in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4694/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of people reporting to Emergency Care with firework related injuries. This information is collected over a four week period covering the end of October and the start of November each year (Halloween period) and is available from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/firework-stats.htm

Information for the 2011 Halloween period is due to be published on Thursday 15th December 2011.

Business Services Organisation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Business Services Organisation and its proposed locations.

(AQW 4700/11-15)

Mr Poots: The location of shared services centres is an important aspect of the Business Services Transformation Programme which is being operationally led by the Business Services Organisation. I expect to consult on proposals for those locations in the near future"

Kinship Care

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total cost of providing services to children in kinship care arrangements in each of the last three years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 4862/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer to my response to AQW 4091/11-15.

The cost of providing services to children in kinship care arrangements in each of the last three years, by Health and Social Care Trust, can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Department of Justice

Republican Separated Prisoners Protest

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that their original demands had been met, to outline the reasons for the Republican separated prisoners re-starting their protest.

(AQW 4025/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): It is not for me as Minister to speak for, or explain the actions of, prisoners.

Damage Caused by Republican Separated Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost of the damage caused by Republican separated prisoners during their protest since it began on Easter Sunday 2010, including the cost of repairs, the replacement of damaged goods and the additional staff costs.

(AQW 4030/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total cost of the damage caused by republican separated prisoners during their protest, since it began on Easter Sunday 2010 is £1,007,000.

This includes the cost of repairs, the replacement of damaged goods and additional staff costs.

Prisoners

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what is the maximum number of prisoners that can be held in each prison.

(AQW 4032/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are a total of 2198 bed spaces currently available but this level of occupancy is constrained owing to the consequences of keeping various categories of prisoners in separate accommodation and the desirability of avoiding cell sharing where possible. This is broken down as follows:

■ Hydebank Wood	391
■ Magilligan	604
■ Maghaberry	1203

These figures include bed spaces available for use in exceptional circumstances such as coping with population fluctuations, which are located in the Special Supervision Units at Hydebank Wood and Magilligan, as well as bed spaces used more routinely in the Care and Supervision Unit and Healthcare Centre at Maghaberry.

Crimes against Older People

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what additional strategies his Department plans to pursue to combat crimes against older people.

(AQW 4034/11-15)

Mr Ford: The safety of older and vulnerable people and ensuring they can live their lives free from the fear of becoming a victim of crime is an important priority for my Department.

In Northern Ireland crimes against older people, especially violent crimes are relatively rare. Statistics show that people aged 65 or over are least likely to be the victims of violent crime, accounting for less than 2% of such victims last year though they constitute 14.5% of the population. However, I recognise that despite these statistics older and vulnerable people still have very real concerns about crime. My Department is developing a range of strategies to tackle crime and the fear of becoming a victim of crime amongst older and vulnerable people.

The new Community Safety Strategy, which will be published in early 2012, will help to build more confident communities and will include proposals to tackle fear of crime and provide reassurance to the most vulnerable. At local level the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships will be central to the delivery of initiatives to support older and vulnerable people in local communities, and build on existing successful initiatives at regional and local level such as community safety wardens, intergenerational projects and Neighbourhood Watch schemes to look out for elderly and vulnerable neighbours.

I have commissioned important work to develop a comprehensive Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending. The framework aims to reshape fundamentally our approach to tackling the factors leading people into the criminal justice system and the obstacles which hinder them from getting back out of it. This is a broad project, with far-reaching links across a number of Executive Departments. The target for the publication of the draft framework is March 2012. I will also launch a public consultation on victims and witnesses of crime next year. This strategy will apply to all victims, including older people.

These strategies will support the work of the wider justice agencies and Government in combating crimes against older and vulnerable people.

Crimes against Older People

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what consideration is being given to the introduction of mandatory minimum sentences for people who commit crimes against older people.

(AQW 4035/11-15)

Mr Ford: Sentencing in the individual case is a matter for the judiciary, taking into account all the circumstances of the offence and any relevant mitigating or aggravating factors in a case. In making these decisions, judges are guided by sentencing guidelines, which indicate that the age and vulnerability of the victim should be treated as an aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sentence.

The Lord Chief Justice has recently announced a priority list of areas where sentencing guidance for the judiciary will be developed. The principles underlying sentencing, expressed in this guidance, will include attacks on vulnerable, including older, people, as an aggravating factor in sentencing decisions.

Alongside this work I have been considering a range of potential mechanisms by which greater transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice might be achieved. I hope to announce proposals in the near future on how best these might be delivered in a way that will promote public confidence.

Republican Separated Prisoner's Protest

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3777/11-15, to detail (i) the nature and extent of the damage caused to the cells on (a) 30 June 2011; and (b) 1 July 2011; (ii) the nature and extent of the fire damage to the recreation room on 1 July 2011; (iii) whether any prison staff were injured in these incidents; and (iv) how many prisoners have been charged in connection with each incident.

(AQW 4125/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) (a) On 30 June 2011 seven prisoners in republican separated accommodation caused damage to their cells, including sanitary ware and cell furniture to an extent that they were put beyond use.
- (b) On 1 July a further eight prisoners caused damage to their cells, including sanitary ware and cell furniture to an extent that they were put beyond use.
- (ii) The incident on 1 July also caused extensive fire damage to the dining hall/recreation room. This resulted in the area being no longer fit for use.
- (iii) No prison staff were injured in these incidents.

- (iv) Seven prisoners have been charged with criminal damage following the damage done to their cells on 30 June. Eight prisoners have been charged with criminal damage following the damage to their cells on 1 July. The fire damage on 1 July is subject to an ongoing police investigation.

Karen Walsh's Defence Teams

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail the total cost to date in legal aid paid to each of Karen Walsh's defence teams throughout the course of her case; (ii) the costs paid to the expert consultants who gave evidence in her defence; and (iii) for an estimate of the final legal aid expenditure in this case.

(AQW 4129/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) To date the total sums paid to Karen Walsh's defence teams is £14,505.42. The breakdown is as follows:
- Tiernans £2,007.83 inc. VAT
 - McNamee, McDonnell & Duffy £4,510.01 inc. VAT
 - Kevin Winters & Co £7,024.08 inc. VAT
 - Higgins, Hollywood, & Deazle £963.50 inc. VAT

The sums paid are in respect of the solicitors engaged in the Magistrates' Court phase of this case. To date no bills have been submitted by counsel for the Magistrates' Court stage. As the fees payable to counsel would not fall to be assessed as standard fees there is no basis on which to base an estimate of the likely cost.

- (ii) To date no payments have been made in respect of expert consultants who gave evidence for the defence.
- (iii) No projection of the total cost of the case can be provided at this time as the basis upon which the Crown Court case will be remunerated is dependent on the outcome of legal proceedings in a test case concerning the remuneration payable in respect of an unrelated Crown Court case.

Materials Purchased to Build Planters at Maghaberry Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the cost of the materials purchased to build planters at Maghaberry Prison; (ii) the number of planters that have been made; and (iii) who authorised this (a) initiative; and (b) expenditure.

(AQW 4131/11-15)

Mr Ford: Maghaberry senior management are committed to improving the quality of the prison environment for all inmates. Garden planters are occasionally manufactured by prisoners as part of a vocational training programme that takes place in the Donard Gardens and then placed around the prison to improve environmental conditions for all who live and work there.

- (i) The cost of the materials purchased to build planters at Maghaberry was £7579.39.
- (ii) 35 planters have been made and placed around various parts of the prison.
- (iii) a, b) The Governor gave approval for the planters to be made and for the expenditure incurred;

Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3782/11-15, how many items belonging to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum which are currently held at the Prison Service College (i) have been catalogued; and (ii) are yet to be catalogued.

(AQW 4176/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Approximately 6,000 items have been catalogued in the Prison Service Museum collection. (ii) There are an estimated 60,000 items yet to be catalogued.

The retired officer who was previously engaged by the Prison Service to catalogue the museum collection has offered to continue his work on a voluntary basis. This offer has been gratefully accepted. He has been, and will continue to be, assisted by a serving officer who is also a volunteer.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3782/11-15, what measures are in place to catalogue the artefacts and documents that are held at the Prison Service College while the future plans for the Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum are being formulated.

(AQW 4178/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Approximately 6,000 items have been catalogued in the Prison Service Museum collection. (ii) There are an estimated 60,000 items yet to be catalogued.

The retired officer who was previously engaged by the Prison Service to catalogue the museum collection has offered to continue his work on a voluntary basis. This offer has been gratefully accepted. He has been, and will continue to be, assisted by a serving officer who is also a volunteer.

Serving Prisoners

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice, for the last available year, to detail the number of serving prisoners who have been convicted of (i) murder; (ii) manslaughter; and (iii) other serious violent offences and who have received legal aid for proceedings in family courts relating to (a) the adoption of children; (b) the residence of children; (c) contact with children; and (d) parental responsibility.

(AQW 4180/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not readily available.

My officials in the Prison Service produced reports detailing those sentenced for the above offences for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011. The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission grants legal aid for the above proceedings in family courts. The Commission attempted to cross-check the lists produced by the Prison Service with their records of prisoners granted legal aid in family proceedings. In the time available, the Commission was in a position to confirm that from 1 April 2010, seven prisoners sentenced for the above offences have been granted legal aid for the following proceedings:

- Five for contact proceedings;
- One for residence proceedings; and
- One for parental responsibility proceedings.

The information supplied by the Commission is by reference to primary case code.

Serving Prisoners

Miss M McIlveen asked Minister of Justice, for the last available year, to detail the number of serving prisoners who have been convicted of (i) rape; (ii) sexual offences against adults; and (iii) sexual offences against children and who have received legal aid for proceedings in family courts relating to (a) the adoption of children; (b) the residence of children; (c) contact with children; and (d) parental responsibility.

(AQW 4181/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not readily available.

My officials in the Prison Service produced reports detailing those sentenced for the above offences for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011. The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission grants legal aid for the above proceedings in family courts. The Commission attempted to cross-check the lists produced by the Prison Service with their records of prisoners granted legal aid in family proceedings. In the time available, the Commission was in a position to confirm that from 1 April 2010, seven prisoners sentenced for the above offences have been granted legal aid for the following proceedings:

- Five for contact proceedings;
- One for residence proceedings; and
- One for parental responsibility proceedings.

The information supplied by the Commission is by reference to primary case code.

Robert Black

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3975/11-15, why the chartering of a private plane was deemed necessary; and who authorised this decision.

(AQW 4242/11-15)

Mr Ford: The arrangements were made, authorised and paid for by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

People who have Recently Completed a Prison Sentence

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department is taking to address the lack of engagement between people who have recently completed a prison sentence and their communities.

(AQW 4262/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice (DoJ) recognises that promoting positive engagement by offenders with their communities is a key factor in effective resettlement and rehabilitation. To this end, a multi agency resettlement agenda has been developed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), working in partnership with the wider DoJ; the Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and other partner agencies such as the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO), to help offenders prepare for release, and to support them as they make the transition from custody to the community.

A wide range of programmes and practical support is available to prisoners to help address issues such as accommodation, debt, benefits, health, addictions, education/training, relationships, and family/parenting issues.

Dedicated multi-disciplinary offender management teams in each prison are responsible for ensuring that prisoners are referred, at an appropriate stage, to those interventions best suited to address their risk and needs, and to put in place the through-care arrangements that will help them to re-integrate into their communities, and support them to live crime-free lives.

The DoJ is alive to the fact that improving offenders' engagement with their communities cannot be delivered by the justice system alone; examples of innovative projects with the voluntary and community sector include an initiative between the women's prison at Hydebank Wood; the Probation-led Inspire Women's Project, NIACRO, and the Women's Support Network (WSN), which is designed to ensure that support and interventions provided to women, both within prison and after release, are co-ordinated with, and inclusive of, the network of support that already exists within the local communities to which the women are returning.

The initiative has allowed women to forge strong links with the wide range of services and support provided by the women's centres in their communities. In addition, representatives of the WSN provide one to one support to women, both in custody and, following their release, in the community.

Case Number 10/040644 at Dungannon Crown Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the circumstances which led to the collapse of the first trial of case number 10/040644 at Dungannon Crown Court; and (ii) the total cost of the case.

(AQW 4317/11-15)

Mr Ford: The first trial in respect of case number 10/040644 did not collapse. The trial ran its full course but the jury was unable to reach a verdict.

Some of the costs associated with case number 10/040644 are not yet known and not all agencies hold cost information at case level. The figures set out in the table below should therefore be treated as estimated costs.

TABLE:

Cost Type	Estimated Cost
PSNI Prosecution ¹	Not Known
PPS Prosecution	£32,500.00
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ²	£2,645.56
Court (Judiciary, Staff and Jury Costs)	£25,036.76
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£1,395.00
Total	£61,577.32

- 1 PSNI have advised that due to the complexity of this investigation the costs associated with this case could only be calculated at disproportionate cost.
- 2 The proceedings in the Magistrates' Court have concluded, but, to date, no claim for payment has been received from the defendant's solicitor. The Crown Court proceedings are not yet concluded and accordingly no bills have been submitted for payment. This figure is the only known cost at this stage and is for advice given at the police station.

Roe House, Maghaberry Prison: Prison Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether any prison officers on duty in certain landings of Roe House, Maghaberry Prison, are in receipt of salary enhancements or additional payments; and if so, why this is deemed necessary.

(AQW 4319/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison Officers on duty on Roe Three & Four landings in Maghaberry Prison are in receipt of an additional allowance. This allowance is paid to staff who are required to work in conditions where a dirty protest is taking place.

District Policing Partnerships

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the running costs of the District Policing Partnerships in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 4325/11-15)

Mr Ford: The District Policing Partnerships are sponsored by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and funded jointly by NIPB and Councils. The total running costs of District Policing Partnerships in each of the last three financial years were:

2008/09

Total expenditure	£3.96 million
Funded by NIPB(75%)	£2.94 million

2009/10

Total expenditure	£3.89 million
Funded by NIPB(75%)	£2.88 million

2010/11

Total expenditure	£3.91 million
Funded by NIPB(75%)	£2.86 million

Judicial Office Holders

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of salaried Judicial Office Holders currently sitting; and (ii) the total cost of their salaries.

(AQW 4327/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have interpreted “judicial office holders” to include both court and tribunal judicial offices.

There are currently 80 salaried judicial office holders in post. Their total annual salary cost is £9,910,086 exclusive of Earnings Related National Insurance contributions (ERNI) and Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLC). The total estimated cost for 2011/12 is £14,286,403 including ERNI and ASLC.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Uniforms

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether he can give an assurance that the crown will not be removed from Northern Ireland Prison Service uniforms.

(AQW 4348/11-15)

Mr Ford: No decisions have been taken in relation to Northern Ireland Prison Service uniforms. NIPS is undergoing fundamental end to end reform and this is one of a range of issues which I would expect to be considered as part of that ongoing review. Any proposals which are deemed to be controversial will be subject to approval by the Executive.

Name: Her Majesty's Prison

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether he can give an assurance that prisons will retain the name Her Majesty's Prison.

(AQW 4349/11-15)

Mr Ford: No decisions have been taken in relation to removing or retaining the name Her Majesty's Prison for prisons within Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Prison Service is undergoing fundamental end to end reform and this is one of a range of issues which I would expect to be considered as part of that ongoing review. Any proposals which are deemed to be controversial will be subject to approval by the Executive.

Hostage Situations in Prisons

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many hostage situations have taken place in each prison and the date each incident occurred, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4350/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been eight incidents of hostage taking in prisons in the last five years. Seven incidents occurred in Maghaberry Prison and one in Magilligan. All of the incidents involved a prisoner taking another prisoner hostage.

The dates of these incidents are set out below:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 to date
Maghaberry	0	0	1- 25/10/2009	1- 15/11/2009	1- 5/7/2011 1- 1/9/2011 1- 30/10/2011 1- 8/11/2011 1- 20/11/11
Magilligan	0	0	0	0	1- 10/10/2011

There have been no incidents of hostage taking in Hydebank Wood.

Weapons Discovered in Prisons

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, for each of the last five years (i) the number and type of weapons discovered in each prison; and (ii) the date each weapon was discovered.

(AQW 4351/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the number and type of weapons discovered in each prison in each of the last five years and the date that each weapon was discovered.

TABLE A

Find Type	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Wood
Year 2006			
Improvised Blades/Knives	1 (Sep)	3 (Aug)	3 (Feb-May)
Flammable Items			2 (June)
Improvised Cosh			1 (Sep)
Year 2007			
Improvised Blades/Knives	7 (Jan – Nov)	3 (June/July)	2 (Feb/Dec)
Improvised Cosh			3 (Oct)
Year 2008			
Improvised Blades/knives		1 (July)	1 (March)
Improvised Cosh			2 (Mar/Aug)
Year 2009			
Improvised Blades/Knives	7 (Feb-Nov)	4 (Sep/Oct)	1 (July)

Find Type	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Wood
Improvised Cosh			2 (Apr/Nov)
Year 2010			
Improvised Blades/Knives	9 (Mar-Dec)	6 (Jan/Sept/Oct)	4 (Feb-Oct)
Improvised Cosh	1 (Mar)		
Total	25	17	21

Consultation on the Access to Justice Review

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what is the best way for members of the public to contribute to the ongoing consultation on the Access to Justice Review.

(AQW 4357/11-15)

Mr Ford: Representations to the consultation on the Access to Justice Review may be made in writing or by e-mail and should be addressed to:

Access to Justice Review
Public Legal Services Division
3rd Floor, Bedford House
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FD

Email – publiclegalservicesdivision@courtsni.gov.uk

My officials will also be happy to meet or speak to members of the public by telephone and are contactable on 028 9032 8594.

When I published the report, I encouraged elected representatives and the wider public to read it and to comment as part of the consultation. In addition, my Department has written to more than 450 individuals and organisations seeking their views. I would welcome any responses by 13 December 2011.

Maghaberry Prison Workshops

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether work in the Maghaberry Prison workshops was suspended to concentrate on making planters for the Prison.

(AQW 4392/11-15)

Mr Ford: No.

Prisoners Classified as Dissident Republicans

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners are currently classified as dissident republicans.

(AQW 4394/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison service does not classify prisoners in such a way. There are currently 34 male prisoners and 1 female prisoner in separated republican accommodation in Maghaberry.

Proposed Bowling Green at Maghaberry Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) for the estimated cost of the proposed bowling green at Maghaberry Prison; (ii) why this project is considered necessary; (iii) who recommended the installation

of a bowling green; (iv) when it is likely to be installed; and (v) how many prisoners are expected to avail of this facility.

(AQW 4402/11-15)

Mr Ford: No estimate has been made of the cost of for a bowling green.

Consideration has been given to a number of outline plans to help meet the recreational and vocational needs of the significant group of elderly inmates. Elderly inmates can experience mobility and disability problems. While some initial cultivation work has been carried out by inmates, the possible construction of a bowling green was rejected by the Governor in favour of more horticultural based activities.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost incurred by his Department on air travel (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010; and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010.

(AQW 4410/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice was established on 12 April 2010. From 12 April 2010 to 31 December 2010 the total cost incurred by the Department on air travel between (i) Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport is £41,759.27 and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain excluding Heathrow Airport is £32,540.59.

Separated Republican Prisoners Protest

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of each piece of equipment, including search scanners, and transport, that was purchased in order to meet the demands of the separated republican prisoners' protest.

(AQW 4437/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following the agreement of 12 August, six items of specialist detection equipment were purchased at a total cost of £54,593. For security reasons I do not propose to provide details of the equipment purchased.

Additional transport costs were requested by loyalist separated prisoners and costs are detailed in AQW 3265/11

Proceeds of Crime Applications

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Proceeds of Crime applications to retain seized goods or funds have been granted in each court division in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4440/11-15)

Mr Ford: Table 1 below details the number of Forfeiture Orders granted under Section 298 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 in the Magistrates' Courts for each of the last three years broken down by County Court Division.

TABLE 1

Division Year	2008	2009	2010	Total
Antrim	14	22	35	71
Ards	13	10	4	27
Armagh and South Down	20	19	14	53
Belfast	45	48	22	115

Division Year	2008	2009	2010	Total
Craigavon	21	12	20	53
Fermanagh and Tyrone	17	20	18	55
Londonderry	6	5	13	24
Total	136	136	126	398

Table 2 below details the number of Confiscation Orders made under Section 156 of the Act in the Crown Court for each of the last three years broken down by County Court Division.

TABLE 2

Division Year	2008	2009	2010	Total
Antrim	3	5	4	12
Ards	2	1	4	7
Armagh And South Down	22	9	8	39
Belfast	19	7	16	42
Craigavon	2	8	4	14
Fermanagh And Tyrone	7	7	7	21
Londonderry	3	1	5	9
Total	58	38	48	144

Under Section 190 of the Act, an application for a Restraint Order may also be made to the Queens Bench Division of the High Court. Table 3 below sets out the number of Restraint Orders granted in the High Court for each of the last three years.

TABLE 3

Year	Orders Granted
2008	15
2009	12
2010	12
Total	39

Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3939/11-15, whether it is mandatory for an offender, who has been released on licence, to co-operate with the terms of the release to ensure public safety and that the necessary punishment for the crime committed is served.

(AQW 4441/11-15)

Mr Ford: Any offender who is released from prison on licence is required to co-operate with all the conditions of that licence. Failure to comply with any of its conditions can lead to the revocation of the licence and immediate return to custody.

Appointments to the Boards of the Agencies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many appointments to the boards of the agencies, within his Department or its arm's-length bodies, have been made since June 2010; and how many of these appointments were made as the result of open competition.

(AQW 4445/11-15)

Mr Ford: A total of 34 appointments to the boards of agencies within the Department of Justice and its arm's length bodies has been made since June 2010. All were made as a result of open competition. The Department made one temporary appointment from 24 September 2010 to 31 January 2012. In addition the Department made seven re-appointments since June 2010, in accordance with relevant guidance and regulations.

Capital Expenditure at Saintfield and Ballynahinch Police Stations

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the capital expenditure at (i) Saintfield; and (ii) Ballynahinch police stations in each of the last five years, broken down by the category of expenditure.

(AQW 4462/11-15)

Mr Ford: The allocation of funding is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Fireworks Licences

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many fireworks licences have been issued in each council area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4467/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice became responsible for issuing firework licences on 12 April 2010.

The information available from that date is set out below:

Council	Number of Firework Licences Issued 12/4/2010 – 31/12/2010	Number of Firework Licences Issued 1/1/2011 – 15/11/2011
Antrim	21	22
Ards	38	27
Armagh	19	17
Banbridge	11	4
Belfast	64	57
Ballymena	20	22
Ballymoney	11	6
Carrickfergus	14	11
Castlereagh	17	14
Coleraine	21	15
Cookstown	12	6
Craigavon	19	12

Council	Number of Firework Licences Issued 12/4/2010 – 31/12/2010	Number of Firework Licences Issued 1/1/2011 – 15/11/2011
Derry	12	17
Down	36	39
Dungannon	14	17
Fermanagh	64	47
Larne	8	4
Limavady	2	7
Lisburn	30	31
Magherafelt	13	10
Moyle	6	7
Newry and Mourne	68	79
Newtownabbey	33	23
North Down	37	35
Omagh	14	12
Strabane	11	13

Convictions for Using a Mobile Phone Whilst Driving

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions for using a mobile phone whilst driving have been dealt with in court instead of by a Fixed Penalty Notice in each of the last three years, broken down by court division.

(AQW 4498/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below gives the number of convictions for using a mobile phone whilst driving, by court division, for the calendar years 2006 to 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONVICTED FOR USING A MOBILE PHONE WHILST DRIVING BY COURT DIVISION 2006-2008

Court division	Year		
	2006	2007	2008
Antrim	5	26	175
Ards	4	38	156
Armagh and South Down	6	15	160
Belfast	13	53	295
Craigavon and Lisburn	4	14	141
Fermanagh and Tyrone	6	41	177
Londonderry	1	14	118
Total	39	201	1222

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Employment Tribunals

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Justice how many employment tribunals have been taken by staff against the Office of the Police Ombudsman in the last four years; and how many are ongoing.

(AQW 4499/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI) has advised me that there have been four employment tribunals initiated by staff against OPONI in the last four years. Two of these cases are currently ongoing, and two cases were withdrawn prior to a hearing.

Legal Fees Relating to Staffing Issues in the Office of the Police Ombudsman

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Justice how much has been spent on legal fees relating to staffing issues in the Office of the Police Ombudsman in the last four years.

(AQW 4500/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Office of the Police Ombudsman has advised me that £61,072.87 has been spent on legal fees relating to all staffing issues in the last four financial years, including the first five months up to August 2011 of this financial year.

Legislation

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice whether he will bring forward proposals for the introduction of legislation similar 'Sarah's Law'.

(AQW 4512/11-15)

Mr Ford: Disclosure of information to protect children already takes place here and will continue to do so under normal police operating practices. Parents and others who have immediate concerns about any individual who they fear is posing a risk to the safety of a child can, and should, go to the police at any time about their concerns. The PSNI have in place public protection teams to deal with these issues.

I informed the Justice Committee earlier this year that I propose to open the policy consideration of a potential disclosure scheme to wider consultation. I intend to return to the Committee early in the New Year with the aim of publishing a policy consultation paper shortly thereafter.

The Northern Ireland Police Fund and the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Justice to outline the role his Department has in (i) setting the criteria for; and (ii) allocating assistance under the (a) Northern Ireland Police Fund; and (b) Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust.

(AQW 4518/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department sponsors both the Northern Ireland Police Fund and the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust and manages that relationship within the framework of a Management Statement Financial Memorandum [MSFM]. The MSFM is drawn up by my Department on the basis of an established formula from DFP and in consultation with each sponsored body. It sets out the legal and administrative framework, as appropriate, within which the body will operate. Regular monitoring is carried out to check that these conditions are upheld.

The terms and conditions set out in the MSFM may be supplemented by guidelines or directions issued by the Department in respect of the exercise of any individual functions, powers and duties of the groups.

Prosecutions and Convictions for Failing to Wear a Seatbelt

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) prosecutions; and (ii) convictions have been secured in each of the last five years for failing to wear a seatbelt.

(AQW 4528/11-15)

Mr Ford: Failure to wear seat belt offences may be prosecuted under Articles 23(3), 24(2) and 24(5) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Seat belt offences can also be dealt with by endorsable Fixed Penalty Notices.

The table below gives the number prosecuted and convicted for the calendar years 2004 to 2006 and the number convicted for the calendar years 2007 – 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available). It is not possible to provide prosecution data for 2007 and 2008.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE PROSECUTED AND CONVICTED FOR WEARING SEAT BELT OFFENCES 2004-2008

Year	Prosecutions	Convictions
2004	78	71
2005	64	60
2006	59	55
2007	n/a	154
2008	n/a	606

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2004 - 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Offences Relating to Wildlife Crime

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) charged; (ii) prosecuted; and (iii) convicted of offences relating to wildlife crime in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4571/11-15)

Mr Ford: Offences with respect to wildlife crime are not specified in the PSNI recorded crime figures and so PSNI Statistics Branch would not be in a position to provide figures on the number of persons charged.

Wildlife crimes may be prosecuted under The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985.

The table below gives the number prosecuted and convicted for the calendar years 2004 to 2006 and the number convicted for the calendar years 2007 – 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

NUMBER OF PEOPLE PROSECUTED AND CONVICTED OF A WILDLIFE CRIME 2004-2008

Year	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of Persons Convicted
2004	0	0
2005	0	0
2006	3	3
2007	n/a	0
2008	n/a	1

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

It is not possible to provide prosecution data for 2007 and 2008. Data for 2004 to 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Safety Cameras on Roads

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice for a breakdown of the number of (i) speeding offences; and (ii) other offences that were detected by the use of safety cameras on roads, and the revenue resulting from the offences in each year between 2005 and 2010.

(AQW 4576/11-15)

Mr Ford: Where a motorist is detected by a camera for speeding or red light running a Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notice is issued by the police. The table below sets out the number of speeding detections caught on mobile and fixed cameras together with the number of detections for red light running.

DETECTIONS BY NORTHERN IRELAND ROAD SAFETY CAMERA PARTNERSHIP¹

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Mobile Camera (including SPECS) ²	9283	9732	12102	14426	20396	37020
Fixed Camera	2869	3485	3767	2728	2364	10039
Total (Speeding)	12152	13217	15869	17154	22760	47059
Red Light Running Camera	0	0	435	720	802	878
Grand Total	12152	13217	16304	17874	23562	47937

1 Data supplied by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Road Safety Camera Partnership is currently working on quality assurance of these statistics and the information provided should therefore be regarded as provisional and subject to change. This information will be finalised and published on the NIDirect website in the next few months.

2 Speed Enforcement Camera System

The information requested on revenue is not available as sought as the revenue received for Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notice offences is not broken down by offence type. However, the total sums received on foot of a Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notice are set out below.

REVENUE FOR CONDITIONAL OFFER FIXED PENALTY NOTICES 2005 TO 2010

Year	Amount
2005	£640,440
2006	£572,940
2007	£716,220
2008	£735,420
2009	£1,033,680
2010	£879,360

Note:

Payments on Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notices are based on the date of issue of the Notice. These yearly figures may therefore be subject to change if monies are received on older tickets.

Prison Review Team

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Prison Review Team is retained under contract or if its remit has now ended.

(AQW 4592/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Review Team is not retained under contract and its remit ended on 24 October 2011 with the publication of the final report.

Police Stations Facing Potential Closure

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to list the police stations that are currently facing potential closure.

(AQW 4617/11-15)

Mr Ford: The future of police stations is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Trial of Sarah-Jane Law at Craigavon Crown Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the costs incurred in the trial of Sarah-Jane Law at Craigavon Crown Court for the alleged theft of two bunches of flowers, broken down by (i) prosecution costs; (ii) defence costs; (iii) court costs; (iv) jury costs; and (v) any other associated costs.

(AQW 4676/11-15)

Mr Ford: Some of the costs associated with this case are not yet known and not all agencies hold cost information at case level. The figures set out in the table below should therefore be treated as provisional estimates.

Cost Type	Estimated Cost
PPS Prosecution	£1,355.001
PSNI Prosecution	£328.802
Defence (Legal Aid Costs)	£5,600.003
Court: Judiciary, Staff	£2,207.50
Jury Costs	£380.67
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£275.00
Total	£10,146.97

- 1 It is not possible to produce precise PPS costings for particular cases. The amount of time required to take individual decisions as to prosecution will vary depending on a range of factors including the complexity of the case and the extent of the case papers. Some costs are identifiable, for example, the fees paid to prosecuting counsel and expert witnesses.
- 2 These are the only identifiable PSNI costs and relate to the Investigating Officer's attendance at court.
- 3 As this case only concluded at the end of October, the claims for payment have just recently been submitted. As such the final fees have not yet been assessed and paid.

Prison Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether any consultation has been carried out on any proposition to end (i) prisons being called “Her Majesty’s prisons” and (ii) the crown being part of the symbol of the Prison Service.

(AQW 4686/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been no consultations carried out on any propositions to end either prisons being called “Her Majesty’s Prisons” or the crown being part of the symbol of the Prison Service.

However, these are amongst issues which were subject to discussion between NIPS management and staff associations on a number of occasions prior to the devolution of Justice.

Capital Expenditure on Randalstown, Crumlin and Antrim Police Station

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Justice how much the capital expenditure was on (i) Randalstown; (ii) Crumlin; and (iii) Antrim Police Station in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4698/11-15)

Mr Ford: The allocation of funding is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Convictions for Breach of a Road Traffic Sign

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice how many convictions for breach of a road traffic sign have been dealt with in court instead of by a Fixed Penalty Notice in each of the last three years, broken down by court division.

(AQW 4801/11-15)

Mr Ford: Breaches of road traffic signs may be prosecuted under Article 50 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

The table below gives the number convicted for the calendar years 2006 to 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONVICTED FOR BREACHING ROAD TRAFFIC SIGNS BY COURT DIVISION 2006-2008

Court division	2006	2007	2008
Antrim	28	61	52
Ards	14	14	24
Armagh and South Down	13	8	16
Belfast	49	105	101
Craigavon and Lisburn	11	15	20
Fermanagh and Tyrone	45	37	28
Londonderry	21	25	32
Total	181	265	273

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Department for Regional Development

Clearing Footpaths of Ice and Snow

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what indemnification local councils which clear footpaths of ice and snow have against legal claims from people who have fallen or injured themselves on these footpaths.

(AQW 4036/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Councils, or groups of traders acting on their behalf, will have the same indemnity benefits as Roads Service, under proposals put forward by my Department. This is on the basis that the Department has a power to take reasonable and practicable measures to prevent snow and ice from interfering with safe public passage over the public highway.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that mainly due to financial constraints, not all of the roads and footways in Northern Ireland can be treated. The Department's indemnity relates to its treatment policy, which provides for the treatment of 28% of the roads network (which carries around 80% of traffic).

Similarly, Councils which enter into the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department will have identified and prioritised important primary pedestrian routes for treatment in exceptional weather conditions. Provision is made for these routes to be agreed and is set out in the schedule to the MOU. A Council's delegated indemnity would operate in a similar manner, in relation to its selection of primary footfall routes identified and prioritised for treatment.

Clearing Footpaths of Ice and Snow

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the total financial assistance that his Department will provide to local councils to assist with the clearing of snow and ice from pavements during the upcoming winter.

(AQW 4037/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it was never envisaged that it would make any financial contribution to local Councils for the provision of this service.

The proposed partnering arrangements exist on the basis that Roads Service will provide the salt free of charge to the Councils who would, in turn, use any available labour to spread the salt. However, Roads Service will offer the Councils an annual service fee to help with the administration of this service. This service fee, which totals £30,000, was previously agreed with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), and will be allocated in accordance with the Service Fee scale currently in force, based on Council population.

Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield: Flooding

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much it cost NI Water to provide assistance each time Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield experienced flooding in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 4045/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the cost of providing assistance in relation to flooding incidents at the Old Grand Jury Manor area of Saintfield is as set out in the table below.

Information for the years prior to the establishment of NIW in 2007 is not readily available.

Year	Number of Call-Outs	Cost of Call-Outs	Cost of Civil/ Remedial Work
1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008	4	£240	£120
1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009	5	£300	£12,163
1 April 2009 – 31 October 2009	5	£300	£300

Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield: Flooding

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development what was the total cost to NI Water for attending all the call-outs at Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield prior to the new drainage system being installed.

(AQW 4046/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that since its inception on 1 April 2007 staff have responded to 14 call-outs in relation to flooding incidents at the Old Grand Jury Manor area of Saintfield. The total cost of these call-outs was £840.

Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield: Flooding

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total cost to NI Water of installing the new drainage system at Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield, including the cost of disconnecting the illegal connection and the additional work to resolve any issues following the initial installation.

(AQW 4047/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the cost of this project was £10,489 (excluding VAT).

Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield: Flooding

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development what contribution was made by the landowner of the field adjacent to Old Grand Jury Manor in Saintfield to the resolution of the flooding problems in the area; and what criteria were used to arrive at this level of contribution.

(AQW 4048/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the landowner made no contribution to the costs of the scheme but carried out work on his land to facilitate the discharge of the ground water into the new drainage system provided by my Department's Roads Service and NIW.

Fuel Efficiencies in Buses and Trains

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the practices in place to (i) monitor; and (ii) improve fuel efficiencies in (a) buses; and (b) trains.

(AQW 4100/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

(a) Buses

Translink has informed me that a key consideration regarding bus fuel efficiency is that buses are a more fuel efficient form of transport than private cars in the sense that on average, once a bus has more than 6 passengers, it is more fuel efficient than a single-occupancy car. Modal shift to public transport will in itself contribute to fuel efficiency.

As for individual vehicles Translink has informed me that fuel consumption is monitored for all bus vehicles and reported on a monthly basis, allowing for any anomalies to be investigated. Monitoring is provided through monthly reports of how many miles individual vehicles have run compared with how much fuel was dispensed to the vehicle.

Efficient operation is supported by regular maintenance regimes that ensure vehicles are running at maximum efficiency. Oil sampling forms part of this activity, and can provide for early warning when engines have some specific fuel problems.

With electronic control of engines and gearboxes, it is possible on some vehicle types to optimise power train characteristics for the most efficient operation in the given operating circumstances. Where this is possible, maximum fuel efficiency settings have been identified and selected.

Within the past 18 months, Translink has rolled out a programme to install idle-shut down systems to over 75% of the fleet. The system will switch the engine off once it detects that it has been idling for either 4 minutes (summer) or 10 minutes (winter).

An eco-driving pilot was initiated in one Ulsterbus depot during 2010. This pilot has successfully demonstrated that specific driver training, supported by on-bus systems to inform drivers as to their 'driving style', can yield fuel efficiency gains. Due to the success of this pilot, a procurement exercise has commenced to roll out the system to the entire Ulsterbus/Metro fleet.

(b) Trains

Northern Ireland Railways' passenger fleet comprises 23 Class 3000 units and 13 near life-expired trains which are currently being replaced by 20 new Class 4000 units.

Generally new trains will consume marginally more fuel than older trains. This is due to their significantly higher performance; acceleration and top speed, their higher passenger amenities (e.g. air conditioning) and their increased weight to meet modern safety standards.

Therefore the primary contribution of new trains to fuel efficiency is their ability to attract significantly more passengers out of cars on to trains. In the past 9 years, NI Railways have attracted 65% more passenger journeys onto the network.

Further to the above Translink has informed me that fuel consumption is monitored for all rail vehicles and reported on a monthly basis, allowing for any anomalies to be investigated.

To improve fuel efficiency on Class 3000 trains a number of steps have been taken.

- Automatic engine shutdown sequence if driver not keyed in.
- Stabling mode on one engine only.
- Halogen saloon lighting replaced by energy efficient LED lighting

An 'Eco Meter and Train Driving Training Project' is being developed for Class 3000 trains to install eco meter systems on existing trains with additional driver training during 2011/12/13.

Class 4000 trains which are based on a development of Class 3000 trains include features which may contribute to greater fuel efficiency. For example:

- Reduced weight; 5 tonnes per train lighter than Class 3000.
- New energy efficient transmission; 10 – 20% improvement over Class 3000.
- Auxiliary power generated from traction engine rather than separate engine therefore energy recovery when braking
- Engines to latest Tier 3A European Union emissions standards.
- LED saloon lighting.
- Eco-meter system integrated into Train Management System.

From January 2012 Translink will be operating the trains on ULSD (Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel) instead of Gas Oil. This cleaner fuel will further reduce exhaust emissions.

NIR has a Train Driver Simulator. The simulator is used to impart driving skills and to assess drivers' performance while undergoing training. This train driving simulator is 7 years old; there is a project to provide a Simulation Refresh and Upgrade. This will include an eco-training and assessment module.

I understand that Translink has received some recent awards in the general field of energy efficiency for Transport companies.

Areas at Risk Programme for the Beechfield Estate, Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development why his departmental staff have not participated in meetings on the Areas at Risk Programme for the Beechfield Estate to which they have been invited.

(AQW 4127/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no record of having received any formal invitation to attend meetings relating to the Areas at Risk Programme for the Beechfield Estate in Donaghadee. However, Roads Service officials would be willing to attend any future meetings, where roads related matters are to be discussed.

Housing Developments not Adopted

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development, in each of the last three years, how many housing developments have not been adopted by Roads Service in each constituency due to developers being placed in liquidation or administration.

(AQW 4135/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a developer going into liquidation or administration is not in itself a reason for not adopting a development. In cases where the developer has gone into liquidation or administration, the appointed receiver or representative is expected to carry out all necessary ongoing maintenance and undertake work to bring the streets up to the standard required for adoption by Roads Service. Failure by the administrator to do so will result in further enforcement being issued under Article 11 of the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980, whereby Roads Service can complete the necessary works required for adoption and recover the costs from the existing road bonds.

I would advise the Member that Roads Service does not hold the information on a constituency basis as requested. However, the table below details the information by Roads Service Section Office:

NUMBER OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS NOT ADOPTED BY ROADS SERVICE DUE TO DEVELOPERS BEING PLACED INTO LIQUIDATION OR ADMINISTRATION

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Omagh	2	0	4
Fermanagh	0	1	11
Dungannon	1	3	9
Cookstown	0	0	0
Strabane	4	0	1
Magherafelt	0	0	1
Ards	1	3	3
Down	0	6	1

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Newry & Mourne	0	7	2
Armagh	0	1	1
Banbridge	0	1	1
Craigavon	3	5	6
Londonderry	0	0	0
Limavady	0	0	0
Coleraine	3	1	4
Moyle	1	0	0
Ballymoney	0	4	0
Ballymena	0	0	0
Larne	1	0	0
Antrim	1	0	0
Belfast North	0	1	2
Belfast South	0	0	1
North Down	0	1	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	0
Lisburn	3	4	6
Castlereagh	1	1	2
Newtownabbey	4	1	1

Article 11 of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of housing developments in each local council area which are subject to Article 11 of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 whereby Roads Service and other agencies have had to complete site works.

(AQW 4136/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that Roads Service does not hold the information by council area as requested. However, the table below details the information by Roads Service Section Office:

	Number of Housing Developments issued with an Article 11 Notice			Number of Sites completed by Roads Service or others		
				*		**
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Omagh	2	0	0	2	0	0
Fermanagh	0	0	3	0	0	0
Dungannon	1	0	0	1	0	0
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strabane	3	0	0	0	0	0

	Number of Housing Developments issued with an Article 11 Notice			Number of Sites completed by Roads Service or others		
				*		**
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ards	0	6	4	1	0	0
Down	2	8	8	1	0	0
Newry & Mourne	0	2	2	0	0	0
Armagh	3	4	4	0	3	2
Banbridge	1	2	4	0	1	2
Craigavon	5	6	5	5	2	10
Londonderry	1	2	6	3	2	1
Limavady	0	0	1	0	0	0
Coleraine	0	6	0	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymoney	1	6	4	0	1	5
Ballymena	2	0	0	0	1	1
Larne	0	1	1	0	1	1
Antrim	1	1	1	0	1	2
Belfast North	4	2	3	0	0	4
Belfast South	1	0	0	0	0	1
North Down	2	2	0	0	0	1
Carrickfergus	2	1	1	2	0	0
Lisburn	5	5	2	0	0	3
Castlereagh	3	3	0	0	0	1
Newtownabbey	3	0	1	1	0	0

* These figures may include sites where the Article 11 Notice was served prior to 2009.

** These figures may include sites where work has commenced and is anticipated to be completed during this financial year.

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry Regeneration Programme

Mr Eastwood asked Minister for Regional Development, with regard to Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme, to detail (i) the funds from his current budget that have been committed to projects under this programme; (ii) the projects that are being funded; and (iii) the start dates for these projects.

(AQW 4141/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the information requested in respect of projects in the Ilex Regeneration Plan, One City, One Plan, One Voice.

(i) Funds from Minister's 2011/12 Budget that have been committed to projects under above programme	(ii) List of projects that are being funded	(iii) The start dates for these projects
£2.1 million	A6 Derry-Dungiven	Statutory Orders to be published in December 2011, with Public Inquiry possible in 2012
£820,000	A6 Randalstown – Castledawson	Public Inquiry possible Spring 2012
£10.6 million	A5 Newbuildings- Aghnacloy	
£550,000	Implementation of traffic management programmes within the City.	Ongoing
£100,000	Western Orbital Feasibility Study	Currently under way
£1.9 million	Madams Bank Road widening	Currently under construction
£1.5 million	Culmore Road Roundabout	Officially opened 13 October 2011

Only details of funding for the 2011/12 financial year have been provided, as commitments for future years have still to be confirmed. The Irish Government's recent indication, that it is unable to part fund the A5 and A8 projects as originally envisaged, will undoubtedly affect the funding available to my Department. When funding is confirmed, I will review spending priorities across my Department including the impact on the Strategic Roads Programme

Residents Parking Scheme in the Bogside Area of Derry

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 3488/11-15, to outline the time-scale for the completion of the legislative procedures for the residents parking scheme in the Bogside area of Derry.

(AQW 4154/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that I am currently considering the review of the Economic Appraisal for Residents' Parking Schemes in Londonderry and other areas of Northern Ireland. Until that process is complete, I am unable to provide a definitive time-scale for the completion of the legislative procedures.

As this is a new initiative in Northern Ireland, there are still other issues to be developed within this process, such as practical matters, dealing with administration and permits.

Londonderry to Belfast Bus Route

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the Londonderry to Belfast bus route includes a stop at the Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 4155/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Londonderry to Belfast bus route is serviced by the Goldline Express 212 and 273 services, neither of which stops at the Antrim Area Hospital.

There are, however, 9 daily weekday rail services operating from Londonderry which stop at the Antrim Bus and Rail Station where passengers can access the Ulsterbus service to Antrim Area Hospital. There are 8 such rail services on a Saturday and 5 on a Sunday.

Bus Routes that include stops at the Antrim Area Hospital

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the bus routes that include stops at the Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 4156/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Translink Ulsterbus services which serve Antrim Area Hospital are as follows:

- 109C: Crumlin – Belfast International Airport – Antrim Bus/Rail Station – Antrim Area Hospital;
- 168B/154: Carrickfergus – Ballyclare – Antrim Area Hospital;
- 321E: Antrim Town Service – Antrim Area Hospital;
- 120A: Ballymena – Antrim Bus/Rail Station – Antrim Area Hospital – Belfast.

From July 2012 Translink is planning to re-route the 219 Goldline Service from Ballymena – Antrim Bus and Rail Station - Belfast to include a regular stop at Antrim Area Hospital.

A5 Road Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, given his response to a question following his oral Ministerial statement on 7 November that “No firm conclusions have been indicated yet by the Irish Government in respect of their funding”, whether he will review his Department’s commitment to the A5 road project.

(AQW 4159/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As you will be aware since my statement on 7 November 2011, the Minister for Transport in the ROI has confirmed that his Government’s investment in transport infrastructure will be scaled back significantly. As a result, the ROI Government has indicated it is unable to part-fund the A5 and A8 schemes as originally envisaged.

A reallocation of funding to my Department is anticipated and when this is confirmed, I will consider spending priorities across my Department, including the impact on the strategic roads programme.

40mph Speed Limit in the Village of Cloughey

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made in the review of the 40mph speed limit in the village of Cloughey.

(AQW 4182/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department’s Roads Service has advised that having carried out a review of the speed limits in Cloughey, which included all of the factors that are relevant to setting speed limits and consulting with the PSNI, it does not consider that a reduction in the speed limit in Cloughey, from its current level of 40 mph, is necessary.

Cost of Trip to France with Members of the Committee for Regional Development

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development for a breakdown of the cost of his recent trip to France with Members of the Committee for Regional Development, including the cost of the overnight stays in Omagh; and whether this trip represented value for money given the financial constraints within Government Departments.

(AQW 4186/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As we move forward in the development of our plans for Belfast Rapid Transit, and in advance of the public consultation, which I launched in October, I felt that it was important for me, and colleagues from the Regional Development Committee and Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils, to see the benefits which a rapid transit system could bring to a city comparable in size to Belfast. Nantes BusWay is widely regarded as the leading example of bus rapid transit in Europe. A number of aspects of the Nantes system are being considered for Belfast.

On 21 September 2011, I therefore led a delegation on a study visit to view the Bus Rapid Transit System in Nantes. Neither I nor my officials stayed overnight in Omagh as part of this visit. The Regional Development Committee and Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils were responsible for their own costs. Costs incurred by my Department are detailed below.

Accommodation (8 persons)	£1480.83
Dinner/hospitality for delegation & hosts (26 Persons)	£ 943.87
Travel and Subsistence (airfares, buses etc) (8 persons)	£1626.33

Small User Dispensation for Water Usage

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has considered a 'small user dispensation' for water usage; and to outline the estimated cost of implementing such a scheme.

(AQW 4205/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The previous Executive agreed the Independent Water Review Panel recommendation that all non-domestic consumers should contribute towards the cost of water and sewerage services.

Qualifying non-domestic consumers with a meter already receive an allowance of 100m³ free water every 6 months, which is worth up to £200 per year on usage. Non-domestic consumers without a meter get a 50% discount on charges.

This is a more generous level of support than anywhere else in the UK. The majority of non-domestic consumers are metered and, therefore, receive bills which are partly based on consumption.

The cost of providing further support to small users would depend on where the line is drawn and the details of scheme. There would be an implementation cost depending on the extent of the changes to NIW's billing system.

Under the existing legislation the setting and approving of water and sewerage tariffs is the responsibility of NI Water subject to the approval of the Utility Regulator. Both are obliged to ensure that there is no undue discrimination against any class of customers and should keep tariffs under review to see if adjusting tariffs could result in a better reflection of costs. Additional costs would need to be met from charges.

In relation to domestic consumers, the Executive subsidises the cost of water and sewerage services on their behalf.

Age of Buses and Coaches within the Translink Fleet

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to state the average age of buses and coaches within the Translink fleet at 30 September in (i) 2009; (ii) 2010; and (iii) 2011.

(AQW 4206/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the average age of buses and coaches within Translink's fleet for the years required. These are included in the NI Transport Statistics 2010/11 (Table 1) published by my department.

AVERAGE FLEET AGE (YEARS)

	Ulsterbus	Metro
2008/09	7.2	6.2
2009/10	6.4	7.1

	Ulsterbus	Metro
2010/11	6.2	8.0

The figures represent the year end position for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Abuse or Vandalism on Buses and Trains

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of reported cases of anti-social behaviour, abuse or vandalism on buses and trains in the last three years; and the number of successful prosecutions taken against the offenders.

(AQW 4208/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised me that the relevant statistics need to be separately reported for bus and rail.

The reported number of recorded incidents of vandalism, and antisocial behaviour information required is as follows.

Calendar Year	NIR					
	Safety-related		Anti-social behaviour		Vandalism	
	No. of incidents	No. of individuals prosecuted	No. of incidents	No. of individuals prosecuted	No. of incidents	No. of individuals prosecuted
2008	63	85	28	35	2	2
2009	110	137	33	38	4	4
2010	102	135	35	39	1	1
Totals	275	357	96	112	7	7

Antisocial behaviour incorporates cases of abuse.

Financial Year	Ulsterbus/Metro							
	Assaults on staff	Assaults on passengers	Stone throwing	Vandalism on board bus	Vandalism at bus station	Inappropriate behaviour	Disruption by member of public	Intoxication of member of public
	No. of incidents							
2008/09	26	37	558	40	11	82	5	5
2009/10	33	15	495	27	7	113	7	9
2010/11	35	19	444	25	5	111	17	1
Totals	94	71	1497	92	23	306	29	15

Prosecutions in relation to bus operations are recorded against 'anti-social behaviour'. The number of individuals prosecuted is as follows.

Financial Year	Ulsterbus/Metro
	No. of Prosecutions

Financial Year	Ulsterbus/Metro
2008/09	2
2009/10	5
2010/11	2

The number of prosecutions on bus is considerably less than for rail because of different regulatory regimes in place. My officials are currently reviewing this issue.

Fare Evasion on Buses and Trains

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of people charged with fare evasion on buses and trains in the last five years; and (ii) the number of successful prosecutions. **(AQW 4209/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Passengers charged with fare evasion on Translink services are as follows:

Calendar Year	NIR	Ulsterbus	Citybus (Metro)
2006	23	4	0
2007	29	4	0
2008	32	4	0
2009	54	7	3
2010	25	8	1
2011 (to 23/09/11)	16	1	2

All of those charged with fare evasion were successfully prosecuted.

Surface Water on Roads in County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail all works that his Department has taken to reduce the amount of surface water on roads in County Fermanagh since January 2010. **(AQW 4232/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that substantial funds were made available to Roads Service to elevate a number of roads in Fermanagh to prevent a repeat of the flooding in 2009. Details of this work were contained in the Fermanagh Flooding Task Force Report, copied to all Fermanagh Councillors on 2 March 2010.

When resurfacing is carried out on any road, the shape of the road is improved to help direct surface water towards gullies or outlets.

In addition, my Department's Roads Service carries out routine maintenance cleaning of gullies, outlets and drains each autumn/winter with a view to reducing the amount of surface water on roads.

Information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Dedicated Bus Lane on the M1 Motorway

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development how many buses, on average, use the dedicated bus lane on the M1 motorway on each day from Monday to Friday.

(AQW 4235/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has informed me that from Monday to Friday, there are a total of 73 Translink Services per day (365 services per week) using the dedicated bus lane on the M1 motorway.

Free Travel Card Scheme for Translink Employees

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how much the free travel card scheme for Translink employees has cost in each of the last five years broken down by (i) employees; and (ii) employees' spouses and partners.

(AQW 4291/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that there are 2,536 'spouse/partner' passes and 1,980 'dependants' passes in circulation at the present time

In relation to the cost of travel made using these cards to the organisation, Translink does not extract this type of usage data from its information management systems for this group of individuals. The number of individual journeys made using such passes is recorded as part of its periodic passenger journey information, which is sufficient for business needs. For these reasons quantification of the cost is very difficult.

Translink has also informed me that there is a nominal cost to the organisation for the production of free travel passes, similar to Senior Smartpass, 60+ Pass, Education & Library Board pass.

Water Quality Issue in Ballymoney

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what caused the recent water quality issue in Ballymoney; and what steps he intends to take to make sure it does not happen again.

(AQW 4306/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that a rigorous investigation was undertaken following the first indication of water quality problems in the Ballymoney area and a comprehensive action plan was implemented to restore water quality to its normal high standard. Investigations centred on recent water main work in the area being undertaken as part of the £90 million water main rehabilitation programme. During the course of the work a number of pipe connections had to be undertaken which coincided with very heavy rainfall which may possibly have contributed to a small amount of excavated material entering the new water mains. Water quality testing is carried out routinely after rehabilitation work and there were indications that the water quality may have been affected by the excavated material. NIW must contact the Public Health Agency in all cases of water quality problems, and following discussions with them it was decided that, as a precautionary measure, customers in the area should be advised to boil water for drinking and cooking purposes. The action plan to restore the water quality in Ballymoney was successful and the boil water notice has now been removed for all customers in the area.

There is a well defined approach to work on the water main system taking into account stringent health and safety standards and water quality testing. The water main rehabilitation programme has been operating for two years with many hundreds of kilometres of new water mains laid, and it is very rare that water quality problems arise following the work.

Interruption to the Water Supply in Rasharkin

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what caused the interruption to the water supply in Rasharkin in October 2011; and (ii) whether businesses which lost trade as a result of the interruption will be compensated.

(AQW 4307/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it is undertaking a major water mains rehabilitation programme in the Rasharkin area. The £90 million programme of water mains replacement is designed to improve the water quality and water pressure to customers in the area. The work involves connections being made to the existing water system which requires the water supplies to be shut down temporarily. It is possible that the interruptions you refer to may have been a result of these planned shutdowns. However, customers are normally advised in advance of all of these planned interruptions.

Unfortunately, unplanned interruptions to the water supplies can occur in any area as a result of pipes bursting for a variety of reasons. NIW recognises that such interruptions do inconvenience customers and it aims to repair any bursts and to restore water supplies as quickly as possible.

Compensation is not payable where NIW is fulfilling its statutory obligations and where no damage has been caused to any subject premises.

Doneyshiel Road, Rasharkin

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any works the Roads Service has planned for the Doneyshiel Road, Rasharkin, in the current financial year; and when the work will commence.

(AQW 4308/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that Doneyshiel Road is a minor, lightly trafficked, rural road and was surface dressed during last summer. No further works on this road are planned for the current financial year.

However, Roads Service officials have informed me that, in order to eliminate the worst of the surface undulations and improve the ride quality, a minor road surface overlay on one short stretch of the carriageway will be considered for inclusion on a future works programme, subject to the availability of finance.

Roads Service will also continue to carry out maintenance on this stretch of road to keep the carriageway surface in a safe condition, in accordance with its maintenance policy and standards.

A5 Road Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the recent announcement about the funding from the Irish Government for the A5 road scheme, whether he intends to review the capital spend on roads such as the A26 in order to progress the scheme as soon as possible.

(AQW 4321/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that the A5 scheme has been taken forward as a result of an agreement between the Executive and the Irish Government.

As the Irish Government has indicated it is unable to part-fund the A5 and A8, as originally envisaged, this will undoubtedly affect the funding available to my Department. When funding is confirmed, I will review spending priorities across my Department, including the impact on the Strategic Roads Programme. In the meantime, development work on the A26 project will continue, with the aim of publishing the draft Orders and Environmental Statement in 2012.

I am conscious that investment in roads infrastructure is an essential component in creating jobs and future prosperity. In the short term, it provides much needed jobs in the construction sector and in the longer term particularly in the case of strategic road improvements, it facilitates the economic growth which is key to our future competitiveness.

A5 Road Scheme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development, given that the A5 project has been postponed, whether part of the £400 million budget will be redirected to the A26 North Coast dualling scheme.

(AQW 4347/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The member will be aware that the A5 scheme has been taken forward as a result of an agreement between the Executive and the Irish Government.

As the Irish Government has indicated it is unable to part-fund the A5 and A8, as originally envisaged, this will undoubtedly affect the funding available to my Department. When funding is confirmed, I will review spending priorities across my Department, including the impact on the Strategic Roads Programme. In the meantime, development work on the A26 project will continue, with the aim of publishing the draft Orders and Environmental Statement in 2012.

I am conscious that investment in roads infrastructure is an essential component in creating jobs and future prosperity. In the short term, it provides much needed jobs in the construction sector and in the longer term particularly in the case of strategic road improvements, it facilitates the economic growth which is key to our future competitiveness.

More Underpasses on the Proposed A26 Road Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development what further consideration he will give to the creation of more underpasses on the proposed A26 road scheme.

(AQW 4355/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the provision of cattle creeps, which may take the form of either an underpass or an overbridge, have been considered as part of landowner accommodation works on the proposed A26 dual carriageway. The needs of individual farms, for example their layout and management, as well as details of the frequency and type of movement of cattle, size of the herd, the degree of severance, the opportunity to share facilities and road user safety have been assessed.

Roads Service has no legal obligation to carry out accommodation works, as liability is limited to monetary consideration only. If, and when, accommodation works are carried out by the Department, the effect is to mitigate the compensation payable in respect of land taken and injurious affection to land retained by the landowner. In this respect, the cost of accommodation works in terms of value to the property is taken into account by DFP's Land & Property Services (LPS) in assessing the overall compensation payable in respect of land and/or rights acquired.

When taking all of this information into account, my Department's Roads Service concluded that the provision of any agricultural crossing for landowners along the proposed A26 road scheme, would not be economically viable.

Displaying of Flags on Roads Service Owned Property

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether it is illegal under the Roads (NI) Order 1993 to display a flag on Roads Service owned property.

(AQW 4609/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Article 87 of The Roads (NI) Order 1993 makes it an offence to attach unauthorised signs and advertisements upon the surface of a road, tree, structure or other works in or on a road. However, the Roads Order does not specifically make reference to flags, and my Department does not have an explicit power under the Order in relation to the flying of flags on Roads Service owned property, such as lampposts.

Nonetheless, Roads Service does have powers under Article 44 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993 enabling it to remove flags or attachments that pose a danger to road users. Where there is no such danger,

Roads Service acts in accordance with the multi-agency Joint Protocol in Relation to the Display of Flags in Public Areas. Under the Protocol, Roads Service will, when called upon by the lead Agency, provide the access equipment and resources to remove unwanted flags, once agreement has been reached for their removal and where they are not easily accessible for the local community.

Cost to Respond to Written and Oral Assembly Questions

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the average cost to his Department to respond to written, oral and urgent oral Assembly Questions tabled by Jim Allister MLA, since May 2011.

(AQW 4660/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Regional Development does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and so the information requested is not available.

Department for Social Development

Recipients of Job-seekers Allowance in Portavogie

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of recipients of Job-seekers Allowance in Portavogie in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4038/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The table below shows the number of people receiving Jobseeker's Allowance at March for the years 2007 – 2011 in the Portavogie Ward.

Date	Recipients in Portavogie Ward
March 2007	42
March 2008	29
March 2009	53
March 2010	71
March 2011	108

Data source Jobseeker's Allowance claimant count scans March 2007, March 2008, March 2009, March 2010 and March 2011

Social Security Offices

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current number and locations of Social Security offices.

(AQW 4058/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently 8 Social Security Offices as detailed below. These offices form part of a network of local offices that include 27 Jobs and Benefits Offices and three Community Benefit Offices.

Names and addresses of offices are as follows:

Social Security Offices	
Ballynahinch Social Security Office	18 Crossgar Road, Ballynahinch, BT24 8XP
Bangor Social Security Office	110 Hamilton Road, Bangor, BT20 4LG.

Social Security Offices	
Cookstown Social Security Office	38-40 Fairhill Road, Cookstown, BT80 8AG
Corporation Street Social Security Office	24-42 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3RD.
Downpatrick Social Security Office	9-11 Mount Crescent, Downpatrick, BT30 6NQ.
Newcastle Social Security Office	31 Valentia Park, Newcastle, BT33 0EH.
Newtownards Social Security Office	East Street, Newtownards, BT23 3EL.
Strabane Social Security Office	Urney Road, Strabane, BT82 9BX.

Housing Benefit

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many families are currently in receipt of housing benefit.

(AQW 4059/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently 60,483 live housing benefit claims where a dependant child or young person is included in the household.

A claimant's family, for benefit purposes, is defined as: -

- The claimants partner(s), if a member of the same household; and
- Any child(ren) or young person(s) the claimant is responsible for (not just sons and daughters)

and who are treated as members of the household.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the number of households that will take advantage of the Warm Homes scheme in the 2011/12 financial year.

(AQW 4080/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Public Service Agreement target for 2010/2011 is to assist approximately 9,000 households by implementing energy efficiency improvement measures and I am confident that this target will be met.

Employment and Support Allowance Claimants

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Employment and Support Allowance claimants who have undergone a work capability assessment since the awarding of the assessment contract to Atos Origin, broken by district council area.

(AQW 4109/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The transition date of medical services from the Social Security Agency to ATOS Healthcare took place on 20 June 2011. Since this date, 8,145 Work Capability Assessments have been conducted. The information requested cannot be broken down by district council area.

Employment and Support Allowance Claimants

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Employment and Support Allowance claimants who have been deemed 'fit for work' or to have a 'limited capability for work' following a work capability assessment carried out by Atos Origin, broken by district council area.

(AQW 4111/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department does not hold information in the form requested. The Employment and Support Allowance's management information system does not differentiate between customers

who have been deemed 'fit for work' having been examined by ATOS Healthcare and those who have been found fit for work before ATOS Healthcare took over on 20 June 2011.

Employment and Support Allowance Claimants

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Employment and Support Allowance claimants who have appealed being deemed 'fit for work' following a work capability assessment by Atos Origin, broken by district council area.

(AQW 4116/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department does not hold information in the form requested. The Employment and Support Allowance's management information system does not differentiate between customers who have appealed being deemed 'fit for work' having been examined by ATOS Healthcare and those who have been found fit for work before ATOS Healthcare took over on 20 June 2011.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development, for each district council area (i) how much funding has been allocated for the Boiler Replacement Scheme; and (ii) how many applications have been refused for failing to meet the criteria to date.

(AQW 4173/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have made £2 million available for the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme and the Housing Executive is managing the delivery of the scheme. The funding for the pilot scheme has not been formally allocated on a district council basis, however, expenditure is being managed on a Housing Executive's grants office level.

The table overleaf provides a breakdown by District Council Area of those applications for the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme that, as at 31 October 2011, had been deemed ineligible on

- (i) grounds of personal eligibility criteria; or
- (ii) where the existing boiler did not meet the technical criteria of the scheme.

There are a total of 762 ineligible applicants and 4 ineligible boilers.

District Council Area	Applications deemed ineligible on personal eligibility criteria	Applications deemed ineligible because existing boilers did not meet technical criteria
Antrim	9	0
Ards	12	0
Armagh	74	0
Ballymena	14	0
Ballymoney	16	1
Banbridge	22	0
Belfast	43	0
Carrickfergus	6	0
Castlereagh	15	0
Coleraine	16	1
Cookstown	42	0
Craigavon	52	0

District Council Area	Applications deemed ineligible on personal eligibility criteria	Applications deemed ineligible because existing boilers did not meet technical criteria
Derry	36	0
Down	27	0
Dungannon & South Tyrone	61	0
Fermanagh	36	0
Larne	6	0
Limavady	17	0
Lisburn	26	0
Magherafelt	19	0
Moyle	14	1
Newry & Mourne	107	0
Newtownabbey	25	1
North Down	17	0
Omagh	26	0
Strabane	24	0
Total	762	4

Panel of Benefit Appeal Tribunals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development whether members on the panel of benefit appeal tribunals are paid per day or per appeal hearing.

(AQW 4187/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are two full time salaried members of the tribunal and 173 paid panel members.

All fee paid panel members receive fees payable on a sessional basis. A sessional sitting is for one half-day i.e. 3 ½ hours duration with either a morning or afternoon start time and may include multiple appeal hearings.

Automatic Payment of Pension Credit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the pilot scheme in England and Wales in 2010, what plans there are to introduce the automatic payment of pension credit.

(AQW 4202/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The detailed evaluation report on the research study into automatic payment of Pension Credit in Great Britain is expected to be published by the Department of Work and Pensions in Spring 2012. Officials are continuing to track that work and any recommendations or changes that emerge as a result of the study will be carefully considered for Northern Ireland at that time, at which point I will examine the possibility of the introduction of automatic payment of State Pension Credit.

Prisoners: Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) remand; and (ii) sentenced prisoners in each prison facility are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

(AQW 4234/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Persons held in custody who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance are subject to a suspension of benefit following detention. The Social Security Agency and Northern Ireland Prison Service have a process in place to ensure that social security benefits, where applicable, are not inappropriately paid to those held in custody.

Supporting People Programme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the funding allocated to the Supporting People Programme in the Foyle constituency in each of the next three years.

(AQW 4279/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The figures provided below reflect the current Supporting People allocation under the Comprehensive Spending Review in the Foyle constituency.

Client Population	Number of Contracted Services	Number of Contracted Units	2011/12 Budget	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Forecast
Frail Elderly	3	50	370,517	370,517	370,517
Homeless Families with Support Needs	7	113	454,598	454,598	454,598
Older People with Mental Health Problems / Dementia	3	35	146,164	146,164	146,164
Older people with support needs	24	715	641,188	641,188	641,188
People with a Physical or Sensory Disability	2	17	152,794	152,794	152,794
People with Alcohol Problems	5	89	947,495	947,495	947,495
People with Learning Disabilities	4	97	410,749	410,749	410,749
People with Mental Health Problems	12	151	1,093,563	1,093,563	1,093,563
Single Homeless with Support Needs	3	87	1,024,595	1,024,595	1,024,595
Teenage Parents	1	16	221,653	221,653	221,653
Women at Risk of Domestic Violence	3	71	537,490	537,490	537,490
Young People at Risk	5	105	873,278	873,278	873,278
Total	72	1,546	6,874,082	6,874,082	6,874,082

Supporting People Programme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Supporting People Programme will remain within his Department.

(AQW 4280/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development has maintained the Supporting People programme budget for the next four years. My department continues to work closely with relevant Department's, Health and Social Care Trusts and stakeholders to ensure that the delivery of the programme continues to be cost effective, provides value for money and supports the most vulnerable people in our society to live independently. There is currently no change to my Department's responsibility for the delivery of the Supporting People programme, however there is ongoing and regular discussions with our partners to ensure that the current arrangements in place remain relevant for the future delivery of the programme.

People in Fuel Poverty

Ms Lewis asked the Minister for Social Development what financial benefits are available to people in fuel poverty.

(AQW 4286/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Financial help is available through a range of Social Security benefits to individuals on low income depending on their individual and family circumstances. Cold Weather Payments may also be paid to those satisfying the qualifying conditions during periods of exceptionally cold weather. Additionally, individuals who are not automatically entitled, may claim a Winter Fuel Payment up to 30 March 2012 if they are born on or before 5 January 1951.

My Department, through the Social Security Agency, is also undertaking an extensive benefit uptake programme contacting older people and those on low incomes to ensure they are receiving their full benefit entitlement. On the 1st of November I launched an innovation fund of £375,000 to support third sector organisations to undertake a range of activities to increase benefit uptake among vulnerable groups. Ensuring people are receiving their full entitlement to benefits will go some way to alleviating increasing fuel costs and contribute to tackling fuel poverty.

My Department's new Fuel Poverty Strategy "Warmer Healthier Homes" was launched in April 2011. The strategy takes forward energy brokering, called for action on the price of oil imports, the introduction of a pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme and developed a range of other initiatives.

The Department currently delivers the Warm Homes Scheme and the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme with the aim of improving the energy efficiency of vulnerable, fuel poor households. In addition, the Housing Executive administers an annual Heating Replacement Scheme which improves the energy efficiency of their stock.

Village Improvement Zone

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of households in the Village Improvement Zone (i) which have had a renovation grant approved and the total value of grants approved to date; (ii) for which the assessment process for a renovation grant has been initiated but a grant has not yet been approved; and (iii) which have not submitted an application for a renovation grant, and to outline the steps being taken to encourage uptake among these households.

(AQW 4300/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has approved nine Renovation Grants at a total value of £105,188 and six Home Repair Assistance Grants at a total value of £22,847 during the period August 2010 to November 2011. A total of 87 Preliminary enquiries have also been received during this period.

Housing Executive records indicate that there are 557 properties in private sector ownership in the Village Improvement area and to date 470 of these private owners have not submitted an enquiry for

Discretionary Grant aid. Over the past fourteen months the Housing Executive's Belfast Grants office has been involved in a comprehensive, pro-active campaign to promote the grants scheme. This has been carried out in a number of ways including:-

- Invited reapplications from 37 cases cancelled due to budget control measures introduced in April 2009
- Established links with a local community group, Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)
- Mail dropped grants information and application forms to every property
- Notified local public representatives (MP, MLAs and Councillors) of grant availability
- Held grants awareness session with local Advice Workers
- Enlisted the assistance of a Field Worker from FOLD to help applicants through the grants system
- Housing Executive Technical member of staff currently going door to door giving advice and offering on-the-spot surveys. To date 466 properties have been issued with a hand-delivered invitation
- Held open days (locally) to assist grant applicants with the completion of their applications. The next event is in the Richview Regeneration Centre on the 29th November 2011.
- The Housing Executive's Grants office is in the process of writing to private Landlords, through their Letting Agents, to inform them of the availability of grant aid.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 3321/11-15, (i) what action his Department is taking to increase uptake of the Boiler Replacement Scheme, given that less than 9 percent of the funding has been allocated; and (ii) whether he will consider removing the Housing Benefit element from the criteria to increase participation.

(AQW 4311/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At the end of October 882 boiler eligibility forms have been issued to applicants who meet the personal qualifying criteria. 393 eligible boilers have been assessed and 219 approvals for work to proceed have been issued. My department has placed advertisements in all local press which will appear during week commencing 14 November. There is funding available to replace approximately 1,330 boilers and I am confident that this target will be met.

Housing Benefit is a qualifying benefit for the Warm Homes Scheme and the rationale for the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme was to assist a group of vulnerable householders who have never previously been eligible for government assistance. The pilot will be subject to a full evaluation once it is completed.

Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development whether people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance relinquish the benefit while they are in hospital or residential care after a specific period of time as an in-patient.

(AQW 4316/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Disability Living Allowance consists of two separate components. The mobility component is payable at the higher or lower rate and the care component can be payable at three different rates; high, middle and low. People can receive either the mobility component or care component or a combination of both.

When a person in receipt of Disability Living Allowance has been in hospital or a similar institution for more than 28 days (84 days if the disabled person is under 16), payment of this benefit is withdrawn. When a person has been in residential care (other than in a hospital or hospice) only payment of the care component of Disability Living Allowance is withdrawn after the number of days already stated.

Payment of Disability Living Allowance is reinstated when a person leaves hospital or residential care providing entitlement still exists.

People who meet the full costs of their stay in hospital or residential care themselves will continue to be paid the Disability Living Allowance they are entitled to.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total cost incurred by his Department on air travel (i) between Northern Ireland and Heathrow Airport from January to December 2010; and (ii) between Northern Ireland and all airports in Great Britain, excluding Heathrow Airport, from January to December 2010.

(AQW 4346/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The details requested in respect of air travel costs incurred are provided below; the figures include any refunds from the business travel provider due to cancellation:

Travel Costs between Northern Ireland and	01/01/10 to 31/12/10 Net Cost £
Heathrow Airport	35,794
Other G.B. Airports (excluding Heathrow)	166,183

These costs must be considered in the context of the 7,000 plus staff working in the Department.

Pension Levels in the Public Sector

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact of the change to the index used to update pensions from April 2011 on pension levels in the public sector.

(AQW 4363/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The pension levels in the public sector are a matter for the Department of Finance and Personnel and other sponsoring Departments.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people currently (i) eligible to receive Disability Living Allowance; and (ii) in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

(AQW 4364/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) My Department does not hold information on the total number of people who may be eligible to receive Disability Living Allowance. (ii) At October 2011, there were 187,379 people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Fuel Poverty

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the introduction of a scheme to alleviate fuel poverty this winter.

(AQW 4365/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My officials are currently in discussion with colleagues from OFMdFM to determine how we can use the Social Protection Fund to assist households in fuel poverty.

Housing Points

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development whether he intends to review the allocation of housing points to increase the points that are awarded to people who have left the armed forces.

(AQW 4435/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Officials from my Department and the Housing Executive are currently carrying out an examination of the Housing Selection Scheme to ensure that the Scheme remains fit for purpose. While there are no plans at present to increase the number of points awarded to people who have left the armed forces, the work to date has identified an aspect of the Scheme that has the potential to prevent ex-service personnel who have been based in Northern Ireland from applying for social housing here. I have asked my officials to ensure that any such barriers in the Scheme are removed.

Green New Deal

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the proposed Green New Deal.

(AQW 4464/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Green New Deal is a proposal for carbon reduction through energy efficiency improvements to domestic properties. A Cross Departmental Group which includes my department, DETI and DFP are in the process of examining options for the delivery of the programme.

The Green New Deal Group provided a business proposal for the delivery of Green New Deal to my department on 14 October 2011 and followed this up with a presentation of their proposal to the Cross Departmental Group on 19 October 2011.

The Cross Departmental Group is currently developing a full economic appraisal to examine different models for the delivery of a programme to support improving the energy efficiency of domestic building stock in Northern Ireland and have agreed to consider the Green New Deal Group's business proposal as one of the options within the business case.

Cost of Housing Benefit

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost of housing benefit in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 4465/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Housing Benefit costs in 2010/11 amounted to £595.3 million. This information is routinely published in the Department's Annual Resource Accounts.

Homes in the Ballymoney Area: Double Glazing

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes in the Ballymoney area might benefit from the installation of double glazing as a result of the Programme for Government.

(AQW 4684/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because a number of double glazing schemes were carried out prior to the introduction of computerised recording systems and therefore the Housing Executive's records on the level of double glazing in its stock is incomplete. However, it is estimated that approximately 50% of the stock already has some degree of double glazing.

Following the consultation period and in anticipation of agreement to the draft Programme for Government, an extensive survey programme will be initiated to establish the number of Housing Executive dwellings that require double glazing. The Housing Executive will then draft a programme to ensure that double glazing is installed in all homes by the end of 2015.

An External Cyclical Maintenance scheme commenced this year in the Housing Executive's Ballymoney District Office area to 388 dwellings which included window replacement.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Vending Machines in Parliament Buildings

Mr Dallat asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the number of food or drink vending machines in Parliament Buildings; and (ii) the revenue raised by each machine in the last twelve months.

(AQW 4102/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) There are currently, as of 8th November 2011, 8 vending machines in Parliament Buildings (5 x drinks and 3 x confectionery). The vending machines are sourced, managed and operated by Eurest as part of the support services contract and are located as follows;

Floor	Room/ Tea Point	Vending		
		Details	Drinks	Confectionery
Second	267	Glass fronted confectionery vending machine (4 rows of 5 bays for crisps and 2 rows of 10 bays for confectionery) and Coca Cola can vending machine	2	2
	286	Glass fronted confectionery vending machine (3 rows of 3 bays for crisps and 3 rows of 6 bays for confectionery) and Coca Cola can vending machine		
Third	Across from 301	Glass fronted confectionery vending machine (3 rows of 3 bays for crisps and 3 rows of 6 bays for confectionery) and glass fronted soft drinks vending machine (5 rows of 9 bays)	2	1
	389	Glass fronted soft drinks vending machine (5 rows of 9 bays)		
Fourth	433	Glass fronted soft drinks vending machine (5 rows of 9 bays)	1	0
Totals			5	3

- (ii) The revenue raised by each machine in the last twelve months, November 2010 to October 2011 is set out in the table in the page below. It should be noted that these figures include 2 vending machines (1x drinks, 1x confectionery) that were located in Annexe C. With the relocation of staff from Annexe C to Parliament Buildings, it was decided to remove the drinks machine completely, and to relocate the other vending machine (confectionery) to Parliament Building, however this was not implemented until November 2011;

	Annexe C Confec- tionery	Annex C Drinks	Room 267 Drinks	Room 286 Confec- tionery	Room 286 Drinks	Room 301 Drinks	Room 301 Confec- tionery	Room 389 Drinks	Room 433 Drinks	
Nov-10	£114.60	£168.35	£48.50	£167.15	£86.10	£66.75	£143.90	£77.00	£98.40	
Dec-10	£138.60	£99.55	£25.80	£200.70	£108.60	£39.10	£150.40	£66.40	£131.10	
Jan-11	£48.20	£129.00	£35.40	£80.65	£77.20	£42.85	£98.40	£62.10	£89.80	
Feb-11	£114.10	£113.50	£80.20	£240.40	£124.10	£74.80	£197.00	£108.10	£113.45	
Mar-11	£83.15	£136.05	£95.15	£313.60	£139.35	£129.90	£202.85	£109.45	£120.95	
Apr-11	£62.35	£14.30	£4.00	£7.00	£28.70	£0	£91.10	£40.15	£66.30	
May-11	£90.30	£184.55	£22.25	£86.95	£52.60	£42.90	£145.20	£86.85	£88.85	
Jun-11	£135.35	£133.90	£49.70	£264.35	£118.85	£39.55	£179.60	£165.75	£115.40	
Jul-11	£77.75	£95.35	£42.60	£150.30	£70.25	£17.90	£92.25	£92.15	£81.00	
Aug-11	£63.20	£102.45	£39.25	£155.40	£80.70	£22.20	£62.05	£59.40	£100.00	
Sep-11	£132.60	£77.90	£55.50	£232.75	£87.35	£106.00	£125.05	£41.10	£124.55	
Oct-11	£17.00	£29.70	£45.85	£230.80	£131.10	£146.45	£156.50	£52.40	£46.85	
										Total Vending Sales: £10,651.15
	£1,077.20	£1,284.60	£544.20	£2,130.05	£1,104.90	£728.40	£1,644.30	£960.85	£1,176.65	

Invoice Reminders

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission why the Finance Office no longer accepts invoice reminders which are included in Office Cost Allowance claims submitted by MLAs.

(AQW 4331/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Following the introduction of the Northern Ireland Assembly (Members' Expenditure) Determination 2010 on 13 December 2010, the Commission introduced a revised Financial Support for Members Handbook. The Handbook was distributed to all Members on 14 March 2011.

While the new Handbook introduced a number of changes, many of the existing administrative requirements, particularly with regard to the submission of claims, were maintained as these were deemed by the Commission to still be appropriate. The requirement to submit original invoices with Office Cost Expenditure (OCE) claims and the exclusion of a supplier's statement as acceptable proof of purchase or service delivery except in extenuating circumstances are not new rules; these have been in place from the earlier Handbook issued in October 2006. This is a practice that is operated across many parts of the public sector and is designed to help to prevent a duplicate payment being made on both a statement and on the original invoice (if the original invoice is subsequently found and presented for payment).

Paragraph 10.4.4 of the Handbook states that "statements are not acceptable except in extenuating circumstances". Therefore, the current Handbook recognises that circumstances will occasionally arise whereby the presentation of an original invoice might not be possible. In these circumstances, the Finance Office will seek to resolve the matter (by, for example, obtaining supporting documentation from the supplier) whilst ensuring that the Commission's guidance contained in the Handbook is applied in a consistent and equitable manner for all Members.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 25 November 2011

(AQW 3642/11-15)

My Department does not directly provide funding for homeless organisations. However, funding is being provided to homeless organisations by the Public Health Agency and Health and Social Care Trusts. The total amount of funding allocated to homeless organisations in the current financial year is £2,418,757. I am unable, at this time, to provide details of allocated future years funding.

(AQW 3643/11-15)

My Department does not track the allocation of funding by District or City Council area, nor does my Department directly provide funding for homeless organisations. However, the Western Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency have allocated a total of £741,004 in the current financial year to homeless organisations in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area. The funding is primarily used to provide accommodation and support for homeless people with chronic alcohol difficulties. I am unable, at this time, to provide details of future years funding.



Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

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PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

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ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

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ISBN 978-0-339-70228-8



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