

Written Answers to Questions

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They should be sent to:

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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 30 November 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

People Banned from Owning a Dog

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether people who have been banned from owning a dog can live in a house with someone who has a dog.

(AQW 16249/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Neither the Dogs Order 1983 nor the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 explicitly prevent a person who has been banned from owning a dog living in a house with someone who has a dog. However, disqualification under the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 is from keeping an animal, participating in the keeping of an animal and being in a position to influence the control of an animal. Depending on the precise arrangements under which the dog is kept, if a disqualified person participates in the keeping of an animal they may be guilty of an offence. Whether this is the case, in any particular situation, would be a matter for the courts to decide.

Decisions with Spending Implications

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, since May 2011, how many decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of ministerial directions.

(AQW 16628/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have issued one Ministerial Direction to my Department since May 2011. This was in relation to carrying out an appraisal to consider the viable options for relocating my Department's headquarters to the former military site, Shackleton Barracks, in Ballykelly.

Forest Service Operations

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what actions her Department intends to take to increase the benefits that communities derive as a result of Forest Service operations.

(AQW 16635/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The establishment and maintenance of working partnerships with local government will be a key action for Forest Service to increase the benefits of forests to local communities.

This is in line with my vision is for improved partnership working with local government and other bodies to make sure that forests play as full a role as possible in supporting regional and local recreational and tourism agendas.

Good progress has been made with several councils in the development of partnership arrangements, expressed in the form of memoranda of understanding and development licences and this has led to the improvement of recreation and tourism facilities within forests.

In the continuation of this work my officials in Forest Service will continue to meet senior council officials across the north of Ireland to discuss their respective recreation and tourism agendas and the

type of agreements that may be used to deliver tourism and social use benefits in individual tourism destination areas.

Animals Exported for Slaughter

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of live animals that have been exported for slaughter in each of the last four year, including the destinations; (ii) the number of animal welfare inspections that were carried out on live exports by her Department during this period; (iii) the number of violations the inspections discovered; and (iv) whether her Department has any policy regarding the slaughter of exported livestock in a manner which is illegal in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 16636/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Freedom of Information Requests

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of Freedom of Information requests received by her Department in each year since 2007; (ii) the proportion of requests each year that were not answered within the time limit; (iii) the number of requests currently outstanding by more than (a) one to two months (b) three to four months; (c) five to six months; (d) seven to twelve months; and (e) more than twelve months.

(AQW 16644/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

Year	Requests Received	Proportion of Requests not Answered within Time Limit
2007	239	7.5%
2008	289	4.8%
2009	276	1.4%
2010	310	2.6%
2011	292	5.1%
	Number of Requests Currently Outstanding	
1-2 months	1	
3-4 months	0	
5-6 months	0	
7-12 months	0	
More than 12 months	0	

DARD responds to information requests in line with two pieces of legislation – The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). The figures provided above are for the total number of requests received under both legislative regimes.

Wind Farms

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department intends to take to ensure that communities will derive benefits from the establishment of wind farms on Forest Service property.

(AQW 16649/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I remain committed to finding a way in which forest assets can be used to help provide benefits to support rural communities. My Department has not yet received formal approval from DFP on the Outline Business Case for the development of wind farm opportunities on my Department's lands. However, pending approval I remain determined to explore all options to ensure that communities derive the benefits from the establishment of wind farms on Forest Service property and will examine all progressive proposals.

Single Farm Payment

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of Single Farm Payments in each of the last five years.

(AQW 16668/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of Single Farm Payments claimed in the last five years are as follows:

Scheme Year	Number of Applications Received
2008	38,648
2009	38,451
2010	38,181
2011	37,873
2012	37,583

Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 15090/11-15, to detail (i) the reasons for each of the 2011 appeals; and (ii) the current status of each appeal.

(AQW 16685/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The reasons for each of the appeals received in 2011 are summarised in Table 1.
- (ii) The current status of each appeal received in 2011 is summarised in Table 2.

TABLE 1. THE REASONS FOR EACH OF THE APPEALS RECEIVED IN 2011

Category of appeal	Number of appeals
FBR over-declaration only	7
Enhancement Measure over-declaration	7
Habitat over-declaration only	3
FBR & Habitat over-declaration	3
Scheme non-compliance	3
Late claim (Force Majeure)	1
Total	24

Explanatory notes for Table 1.

FBR is Field Boundary Restoration.

Over-declaration is where a claimant has not completed some or all of the work claimed. For example the completed length of FBR, or area of habitat being managed by the claimant is less than that claimed.

Enhancement Measure funding is for capital items that help scheme participants meet the requirements of their management plan.

Scheme non-compliance is where a claimant has not completed an aspect of the work in their management plan to the standard required.

Force Majeure is exceptional circumstances outside the farmer's control which could not have been avoided except at the cost of excessive sacrifice.

TABLE 2. THE CURRENT STATUS OF EACH APPEAL RECEIVED IN 2011

Status	Number of appeals
In progress	2
Appeal rejected	16
Appeal successful	6
Total	24

Conserve Priority Habitats

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department will continue to conserve priority habitats, in particular peatland habitats, given the cuts of over £40 million to agri-environment funds since 2010.

(AQW 16715/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department continues to help to conserve a wide range of priority habitats, including peatlands, through the on-going delivery of agri-environment schemes. There are 12,100 farmers participating in DARD schemes who manage some 450,000 ha of land. This represents 44% of the agricultural area, with approximately £25m paid out to farmers in agri-environment schemes each year. My Department works closely with the NI Environment Agency (NIEA) to implement Habitat Action Plans for priority habitats which helps landowners to undertake appropriate management plans aimed at conservation of these habitats.

Despite a reduction in funding available under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007- 2013, the agri-environment budget is £180m and my Department has progressed new applications to the NI Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) which have the highest environmental value. Some 549 new agreements were signed this year and a further 200 applications will be offered agreements with a start date of 1 January 2013. In addition, my Department is focusing on helping existing participants to make the most of their schemes to benefit the countryside and we are working to develop a new agri-environment scheme for the next RDP for 2014 – 2020. The reform of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy is ongoing, and the outcome of this process will shape the parameters of the future agri-environment programme. It is envisaged that funding will be made available to manage priority habitats, such as peatlands under the next RDP.

Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 15090/11-15, to detail (i) the reasons for each of the 2012 appeals; and (ii) the current status of each appeal.

(AQW 16742/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

(iii) The reasons for each of the appeals received in 2012 are summarised in Table 1.

(iv) The current status of each appeal received in 2012 is summarised in Table 2.

TABLE 1. THE REASONS FOR EACH OF THE APPEALS RECEIVED IN 2012

Category of appeal	Number of appeals
FBR over-declaration only	12
Enhancement Measure over-declaration only	8
Habitat over-declaration only	3
FBR & Habitat over-declaration	3
FBR & Enhancement Measure over-declaration	2
Payment related appeal	2
Land ownership appeal	3
Appeal to withdraw claim	1
Total	34

Explanatory notes for Table 1.

FBR is Field Boundary Restoration.

Over-declaration is where a claimant has not completed some or all of the work claimed. For example the completed length of FBR, or area of habitat being managed by the claimant is less than that claimed.

Enhancement Measure funding is for capital items that help scheme participants meet the requirements of their management plan.

Scheme non-compliance is where a claimant has not completed an aspect of the work in their management plan to the standard required.

TABLE 2. THE CURRENT STATUS OF EACH APPEAL RECEIVED IN 2012

Status	Number of appeals
In progress	7
Appeal rejected	25
Appeal successful	2
Total	34

Manufacture and Sale of Cider Products

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development who has responsibility for the regulations regarding the manufacture and sale of cider products.

(AQW 16758/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has no responsibility for the regulations regarding the manufacture and sale of cider products.

Single Farm Payment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farms in each constituency are in receipt of single farm payments.

(AQW 16790/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of farm businesses in each constituency that submitted a Single Farm Payment (SFP) application in 2011 is as follows:

Constituency	Number of Applicants to the 2011 Single Farm Payment Scheme
Belfast East	127
Belfast North	82
Belfast South	150
Belfast West	34
East Antrim	1152
East Londonderry	2393
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	6100
Foyle	309
Lagan Valley	1684
Mid Ulster	4386
Newry and Armagh	4350
North Antrim	3616
North Down	233
South Antrim	1671
South Down	3832
Strangford	1534
Upper Bann	1343
West Tyrone	4479
Others *	398

* The constituency information is drawn from the postcodes of businesses that submitted a SFP in 2011. The " Other " figure represents farm businesses that either do not have a valid postcode recorded against their business or are businesses where the addresses held is outside the 18 constituencies listed above.

Farms

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of farms, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 16791/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The 2011 Agricultural Census found farms by constituency as follows:

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF FARMS AT JUNE 2011

Constituency	Number of Farms
Belfast East	28
Belfast North	9
Belfast South	24
Belfast West	9
East Antrim	802

Constituency	Number of Farms
East Londonderry	1,543
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	4,279
Foyle	175
Lagan Valley	864
Mid Ulster	2,860
Newry & Armagh	3,027
North Antrim	2,199
North Down	119
South Antrim	1,036
South Down	2,606
Strangford	880
Upper Bann	737
West Tyrone	3,239
Total	24,436

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16796/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and ALBs take very seriously their obligations in relation to prompt payment to all their suppliers.

We are legally bound to meet the terms of the Late Payment of Commercial debts (Interest) Act 1988 as amended and supplemented by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002. Payment should be made within agreed terms or if no terms have been agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

In line with DFP guidance we are committed to paying as many suppliers as we can within 10 (working) days.

In relation to my Department and its Agencies, 10 day prompt payment performance is sent to senior management for review each month for them to take action as appropriate. Additionally, my Departmental Board reviews performance each quarter and annual performance is recorded in the annual report.

My ALBs who make payments also have mechanisms in place to monitor and report on their performance.

Payments from contractors to their sub-contractors are not the responsibility of my department and ALBs.

Equality Impact Assessments

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the cost to her Department, over the last three financial years, of undertaking equality impact assessments.

(AQW 16858/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Section 75 statutory duties make equality and good relations central to the whole range of public policy decision-making. Therefore the cost of carrying out Equality Impact Assessments are not maintained separately and cannot readily be disaggregated

Infected Saplings

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how long landowners are given to destroy infected saplings after being served with destruction notices.

(AQW 16941/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Statutory Plant Health Notices specify a time by which action must be completed. The Inspector's primary consideration is the plant health risk which Chalara dieback poses and control is achieved by destroying affected plants and plant material. It is important we move quickly to remove infected plants. Currently, inspectors allow up to 7 days for compliance, although it is desirable that action takes place as quickly as possible. For that reason, I am currently making Forest Service assistance available to help landowners comply with notice requirements, and this offer has been taken up by all landowners so far.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what interaction she has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in relation to ash dieback disease.

(AQW 16944/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: On Monday 19 November, I took part in a teleconference, chaired by DEFRA Secretary of State Owen Patterson MP, and attended by the Scottish and Welsh Agriculture Ministers, to discuss ongoing co-operation on matters of common significance. During this meeting, I updated the Ministers on the situation relating to Ash Dieback in the north of Ireland and our policy of containment and eradication. We agreed to remain in close co-operation between the devolved administrations and particularly between Ireland, north and south.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what interaction she or her Department has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs or his Department following the discovery of ash dieback disease in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 16945/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: On Monday 19 November, I took part in a teleconference, chaired by Owen Patterson MP, and attended by the Scottish and Welsh Agriculture Ministers, to discuss ongoing co-operation on matters of common significance. During this meeting, we also discussed the issue of Ash Dieback and agreed that the best way forward remained the close co-operation between all Devolved administrations and through north and south co-operation.

Following confirmation of Ash dieback findings, my officials have been in regular discussions with colleagues in DEFRA. My Department is represented on the Chalara Outbreak Management Team and has taken part in the recent COBR meetings, which were chaired by the DEFRA Secretary of State, Owen Paterson MP.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Promotion of the Irish Language

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the number of Irish speakers in the Armagh City area; and (ii) what programmes or organisations her Department has funded in the Armagh City area for the promotion of the Irish language.

(AQW 14990/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Department does not hold the information pertaining to the number of Irish speakers in the Armagh City area.

The 2011 Census included a question on the Irish language. The statistics will be published within the next few months.

The Lófa 2015 initiative was launched by myself to encourage more people to speak Irish. The Lófa Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme programme was available to everyone in the North during the summer of 2012.

Foras na Gaeilge the Irish Language Agency of the North South Language Body is jointly funded by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht. In the Armagh City area Foras na Gaeilge fund the following programmes and organisations to promote the Irish language:

- Summer Camps Scheme 2012
- Youth Events Scheme 2012/2013
- 18th William Kennedy Piping Festival
- Cairde Teo
- Bunscoil Ard Naomh Caitríona
- Armagh Pipers – Secondary School day
- The Armagh Rhymers Educational & Cultural Organisation
- Patrún an Oirghialla (Gaeltacht Oirdheiscirt Uladh)
- Gael-Linn

Departmental Staff Charged with Criminal Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) whether any departmental staff have been charged with criminal offences; and (ii) what is her Department's position regarding staff employment whilst court proceedings are pending.

(AQW 15284/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL has no record of any Departmental staff having been charged with criminal offences.

DCAL's position is in accordance with paragraph 26.1 of the NICS Standards of Conduct Policy staff are required to report to their employing Department if they are arrested, charged, or convicted by a Court of any criminal offence (except a traffic offence with a private vehicle for which the penalty has not included imprisonment or disqualification from driving). Failure to do so may be treated as a disciplinary matter which is dealt with in accordance with section 6 of the NICS Policy on Discipline. The policy includes provision for the person exercising formal disciplinary powers, if the circumstances warrant it, to pursue formal disciplinary action without waiting on the outcome of any police investigation and disposal of any resulting criminal proceedings.

2013 World Police and Fire Games

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department plans to promote the World Police and Fire Games in advance of August 2013; and what cultural significance will be highlighted in the promotional material.

(AQW 15311/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: 2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited have a Communication Strategy in place to ensure that the 2013 Games are promoted locally, nationally and internationally.

A number of specific promotion mechanisms are in place, including the Games website, which is the primary communications channel to carry all information regarding the 2013 Games. Other promotional methods include social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, electronic newsletters, printed marketing, regular local and national PR activity and international Services-specific PR.

An advertising campaign is ongoing as part of the volunteer recruitment programme and in the lead up to the Games next year a further advertising campaign is planned to promote the Games to the public.

Furthermore, an event plan has been designed to promote the Games locally and further afield. These events are a mix of pre-existing events to relevant industry sectors, or events that have been specifically arranged by 2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited to promote the Games.

In terms of cultural content in World Police and Fire Games promotional material, a range of cultural information will be considered, not least given Derry's role as City of Culture 2013. However, it is intended that there will be a diverse and varied cultural programme on offer to visitors for the Games.

2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited will, through its communication media, highlight and provide links to cultural events that will take place across the north of Ireland during the period of the Games. Additionally it is encouraging local Councils to consider organising additional events during and around the Games to further enhance the cultural offer.

Board of Sport NI

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the reasons for the delay in appointing a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson to the Board of Sport NI.

(AQW 15375/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Following the statement made by the Minister for Regional Development in relation to a fair employment tribunal case involving public appointments, I requested the postponement of all processes in relation to public appointments within the Department for a period, while advice was sought in relation to procedural matters. This postponement included the process relating to the appointment of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson to the Board of Sport NI.

Departmental Staff: Ban on Issuing Press Releases

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there is a ban in place on the issuing of press releases by staff in her Department, or its arm's-length bodies, to the Press Association.

(AQW 15401/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There is no ban in place on issuing of press releases to the Press Association.

Boat Patrols

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many boat patrols her Department has performed off the coast of Antrim in the last 12 months.

(AQW 15519/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There have been 7 boat patrols carried out by DCAL Fisheries Protection Officers off the Antrim coast in the last 12 months.

Sandy Row Boxing Club

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the support provided by her Department, and its arm's-length bodies, to Sandy Row Boxing Club between May 2007 and May 2011.

(AQW 16123/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding to sport in the north of Ireland and for providing advice and guidance to clubs and governing bodies on the development of their sports. In the period May 2007 to May 2011, Sport NI received no applications for funding from Sandy Row Amateur Boxing Club (SRABC) and consequently the club was not considered for any funding support. In that time, however, and following a request from SRABC to the then Minister, Nelson McCausland MLA, the Minister and Sport NI met with representatives of the club to discuss their concerns over alleged sectarianism within the sport. At this meeting it was agreed that Sport NI would raise the matter with the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC) and the County Antrim Board (CAB). As a result of this,

Sport NI contacted SRABC in December 2010 to offer the services of a neutral advisor to facilitate discussions between the club, the UPBC and the CAB. This offer of support was refused by SRABC on 29 December 2010.

National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what contact she has had with the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts in relation to seeking additional inward support.

(AQW 16680/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Nesta is actively seeking to reinvigorate its presence and impact in the north of Ireland and my Department is supporting this through ever increasing liaison. This has included officials participating in Nesta briefings and discussions on digital education and its recently launched Plan 1 – which sets the case for innovation led growth.

My Department is working with partners across government, such as DETI and Invest NI, and with the wider creative and cultural sector to increase awareness of Nesta programmes and opportunities for collaboration.

In 2009/10 NESTA piloted a Creative Credits programme in Greater Manchester which enabled small to medium sized companies to acquire support from a local creative business. DCAL has advocated a similar scheme locally, via the Executive's Jobs in the Economy initiative should funding be available, to harness the expertise and innovative potential of the creative industries to support wider business growth.

I understand that Nesta is considering a 'road-show' in the north of Ireland in March 2013. This coincides with Creativity Month and a Nesta event would therefore benefit from an enhanced promotional platform and related activities taking place at that time. My officials are liaising with Nesta to this effect.

Salmon Consultation

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when her decision on actions to be taken following the salmon consultation will be announced.

(AQW 16682/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am currently considering the outcomes of the public consultation, together with scientific and other advice, and I will decide on what actions are required to provide robust protection of wild Atlantic salmon stocks in the DCAL jurisdiction.

I would anticipate making a statement on this matter to the Assembly during December.

Department of Education

Pupils

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the number of pupils who have been (i) suspended; and (ii) expelled in each of the last five years, broken down by (a) school sector; and (b) Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 16990/11-15)

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

I am unable to provide you with a breakdown of figures by school sector or Board area as to do so would not comply with the Statistics Authority Code of Practice on Official Statistics, in particular Principle 5, relating to confidentiality. It is inappropriate therefore to publish the expulsion statistics in any more detail since the risk of individual pupils being identified is unacceptably high, due to the small numbers involved.

PUPILS SUSPENDED IN LAST 5 YEARS - BROKEN DOWN BY SCHOOL SECTOR

School Sector	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Primary Schools	212	196	248	179	200
Secondary Schools	4,185	3,936	3,903	3,530	3,134
Grammar Schools	711	540	568	466	460
Special Schools	82	86	60	65	85
Total	5,190	4,758	4,779	4,240	3,879

PUPILS SUSPENDED IN LAST 5 YEARS – BROKEN DOWN BY BOARD AREA

BOARD AREA	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
BELB	1,067	888	942	835	816
WELB	895	890	798	746	753
NEELB	1,290	1,067	1,234	1,045	866
SEELB	863	1,016	1,004	879	828
SELB	1,075	897	801	735	616
Total	5,190	4,758	4,779	4,240	3,879

Notes to tables:

- 1 The figures include pupils in Key Stage 1-4 in primary, post-primary and special schools.
- 2 The figures refer to the number of pupils suspended. The total number of suspensions is likely to be higher since a pupil can be suspended more than once.

PUPILS EXPELLED IN THE LAST 5 ACADEMIC YEARS

Year	Number of expulsions
2007/08	25
2008/09	36
2009/10	22
2010/11	38
2011/12	24

Pre-School Places

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many children received a pre-school place in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) type; and (ii) Education and Library Board.

(AQW 17027/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The tables below show the number of children in DE funded pre-school education places in each of the last three years:

2009/10

Type	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	TOTAL
Voluntary and Private Pre-School Education Centres¹	523	1,225	1,696	1,372	1,928	6,744
Nursery Schools						
Full-time	1,563	473	338	811	811	3,996
Part-time	-	310	1,031	207	313	1,861
Total Nursery Schools Pupils	1,563	783	1,369	1,018	1,124	5,857
Primary Schools Nursery Class Pupils						
Full-time	1,158	934	523	495	1,384	4,494
Part-time	177	829	1,120	1,412	262	3,800
Total Nursery Class Pupils	1,335	1,763	1,643	1,907	1,646	8,294
Primary: reception	1	90	115	91	279	576
Total Primary Pupils	1,336	1,853	1,758	1,998	1,925	8,870
Total	3,422	3,861	4,823	4,388	4,977	21,471

2010/11

Type	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	TOTAL
Voluntary and Private Pre-School Education Centres¹	614	1,321	1,903	1,652	2,109	7,599
Nursery Schools						
Full-time	1,569	467	341	812	84	4,033
Part-time	-	314	1,038	209	312	1,873
Total Nursery Schools Pupils	1,569	781	1,379	1,021	1,156	5,906
Primary Schools Nursery Class Pupils						
Full-time	1,241	994	528	527	1,539	4,829
Part-time	129	821	1,136	1,405	182	3,673
Total Nursery Class Pupils	1,370	1,815	1,664	1,932	1,721	8,502
Primary: reception	2	78	91	102	218	491
TOTAL PRIMARY PUPILS	1,372	1,893	1,755	2,034	1,939	8,993
Total	3,555	3,995	5,037	4,707	5,204	22,499

2011/12

Type	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	Total
Voluntary and Private Pre-School Education Centres¹	650	1,338	2,140	1,781	2,240	8,149
Nursery Schools						
Full-time	1,515	471	312	812	871	3,981
Part-time	-	313	1,094	210	313	1,930
Total Nursery Schools Pupils	1,515	784	1,406	1,022	1,184	5,911
Primary Schools Nursery Class Pupils						
Full-time	1,289	1,020	575	597	1,662	5,143
Part-time	128	791	1,092	1,357	158	3,526
Total Nursery Class Pupils	1,417	1,811	1,667	1,954	1,820	8,669
Primary: reception	1	87	101	107	148	444
Total Primary Pupils	1,418	1,898	1,768	2,061	1,968	9,113
Total	3,583	4,020	5,314	4,864	5,392	23,173

BELB - Belfast Education and Library Board

WELB - Western Education and Library Board

NEELB - North Eastern Education and Library Board

SEELB - South Eastern Education and Library Board

SELB - Southern Education and Library Board

1 Voluntary and Private centres funded under the Pre-School Education Programme

North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what schools in North Down have been identified as in need of repair; and for an estimate of the cost to make the necessary repairs.

(AQW 17163/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: According to the Education and Library Boards' estate management system, the following schools in the North Down area have been identified as being in need of repair. The estimated cost of these repairs (maintenance backlog at 26 November 2012) is detailed below:

School	Maintenance Backlog (£)
Bangor Nursery	53,545
Hollywood Nursery	1,500
Trinity Nursery	63,920
Ballymagee Primary	3,290
Ballyvester Primary	28,550
Bloomfield Road Primary	313,680
Clandeboye Primary	274,395

School	Maintenance Backlog (£)
Crawfordsburn Primary	20,450
Donaghadee Primary	139,580
Grange Park Primary	154,940
Hollywood Primary	138,769
Kilcooley Primary	219,047
Millisle Primary	125,235
Rathmore Primary	367,230
Redburn Primary (Closed)	604,405
Saint Anne's Primary	29,615
Saint Comgall's Primary	5,190
Saint Malachy's Primary	210,786
Saint Patrick's Primary	298,945
Bangor Central Integrated Primary	53,850
Glencraig Integrated Primary	62,775
Saint Columbanus College	527,685
Priory College	561,685
Bangor Grammar School	4,791,098
Clifton Special	5,100
Killard Special	8,355
Total	9,063,620

There is a programme of planned maintenance across the schools' estate that impacts on the level of maintenance backlog. In addition, reactive maintenance is carried out to address unexpected emergency issues such as a heating system failure. The cost of emergency work is not reflected in the maintenance backlog figure.

As I am sure you are aware the new build for Bangor Grammar School is now nearing completion. The maintenance backlog for the school, as detailed above, reflects the condition of the old school at College Avenue.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what powers the Education and Skills Authority will have over the selection and intake of pupils to post-primary schools.

(AQW 17167/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under Article 16 of the Education (NI) Order 1997 (N.I.5) the Board of Governors of each grant-aided school must draw up criteria to be applied, in the event of oversubscription, in order to select children for admission to the school. This will not change in the move to the Education and Skills Authority.

Voluntary Grammar Schools

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 16834/11-15, at what stage of the approvals process is this matter; and how long before the process is complete.

(AQW 17179/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The approval process is at the information gathering stage. An extensive exercise will be necessary and it is likely that the process will take a number of months to complete.

Department for Employment and Learning

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16730/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Unless otherwise stated in a contract, the Department aims to make payments to suppliers and contractors within 30 days of receipt of goods or services, on presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later. This is in accordance with the Confederation of British Industry's prompt payment code and British Standard BS 7890.

In November 2008, Finance Minister Nigel Dodds set a target for all Northern Ireland Departments to pay supplier invoices within 10 working days of receipt in order to help local business in the current economic climate.

In order to promote awareness within the Department, prompt payment policy forms part of the Department's financial procedures. The policy is applied in partnership with Account NI, the financial shared service centre, which performs transaction processing on behalf of the Department, including payment.

The Department monitors its own performance against both 10 day and 30 day targets on a monthly basis and takes action accordingly. Information on prompt payment performance is also included in the Department's annual resource accounts, as required by the FReM (Financial Reporting Manual).

In the year ended 31 March 2012, 96% of invoices from suppliers were paid by the Department within 30 days, and 87% within 10 days.

The Department has given guidance on prompt payment to its arm's-length bodies. These bodies have processes in place to ensure adherence to prompt payment for all their suppliers (including contractors and sub-contractors).

Paid Employment for Young People

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the timescale for the proposed scheme to provide 1700 young people with six months paid employment.

(AQW 16748/11-15)

Dr Farry: This initiative, known as 'First Start', will support 1,700 jobs, each lasting for a minimum of six months, for unemployed 18 to 24 year olds. First Start will support an initial tranche of 500 jobs in this financial year. A further 600 opportunities will be supported during both 2013/14 and 2014/15. While these jobs may, initially, be temporary it is anticipated that in many cases they may lead to permanent employment.

Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps will be taken to ensure that the additional training and employment schemes envisaged in the Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative will be distributed equitably.

(AQW 16749/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative announced earlier this month is a package of measures in response to the current economic circumstances faced by Northern Ireland. The new measures are intended to ensure that those out of work have access to the right training, skills and education opportunities and are particularly focused on the needs of young people and other disadvantaged groups.

A number of the new measures outlined within the Economy and Jobs Initiative will be delivered through my Department's Steps to Work (StW) programme. They include 'First Start' offering waged employment opportunities for young people, 'Step Ahead 50+' offering temporary paid employment in the community and voluntary sector and 'Public Sector Work Placements'

These measures will be offered to people from all backgrounds throughout Northern Ireland. The distribution of 'Public Sector Work Placements' will be dependent on the availability/locations of work experience placements within public sector organisations but again will be open to people from all backgrounds. My Department is committed to offering placements and a number of these will be available in the network of 35 Jobs & Benefits Offices and Job Centres across Northern Ireland.

Apprenticeship Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the timescale for the introduction of the proposed scheme for an additional 900 apprenticeship places for young people.

(AQW 16750/11-15)

Dr Farry: Through the Youth Employment Scheme we will encourage further employer engagement with the objective of bringing an additional 900 young people onto the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. As you are aware, the programme is demand-led with employers employing the apprentice and my Department meeting the full cost (in the case of 16 to 24 yr olds) for the "off the job" training.

It is intended that a significant number of those young people who participate on the Youth Employment Scheme will transfer directly to ApprenticeshipsNI. To help facilitate this, the Jobs and Economy Initiative has allocated an additional £0.2m in 2013/14 and a further £0.7m in 2014/15 to ApprenticeshipsNI.

Temporary Employment

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the timescale for the introduction of the scheme to provide temporary employment for 1100 people aged over fifty.

(AQW 16751/11-15)

Dr Farry: The initiative to provide temporary employment for 6 months for 1,100 people aged 50 or over, which will be known Step Ahead 50+, is scheduled to be introduced in early January 2013 as part of the Steps to Work programme. It is proposed that Step Ahead 50+ will initially support 300 temporary jobs in this financial year with a further 400 temporary jobs supported during both 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Budget Reclassification of Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to explain the £0.9 million budget reclassification of Stranmillis University College, Belfast, referred to in Table E of the Minister of Finance and Personnel's statement to the Assembly on 12 November 2012.

(AQW 16775/11-15)

Dr Farry: Stranmillis University College have revised their expenditure profiles for 2012/13 and requested that £0.9 million Resource DEL be reclassified to Capital DEL to progress their capital programme, including the Dunseverick Accommodation En Suites project. This was actioned in the recent October Monitoring Round.

Training Organisations

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many young people in West Belfast are in training organisations.

(AQW 16806/11-15)

Dr Farry: Steps to Work (StW) is my Department's main adult return to work programme and is delivered by contracted providers. At June 2012 (the latest date for which statistics are available) there were 169 people aged 18 – 24 years old on the StW programme with the contracted provider in West Belfast.

My Department, through its Training for Success (TfS) Programme, guarantees a training place for all unemployed young people in the 16-17 age group. At 20 November 2012 there were 631 participants on TfS with contracted suppliers based in West Belfast.

The Programme-Led Apprenticeship (PLA) programme assists young school leavers who have been unable to find the requisite employed status during the economic downturn to train as an apprentice. At 20 November 2012 there were 1,421 young people participating on the PLA programme with the contracted suppliers based in West Belfast.

ApprenticeshipsNI is my Department's flagship training programme for those in employment. There are over 100 frameworks covering apprenticeships in a diverse range of occupational areas. At 20 November 2012, there were 1,128 young people placed with training organisations in West Belfast, following an ApprenticeshipsNI framework.

Apprenticeship Schemes

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list the apprenticeship schemes offered by his Department; and to detail how each scheme operates for those involved and the payment they receive.

(AQW 16808/11-15)

Dr Farry: ApprenticeshipsNI is my Department's flagship training programme for those in employment. There are over 100 frameworks covering apprenticeships in a diverse range of occupational areas. ApprenticeshipsNI provides apprentices with the opportunity to achieve an industry approved Level 2/ Level 3 Framework and is open to those who have reached school leaving age, are either entering or are already in employment, and contracted to work a minimum of 21 hours a week.

As a minimum, employers with apprentices in the ApprenticeshipsNI programme must adhere to the National Minimum Wage Act 1998. However, under ApprenticeshipsNI guidelines, they are encouraged to pay their apprentice a wage commensurate with the industry rate for the job.

ApprenticeshipsNI training is delivered by contracted training suppliers throughout Northern Ireland. It is a demand-led provision and the number of apprenticeship places is determined by employers meeting their business needs. For apprentices aged 16-24 directed training costs are met by my Department and for apprentices aged 25 plus, 50% funding is available if they are undertaking an apprenticeship in an economically important sector. Funding ranges from £2,600 to £10,800 determined by the level and occupational area of study. On completion, an incentive bonus of up to £1,500 is paid to the employer.

Programme-Led Apprenticeships (PLA) assist young school leavers who have been unable to find the requisite employed status to train as an apprentice during the economic downturn. Entry to the programme may be by self-referral, referral from Careers Service or progression from Training for Success. The programme guarantees training of up to 104 weeks for unemployed 16/17 year olds

who have been assessed as capable of undertaking and achieving a Level 2 Apprenticeship Framework qualification.

The qualification is identical to that offered under the employer-led ApprenticeshipsNI programme. A participant who secures paid employment in his/her framework area during PLA may transfer to ApprenticeshipNI.

PLA participants receive a weekly non-means tested Educational Maintenance Allowance of £40. In addition assistance is available towards the cost of travel, childcare and, where necessary, lodgings.

Steps to Work

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the creative industry sector being one of the largest potential for job growth (over 11,700 jobs by 2020), why he is removing the music industry support that is available under the Steps to Work Programme from the new Steps to Success Programme.

(AQW 16850/11-15)

Dr Farry: Steps 2 Success, my Department's new employment programme is being developed to help people in receipt of benefits and removed from the labour market to find and sustain employment. A key feature of the new programme is to remove the prescriptive nature of previous employment programmes. This flexibility will allow providers to develop and tailor innovative support solutions to address clients' barriers to employment without the need to attend pre-determined provision or training. Additionally, the number of hours and/or days that a client will be required to attend will be agreed between the client and the provider. This will allow a client and their Steps 2 Success provider to work together to achieve the client's job goal at the earliest opportunity.

While music industry advice, like all other elements of Steps to Work, no longer exists as part of a set menu of provision, support should still be available via the Steps 2 Success provider. Where a client's agreed job goal includes the need for music industry support, this will be arranged by the provider who will have responsibility for ensuring that a robust supply chain is in place to meet the needs of all clients on the Steps 2 Success programme.

Youth Unemployment

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department has taken to address youth unemployment in the Newry and Armagh area.

(AQW 16951/11-15)

Dr Farry: Addressing youth unemployment, in all areas of Northern Ireland including the Newry and Armagh area, is a priority.

Steps to Work (StW) is the Department's main return to work provision and in the Newry and Armagh area 551 young people are currently availing of this programme. This is a flexible programme which tailors provision to the individual's need with the aim of assisting participants to find and sustain employment.

The Department's Pathways to Work programme assists people with health conditions and disabilities move into employment and presently 122 young people in the Newry and Armagh area are involved in this programme.

In addition to this, in the period April to October 2012 my Department helped 566 young people move from welfare to work in Newry and Armagh (the area served by Newry and Armagh Jobs and Benefits Offices). This is 13% above target for those areas for the period. (The target for Newry was 318 and for Armagh, 182).

My Department is also implementing the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) which was agreed by the Executive in March. The Scheme aims to help young people gain experience, acquire new skills and find employment and the Department is actively working with employers to secure as many opportunities,

as quickly as possible across Northern Ireland. Opportunities under YES will be available in the Armagh and Newry areas in the coming months.

As part of the Jobs and Economy Initiative announced by the Executive, my Department has also recently implemented a new youth employment initiative within the Steps to Work programme called 'First Start'. Between October 2012 and March 2014, First Start will support 1,700 waged employment opportunities, each lasting a minimum of six months, for young people aged 18 to 24 who have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for at least six months. First Start opportunities will be available in the Newry and Armagh area in the coming months.

Finance: Pre-hearing Deposits

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many pre-hearing deposits there have been in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16972/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table provided sets out statistics from the Office of Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal concerning pre-hearing deposits in the previous three full reporting years and to date this year.

TABLE: PRE-HEARING DEPOSITS – APRIL 2009 TO NOVEMBER 2012

	Listed for hearing	Heard	Deposit ordered	Deposit paid
April 2009-March 2010	-	-	-	-
April 2010-March 2011	3	3	-	-
April 2011-March 2012	20	8	6	-
April 2012-November 2012	31	13	13	5

Disparities between numbers listed for hearing, heard, deposits ordered and deposits paid reflect situations where a case (or relevant part of it) has been conciliated or otherwise settled, withdrawn, postponed or dismissed

South Eastern Regional College and Down District Council

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether any partnership arrangements exist between the South Eastern Regional College and Down District Council.

(AQW 16975/11-15)

Dr Farry: South Eastern Regional College has advised that it does not have formal partnership arrangements with Down District Council. The college has, however, worked in partnership with the council on a series of joint projects and activities, including:

- 'Driving Your Way to Success' - which provides vocational training opportunities for 30 local young people (while also offering an opportunity to receive driving lessons and undertake a driving test);
- the annual Dermot Curran Enterprise Awards - which recognises young entrepreneurs;
- the Beyond Project - which supports local businesses;
- a joint promotion strategy for Essential Skills; and
- World Host, Retail and Hospitality Business - which was delivered during 2011/12, in association with Down Business Centre.

Ministerial Directions

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many decisions with spending implications he has made on foot of ministerial direction since coming into office.

(AQW 17024/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have not given any ministerial directions required by Managing Public Money since taking up office.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Dangers on Farms

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the issues and dangers on farms caused by the use of recycled gypsum for bedding; and what steps her Department has taken in relation to this matter, including any regulatory measures.

(AQW 16571/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): HSENI, in conjunction with the HSE and the Environment Agency in GB, has commissioned research into the influence of gypsum in animal slurry systems. The results of this research are due next year and will be used to help inform national policy.

Environmental legislation (enforced by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, NIEA), does not permit the use of waste plasterboard or waste gypsum as animal bedding.

The NIEA has issued a regulatory position statement and contacted suppliers of re-cycled gypsum to ensure that they inform farmers that re-cycled gypsum must not be used for bedding livestock.

In the mean time, HSENI continues to advise farmers through the press and visits that they should not use gypsum in animal bedding. The farming press in Northern Ireland has reported widely on the potential issues of using gypsum and that the use of gypsum for animal bedding is illegal. HSENI has recently re-issued advice on this matter to the farming industry through the press.

Caleb Foundation

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 15673/11-15, to outline the issues raised by the Caleb Foundation at the meeting on 2 March 2010.

(AQW 16616/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A range of issues were discussed with the Caleb Foundation at the meeting on 2 March 2010.

Small Firms Merit Award for Research and Technology Programme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action is being taken to reclaim any of the £25,000 paid under the Small Firms Merit Award for Research and Technology Programme to NCR Fibre Solutions, later known as Hempire Building Materials; and why her Department is reclaiming this money.

(AQW 16642/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI will always consider reclaiming financial assistance from any company that has been in receipt of Invest NI grant assistance and fails to comply with the conditions of the Letter of Offer.

In the case of Hempire Building Materials (Hempire) this occurred through the cessation of trading and as a result Invest NI is entitled to seek recovery of the full amount paid in the preceding three years. That amount is £25,252.03 and not £25 million as claimed in the question.

The project's Technology Executive and Client Executive are currently considering whether it would be appropriate to instigate procedures to reclaim grant paid under the SMART programme.

Ministerial Directions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, since May 2007, how many decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of ministerial directions.

(AQW 16684/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since May 2007 two decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of Ministerial Directions.

Patton Group: Sub-Contractors

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what contact her Department has had with major clients of the Patton Group in relation to those clients paying sub-contractors directly for works that have already been completed or substantially completed.

(AQW 16714/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has had no contact with the clients of Patton Group in relation to those clients paying sub-contractors directly.

The ability of any client of the Patton Group to make payment directly to a sub-contractor can only be informed by the terms and conditions of the contractual arrangements that exist between the Patton Group, as the main contractor, the sub-contractors and the Patton clients to which we are not party.

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16728/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), has instructed all Departments, their agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) to take steps to support the Northern Ireland Civil Service 10 day prompt payment target.

All Departments operate through the Account NI platform which ensures a consistent approach to invoice payment and supplier management that supports the 10 day prompt payment target.

Additionally, within the Department there are a number of processes in place to complement and support the Account NI approach, including: centralised monitoring of the invoice approvals process to minimise the risk of delays; provision of monthly key performance indicators at branch level which include performance against the 10 day target; reasons for late payments analysed with a focus on actions that can be taken to prevent re-occurrences; reporting of monthly prompt payment performance, including that of NDPBs, to the Departmental Board.

The Department has received assurances from its NDPBs that they are committed to the 10 day prompt payment target and that they will continue to review supplier relationships, invoice validation and approval processes to minimise any delays in the payment process and address areas for improvement.

In relation to sub-contractor payments, DFP Procurement Guidance Note 06/12 states that where the contractor enters into a subcontract for the provision of any part of the Services, the contractor shall ensure that a term is included in the subcontract which requires the Contractor to pay all sums due to the subcontractor within a specified period, not exceeding 30 days from the date of receipt of a valid invoice.

Grants for Farms

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether grants for farms have been linked to health and safety risk, such as, the provision of guards and alarms; and if not, whether this is an option for the future.

(AQW 16746/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Although grants for farms are a matter for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), my Department's Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) has worked with DARD to include equipment which promotes safer working practices under the Farm Modernisation Programme. However, current EU rules do not permit grants to farm businesses to be used for items which replace or repair or to meet statutory requirements, such as the replacement of broken power shaft safety covers.

HSENI is of the view that many of the risks on farms can be managed with little or no cost to the farmer. However, HSENI has been working with DARD, through the Farm Safety Partnership, to develop an action plan looking at specific actions to address the poor health and safety record within the agricultural industry. Any recommendations relating to providing financial assistance to farmers to improve health and safety on farms will be considered both by DARD and my Department.

InvestNI

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether InvestNI has conducted a survey on foreign direct investors to ascertain the main reasons for them investing here and the most important attraction factors they use when considering investment in any area or country.

(AQW 16752/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While Invest NI has not conducted a formal survey with its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies, the agency gains knowledge and understanding from the feedback from companies as part of the inward visit programmes and negotiation process (for first time investors). In addition, the ongoing client management of externally owned companies also provides feedback on the key issues and drivers for investment growth and sustainability.

Invest NI has conducted extensive research on the typical requirements of an internationally mobile FDI project and has also compared Northern Ireland's capability to meet those requirements against the capability of its competitors.

As a result, Invest NI has a firm understanding of the reasons investors have for locating in Northern Ireland.

Unemployment Figures for Young People

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the recent unemployment figures for young people, what further steps are being taken to ensure that job promotion, skills based training, and other associated measures are being targeted in the most cost effective way.

(AQW 16814/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is acutely aware of the particular difficulties facing young people and has developed a comprehensive range of Business Solutions including employment grants and skills development support which benefit young people and indeed older people alike.

A specific measure within Invest NI's Jobs Fund is the NEET (not in employment, education or training) business start grant which provides an incentive grant of £1,500 to businesses started up by young people aged 16-24 not in employment, education or training.

I am also aware that Invest NI with the support of DEL and other key stakeholders, has organised a pilot event in Limavady specifically to help young people find out how to gain work experience, develop additional skills and get recognised relevant qualifications that will help them secure a job or to start their own business.

Invest NI will continue to work closely with all government departments and local economic development stakeholders to promote its Business Solutions and to ensure that the support available to business from Invest NI and to individuals and young people through other partners such as DEL is working effectively.

Enforcing Authorities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether (i) any farmers or farming representatives have been given the opportunity to engage with the enforcing authorities or have input into awareness campaigns; and (ii) any assessments have been carried out on the effectiveness of previous campaigns and activities.

(AQW 16849/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) has and continues to, engage with the farming community in developing initiatives and campaigns. This has included extensive discussions with the Ulster Farmers Union along with advice obtained from other members of the Farm Safety Partnership and the farming representative on the Board of HSENI.

Plans for a farm safety awareness campaign due to launch in March 2013 are being developed using research being collected from farm related stakeholders groups.

Campaign evaluations that encompass both market research testing and media evaluation activity have taken place post-campaign to establish their effectiveness.

Health and Safety on Farms

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to farm health and safety issues, whether her Department has focused on either advice and guidance or enforcement.

(AQW 16873/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During the farm safety visits, HSENI inspectors focus on providing information and advice to farmers on the key health and safety risks encountered on farms. However, in accordance with their statutory remit, if during visits inspectors observe activities which will involve a risk of serious personal injury they may take appropriate enforcement action.

InvestNI Business Park in Strabane

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the development of the InvestNI Business Park in Strabane and specifically to outline (i) when enabling works will be completed to allow potential tenants to begin the process of seeking planning permission for the development of new build premises, (ii) how many expressions of interest have been received to date in locating business enterprises on this site and (iii) what efforts have been made by InvestNI to proactively seek potential investors/business tenants to locate on this site.

(AQW 16896/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has acquired 40 acres of land at Melmount Road for the purposes of developing a new business park to support economic development in the Strabane District Council area.

The first phase of construction works, which will see the release of nine acres of new serviced land, is expected to complete in early 2013. To date Invest NI has recorded seven interests from businesses in respect of acquiring sites.

Once construction of the first phase has completed, and the land is available, Invest NI will proactively market the Park to both foreign and indigenous investors as an investment location. It is important to note, however, that the final decision on location rests solely with the investor.

Invest NI will continue to engage proactively with Strabane District Council in progressing this important development.

Ulster Way in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department intends to take to promote further the Ulster Way in North Down,
(AQW 16954/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The revised route for The Ulster Way was officially launched by then Environment Minister Edwin Poots MLA on 16 September 2009 at Crawfordsburn Country Park.

My Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland currently promote The Ulster Way in North Down on www.discovernorthernireland.com and www.walkni.com.

The two websites have received over one million visitors in the last six months, showing how important these websites are in promoting Northern Ireland.

My Department is also working with the World Police and Fire Games Company to promote Northern Ireland, including North Down, tourism to the competitors and spectators of the Games.

Conlig

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department intends to take promote further the lead mines at Conlig as a tourist destination in North Down.
(AQW 16955/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) remit is to promote the whole of Northern Ireland to both the domestic and Republic of Ireland markets, with a view to increasing visitor numbers and spend. Each year NITB undertakes a series of seasonal marketing campaigns in both markets. The huge variety of products, regions and events featured from throughout Northern Ireland are based on what motivates our key customer segments which have been identified through substantial research.

Within this context, neither my Department nor the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has any plans to promote further the lead mines at Conlig as a tourist destination at this stage.

Health and Safety on Farms

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what officer resource is available for health and safety work on farms; and whether this is linked to the perceived risks within the farming sector.
(AQW 16957/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Currently 10 inspectors are available to work on farm safety inspections on a permanent basis/all year round, with more available to carry out targeted farm safety visits for shorter time bounded initiatives. Additional staff were made available this year due to the worsening situation regarding fatal accidents in the farming sector.

Health and Safety on Farms

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there is an inspection programme for health and safety on farms.
(AQW 17003/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I can confirm that HSENI intends to carry out 1000 farm inspection visits between April 2012 and March 2013.

City of Culture 2013

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the success to date of the marketing campaign for the City of Culture 2013.
(AQW 17021/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am confident that NITB and Tourism Ireland marketing plans will provide the platform to promote Londonderry as the UK City of Culture across all of our major markets.

The marketing plans aim to raise the profile and positive awareness of Londonderry, drive tourism numbers and maximise awareness of Londonderry as an investment location. The array of events recently announced covering theatre, music, dance, visual arts, architecture and film will have a wide appeal for all our potential visitors.

The news that Londonderry has been named the fourth best city in the world to visit next year by Lonely Planet is an important accolade and provides a further marketing opportunity for the city in 2013.

Wi-Fi Scheme in Newcastle

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of the pilot Wi-Fi scheme in Newcastle town centre; and (ii) whether her Department has shared the post-project evaluation with Down District Council.

(AQW 17034/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The wi-fi pilot project in Newcastle Town Centre ran for one year between April 2009 and March 2010. The purpose of the pilot was to: -

- examine if the installation of a mesh network could stimulate sufficient broadband use and take-up in a town with a tourism focus to lead to the emergence of a commercially sustainable service;
- examine the relative merits of the external mesh network over the more traditional internal “hot-spots” model;
- promote environmental sustainability in terms of encouraging mobile working; and
- assist visitors to the town by providing reliable, cost-effective “pay-as-you-go” access to a broadband service.

A local community forum expressed some concerns over the project which had an impact on the delivery. However, by working closely with Down District Council, the project was delivered on time and within budget, leading to a commercially available service. After the pilot had concluded, it is understood that the District Council entered into an agreement with the service provider Air-Net Wireless Ltd to support the network for a further year.

The project was useful in that it allowed for comparison between a wireless mesh network (effectively a router network covering a geographic area) and the traditional ‘hotspot’ model (where host businesses are wi-fi enabled to allow them to offer connectivity to customers). It was found that the wireless mesh approach offers greater flexibility allowing access to services for longer periods of time. From DETI's perspective the pilot project was successful.

I believe that although the network remains in place, it is no longer operating due to diminishing commercial interest.

My Department has not yet shared the Post-Project Evaluation for the initiative with Down District Council. However, pursuant to my response to AQW 15586/11-15, my officials will make the evaluation report available should the Council wish to receive a copy.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the Department will conclude its submissions to the Ombudsman on the draft report on her Department's handling of Presbyterian Mutual Society issues.

(AQW 17095/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My officials have provided all information requested by the Ombudsman.

Department of the Environment

Stewarts Place, Hollywood

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of the Environment what action is being taken to protect and restore 1 Stewarts Place, Hollywood.

(AQW 16222/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): NIEA's Historic Buildings Unit has been in regular contact with the owners of 1 Stewarts Place since 13 Oct 2008, when a site meeting was held to agree the scope of urgent remedial works. Subsequent to that meeting, and after the issue of a Dangerous Structures Notice by Building Control and a warning letter from NIEA, some urgent repair works were carried out.

Following this first intervention, an application for grant-aid was made to NIEA to carry out further urgent repairs, and also non-urgent works to conserve and restore the building. A letter of offer was made on 3 October 2011, however this was not taken up by the owners. Nonetheless, they repaired the roof, removed vegetation, loose render was taken down and repairs to the gutters were undertaken. It appeared that the minimum amount of work necessary to secure the building and protect the fabric had been carried out. This reflected the level of work that would have been required to be carried out under an Urgent Works Notice, had one been issued around that time.

A site visit on 9 May 2012, in better weather, revealed previously unidentified 'new' problems. A window head to the ground floor was of concern, and the gutters and render needed further work. During subsequent contact with the owners, they agreed to carry out further repair work as required. As part of this process, the owner agreed to provide NIEA with an engineer's assessment of the building. To date this has not been forthcoming.

NIEA has, however, sought its own engineering assessment of the property. An initial site inspection and informal evaluation was made on 12 October. NIEA has subsequently written to the owners, to seek their own engineer's report, and to gain access to the property to enable further assessment to be carried out. In this correspondence NIEA has again reminded the owners of its statutory powers under Article 80 of the Planning Order (NI) 1991, i.e. to undertake urgent works to prevent further deterioration of the property, and seek recompense for the costs incurred.

NIEA is continuing to monitor the condition of this building and will take action if and as appropriate – in keeping with the legislation established policy and in line with PPS6.

Planning Application

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment, in each of the last five years, how many enforcement cases were allowed to continue while a valid planning application for the same development was under consideration.

(AQW 16268/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Information is not recorded on the Department's database in such a way as to identify enforcement cases that were allowed to continue while a valid planning application for the same development was under consideration.

The Department's general policy approach to dealing with breaches of planning control is contained in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 9 – The Enforcement of Planning Control. Whilst enforcement action may be held in abeyance while a planning application or appeal is being determined, if a case is well advanced or when the unauthorised activity/development is considered to be unacceptable enforcement action is likely to proceed immediately.

Protracted negotiations will not be allowed to hamper or delay whatever formal enforcement action may be required to make the development acceptable on planning grounds, or to compel it to stop. I have also made it clear to Planning that there needs to be a step change in enforcement going forward, that

planning applicants cannot frustrate enforcement by serial planning applications and that on a case by case basis, enforcement should be pursued where proper, independent of planning status.

Indeed, I have asked planning to assess the opportunity to apply for injunctions in appropriate cases, to escalate enforcement practice.

Experience to date has however shown that courts may adjourn enforcement proceedings if a retrospective planning application has been submitted by the offender to regularise the unauthorised development or where the offender has appealed the enforcement notice.

Destruction of Council Property or Trees in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 9206/11-15, whether any prosecutions were sought against businesses or companies for the destruction of council property or trees in South Antrim.

(AQW 16536/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Neither Antrim nor Newtownabbey Borough Council has sought any prosecutions against businesses or companies for the destruction of council property or trees in South Antrim.

Illegal Dumping of Agricultural and Equestrian Animal Carcasses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 14741/11-15, how many of the agricultural carcasses recovered had ear tags removed.

(AQW 16554/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Some Councils had either not collected any carcasses or did not record the information. Each of the ten Councils that did record such detail (Ballymena, Coleraine, Craigavon, Down, Dungannon, Larne, Lisburn, Moyle, Omagh, Strabane) reported that all the carcasses they collected had their ear tags removed.

Sale of Recycled Gypsum

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what steps her Department has taken, or intends to take, to prohibit the sale of recycled gypsum as farm bedding; and what regulation is being applied to wholesalers or retailers to prohibit sales.

(AQW 16572/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The NIEA has adopted a Quality Protocol for recycled gypsum but it does not include animal bedding as an approved end use. During the development of the Quality Protocol, there was no risk assessment carried out into the use of waste gypsum as animal bedding. The Quality Protocol however permits the use of gypsum as a soil conditioner.

The use of recycled gypsum as animal bedding without a waste authorisation is an offence. NIEA will not authorise the use of these materials until there is clear scientific evidence to demonstrate that they do not pose a risk to animals, humans or the environment, in particular from hydrogen sulphide generation.

The NIEA issued a Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) in June 2012 and it can be found on:

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/gypsum-plaster-2012.pdf>.

There are currently two licensed waste facilities processing waste plasterboard in Northern Ireland. The Agency has contacted these operators to ensure that they inform farmers that recycled gypsum must not be used for bedding livestock. NIEA staff have also visited a number of farmers who received the recycled gypsum to confirm what end use they put this material to.

Freedom of Information Requests

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of Freedom of Information requests received by his Department in each year since 2007; (ii) the proportion of requests each year that were not answered within the time limit; (iii) the number of requests currently outstanding by more than (a) one to two months (b) three to four months; (c) five to six months; (d) seven to twelve months; and (e) more than twelve months.

(AQW 16666/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The information requested is as follows:-

YEAR	Requests Received	Proportion of Requests not Answered within Time Limit
2007	1009	4.6%
2008	634	6%
2009	599	4.3%
2010	561	9.3%
2011	428	10.3%
	Number of Requests Currently Outstanding	
1-2 months	Nil	
3-4 months	Nil	
5-6 months	Nil	
7-12 months	Nil	
More than 12 months	Nil	

The information requested in points (i) and (ii) has been published in a series of FOI Annual Reports which can be accessed from the OFMDFM website site at: http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/improving-public-services/information_management_and_central_advisory_branch/annual-reports-and-statistics.htm

Illegal Dumping of Waste

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether illegal dumping of waste has ceased, and (ii) what measures he has put in place to ensure that the illegal dumping of waste does not occur and that it can be easily detected.

(AQW 16719/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Illegal dumping of waste and other types of illegal waste management have not ceased. The profits available to those involved in the illegal waste industry are significant, meaning that this form of criminality will continue for the foreseeable future. Many waste offenders are known to be involved in other types of criminality and are involved in waste offending due to the huge opportunities for profit that are involved.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Environmental Crime Unit continues to investigate those who are involved in the illegal waste industry, to bring them to court for environmental offences and on conviction, to seek to deprive them of their criminal benefit through the use of the Proceeds of Crime Act. There has been success in this regard, with a range of ongoing and serious Environmental Crime Unit investigations. That said, I believe the importance of the Environmental Crime Unit and the scale of demand on its work means the Environmental Crime Unit needs to be expanded. I have asked my Permanent Secretary to assess and advise how this can be achieved.

Vacant Listed Buildings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what responsibility Departments have to protect and maintain vacant listed buildings in their estate.

(AQW 16721/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Executive requires all government departments and agencies to set a good example in the care of their historic estate. This includes listed buildings.

In June this year I launched a new Northern Ireland specific version of the 'Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate', endorsed by the Executive, which updates previous UK guidance from 2003.

This sets out twelve points which should be followed by all departments. In regard to vacant buildings, points 4 to 7 are most relevant ie: 'commission regular condition surveys; implement a planned programme of repairs and maintenance; protect heritage at risk' and 'work to keep buildings in active use'. For example, a meanwhile use for a currently vacant building can help improve its security and ensure that it remains well ventilated and heated. A report on progress is to be laid in front of the Environment Committee during September 2013.

If you would like to find out more about the Protocol you can download a copy from NIEA's website at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/builthome/information/protocol_for_the_care_of_the_government_historic_estate.htm

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how much the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan has cost since the beginning of its development.

(AQW 16723/11-15)

Mr Attwood: To date the cost to the Department since the formal commencement of the Belfast Metropolitan Plan in January 2001 has been in the region of £9.3 million.

This does not include the costs incurred by other departments such as OFMDFM, who are largely responsible for funding the Planning Appeals Commission, or costs to individuals and other bodies, including Councils, who have participated in the plan process.

It is estimated that a further £0.25 million will be incurred between now and adoption at the end of March 2013. This includes both staff costs and costs incurred in printing the Adoption Statement and the revised Written Statement and Maps.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether there is public access to the details of payments made to landowners in regard to the protection of Areas of Special Scientific Interest.

(AQW 16724/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There is no formal mechanism for public access to details of payments made to landowners in regard to the protection of Areas of Special Scientific Interest. However, an individual may make a request to the Department for information about such payments. Any such request would be considered within the relevant provisions of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and, particularly, the Data Protection Act 1998.

Sheepland Area of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what action is being taken to ensure that the landowner of the Sheepland area of special scientific interest is meeting the obligation to protect the site.

(AQW 16725/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Sheepland Coast Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) was declared on 27th June 2007.

According to Departmental records there are currently 45 individual landowners within Sheepland Coast.

The question posed does not specify which landowner in question the member is referring to but he can be assured that all ASSIs including Sheepland Coast are routinely monitored on a regular basis. Any identified non-compliance within an ASSI is thoroughly investigated and acted upon in accordance with NIEA enforcement policy.

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16727/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the current economic climate, I recognise the importance of cashflow for many contractors and suppliers. My Department is committed to the prompt payment of valid invoices and continues to monitor performance to ensure all contractors and suppliers are paid as promptly as possible.

To ensure a focus on prompt payment performance, the Department has deployed a number of mechanisms and practices to monitor and improve performance including:

- Provision of training to over 300 staff within the past 18 months, highlighting the importance of the prompt payment of invoices;
- Dissemination of monthly prompt payment performance statistics to business areas;
- Quarterly reporting of prompt payment performance to senior management;
- Monitoring mechanisms to ensure departmental staff are processing invoices promptly and to facilitate timely resolution of potentially disputed invoices; and
- Oversight monitoring arrangements are in place for the Department's arms-length bodies.

During 2011-12, the Department's prompt payment performance increased from 70% to 85% of valid invoices paid within 10 days. Within the first six months of the current financial year, the Department has paid 92.1% of valid invoices within the 10 day target.

In addition, I have raised a series of questions with local Councils in relation to prompt payment or otherwise of invoices. I shall be pursuing further this matter.

Road Safety Campaigns

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department has spent on road safety campaigns in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16737/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As part of the current road safety campaign programme, there is an extensive portfolio of public information advertisements which are run on a regular basis, addressing many negative road user behaviours. The total amount spent on road safety campaigns over the last three financial years is as follows:

Financial Year	Amount
2009-10	£1,749,113
2010-11	£1,999,470
2011-12	£3,036,492

The figures provided above cover all aspects of our road safety campaign work such as development research, creative development, production and airtime. The increase in the 2011-12 budget was primarily due to the production of two new television campaigns, "Just Because" and "Excuses".

The most recent independent study by Oxford Economics isolates the importance of the role of DOE advertising and have calculated that from 1995 – 2011, 21,977 men, women and children in Northern Ireland have been saved from death and serious injury on our roads. This prevention of death and serious injury concludes that the economic payback is £10 per £1 invested by DOE excluding the human costs, but £42 per pound invested including human cost.

The impact of the road safety campaign is carefully monitored; the evidence shows that they are consistently rated as the most important influence on road user behaviour, and therefore are an important element of the Department's work to reduce casualties on our roads, with the aim of achieving zero deaths.

Administration Costs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why there has been a 17.9 percent increase in administration costs in just 6 months in 2012/13, as revealed by Table H of the Minister of Finance and Personnel's statement of 12 November 2012.

(AQW 16762/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are two main factors contributing to the increase in the DOE's Net Administration budget in 2012-13.

Firstly, the Department secured an additional £2.1 million of funding, as part of the Executive's Invest to Save Scheme, for an early retirement / severance scheme for planners. This funding is to facilitate the restructuring of the planning service, in preparation for its transfer to local government and the return of planners from redeployments to other departments and organisations.

Secondly, Table H of the Finance Minister's Statement to the Assembly on the October Monitoring Round shows the change in departments' Net Administration budgets. The Net Administration budgets exclude administration costs funded from income generated from fees and charges.

DOE, unlike most other departments, generates a significant amount of income from fees and charges which is netted off its total Administration budget. Whenever there is a reduction in administration income, there is a need to reduce administration costs and, in some cases, it may be necessary to divert funding from the non administration budget to cover the shortfall in income.

This has been the case in respect of planning income, where over the past number of years, my Department has faced a significant and dramatic fall in the level of planning income. This reduction has been managed through reducing the costs of the planning function, mainly through the redeployment of staff, and, due to the scale of the reduction in income, through subsidising the planning function from other programmes within the Department.

However, my Department's Gross Administration budget has actually decreased by 9% between the opening budget for 2010-11 (£72.1 million) and the opening budget for 2012-13 (£65.6 million). During this period there has also been a corresponding reduction in the Department's overall staff complement by some 283 staff.

Presenting departments' administration budgets on a net basis, not only understates the level of spend on administration costs by excluding those costs funded through fees and charges, but can also distort increases and/or decreases in departments' administration spend.

Waste Repatriation Schemes at Seskinore and Eskra

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment what liaison has taken place with Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council on the waste repatriation schemes at Seskinore and Eskra.

(AQW 16784/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has not formally liaised with local Councils as Councils have not been involved in the repatriation of waste programme. However, as a matter of course NIEA liaises directly with local Councillors and MLAs on important local issues such

as haul roads, mud on roads and other potential impacts of the works. NIEA, in conjunction with the contractor and environmental consultants, develops a method statement for each repatriation site which identifies and puts in place the necessary mitigation measures to protect the environment and minimise and any adverse impacts on the local community. My officials also liaise with PSNI and Roads Service to develop road traffic management programmes to ensure that the works are carried out in a safe and effective manner.

Environmental Crime Unit

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many complaints have been made to the Environmental Crime Unit in each of the last three years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 16792/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Environmental Crime Unit records information received about environmental offending by Council area rather than constituency. These figures are set out below. The scale of this confirms in my view that the Environment Crime Unit needs to be developed and resourced. I have previously asked the DOE Permanent Secretary to take this work forward and to bring forward advice.

The number of items of information received by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Environmental Crime Unit in each of the last three years, broken down by Council area

Council area	2010	2011	2012 (to end Oct)
Antrim	32	18	12
Ards	56	39	27
Armagh	45	31	36
Ballymena	13	24	18
Ballymoney	16	6	5
Banbridge	21	17	8
Belfast	37	22	25
Carrickfergus	6	4	7
Castlereagh	9	7	1
Coleraine	17	19	17
Cookstown	10	10	14
Craigavon	27	17	17
Derry	22	15	23
Down	51	39	37
Dungannon and South Tyrone	67	33	32
Fermanagh	37	24	14
Larne	23	12	9
Limavady	16	13	15
Lisburn	35	28	32
Magherafelt	15	13	8
Moyle	15	7	3
Newry and Mourne	46	33	26

Council area	2010	2011	2012 (to end Oct)
Newtownabbey	22	17	26
North Down	11	3	6
Omagh	21	10	9
Strabane	22	24	8
Total	692	483	435

Planning Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why, after six months of the current budget, has Planning Service required an additional £2.6m for running costs by way of redistribution of resources. **(AQW 16802/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The redistribution of running costs totalling £2.6 million to Planning Service, as detailed in Table D in the Finance Minister's Statement to the Assembly on the 2012-13 October Monitoring Round, relates to the reallocation of corporate services overhead costs.

This relocation was necessary to properly align budgets as a consequence of organisational restructuring since the budget was originally determined as part of Budget 2010; a rationalisation of corporate services across the Department and its agencies; and the apportionment of administration costs to all business areas.

Since Budget 2010, there has not been an opportunity for the Department to realign its budget to reflect the above changes. Moving forward, these costs will be reallocated to all business areas, including planning, as part of the next Budget realignment process and will therefore not need to be transferred during the monitoring process for future years.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why, after six months of the current budget, has the Northern Ireland Environment Agency required an additional £2.2m for running costs by way of redistribution of resources.

(AQW 16803/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The redistribution of running costs totalling £2.2 million to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), as detailed in Table D in the Finance Minister's Statement to the Assembly on the 2012-13 October Monitoring Round, relates to the reallocation of corporate services overhead costs.

This relocation was necessary to properly align budgets as a consequence of organisational restructuring since the budget was originally determined as part of Budget 2010; a rationalisation of corporate services across the Department and its agencies; and the apportionment of administration costs to all business areas.

Since Budget 2010, there has not been an opportunity for the Department to realign its budget to reflect the above changes. Moving forward, these costs will be reallocated to all business areas, including NIEA, as part of the next Budget realignment process and will therefore not need to be transferred during the monitoring process for future years.

Statutory Transition Committees

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment, given that he has previously stated that Statutory Transition Committees would be in place by May 2013, when they will be in place; and what powers they will have,

(AQW 16817/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As part of the management of the reform programme, the Department is continually reviewing elements of the timetable and is now working to provide for Statutory Transition Committees as soon as possible in 2013. I intend using enabling powers in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Act 2010 to make regulations to establish Transition Committees on a statutory footing.

My intention is that the Statutory Transition Committees will have powers to enable them to aid the process of convergence and take forward the work required around governance, corporate and financial planning, arrangements for service delivery, transferring functions, community planning, capacity building and the appointment of senior staff. I believe this will help create certainty and leadership, as well as drive the reform process.

Shadow Councils

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment what powers Shadow Councils will have.
(AQW 16819/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is anticipated that, with the Secretary of State's agreement, elections to the new councils will take place in mid-2014. Following the election of the new councillors, the eleven new councils will operate in shadow form until 1 April 2015, when they will adopt their full range of functions and powers.

During the shadow period, the new councils will take the key decisions necessary to ensure their establishment and effective operation from the beginning of the 2015/16 financial year. Some key tasks that will be completed during the shadow period are:

- striking of the rate for 2015/16;
- agreeing a budget for the new councils;
- deciding upon the name and status of the new councils; and
- agreeing key documents such as the Corporate and Business Plan of the new councils.

Primary powers in relation to shadow arrangements will be included in the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill. Subordinate legislation will provide for the role of the new councils during the shadow period. Both the Bill and the subordinate legislation will be presented to the Assembly for scrutiny in due course.

Lisburn/Castlereagh Statutory Transition Committee

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration he has given to the membership of the Lisburn/Castlereagh Statutory Transition Committee, given that this cluster is unique because of the transfer of a significant amount of population and assets to the new Belfast City Council.
(AQW 16820/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The unique situation regarding the transfer of parts of Lisburn and Castlereagh into Belfast was discussed at the first meeting of the Regional Transition Committee on 24 April 2012 and subsequently during my visit to the Lisburn and Castlereagh Voluntary Transition Committee on 13 June 2012.

I can assure the Member that, in light of the issues surrounding boundary changes and asset transfer, consideration has already been given to the impact of this on both Statutory Transition Committees representing Lisburn and Castlereagh and Belfast. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, under which the Statutory Transition Committees will be established, provides that members of Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council will have membership on the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee.

National Park

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment how many people or organisations from North Antrim and East Antrim have contacted him or his Department supporting a National Park in their area.

(AQW 16872/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department conducted a consultation exercise in 2011 to take forward proposals for national park legislation. Three organisations from North Antrim and East Antrim responded to this consultation to voice broad support for enabling legislation for national parks. That said, as is the case in politics and community life, there are voices, who do not go to public meeting, who support proposals. I believe it is important that this is recognised, including by those who oppose national parks.

Road Safety Council

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment why the Road Safety Council is not receiving any government funding.

(AQW 16877/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following a third highly critical independent review of the Road Safety Council (RSC) in 2008, the then DOE Minister took the decision to withdraw core funding from the Road Safety Council and to channel funding direct to the front line road safety activities of local committees; this decision was implemented in 2009. The Department was also tasked with carrying out a fundamental policy review of how it should engage with the wider voluntary and community sector.

In April 2010, following a review of road safety funding to the voluntary & community sector, the decision was taken by the DOE Minister at that time, to appoint an Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) and open up funding to the wider voluntary and community sector rather than all available funding going to the Road Safety Council.

Subsequently, the Department engaged with Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to initiate an open tender competition to appoint an IFB to design and manage a road safety funding programme on its behalf.

The funding programme was designed to direct funding to frontline road safety activities and enable the Department to engage effectively with local communities and the wider voluntary & community sector in addressing local road safety concerns.

The principal aims of the funding programme are to:

- fund projects which support the achievement of the objectives of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy;
- direct funding to frontline road safety activities which provide direct benefits to the community; and
- enable the Department to engage effectively with the wider local voluntary and community sector in the promotion of road safety.

The Community Transport Association (CTA) currently holds the contract to administer the Road Safety Grant Funding Programme on behalf of the Department.

The Road Safety Grant Funding Programme is open to the voluntary and community sector, including the Road Safety Council and local Road Safety Committees. To date no application for funding has been received from the Road Safety Council but a number of local Road Safety Committees have applied for funding with some success.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the announcement by the Westminster Government that Post Offices in England will now process Driver and Vehicle Licensing applications, whether his Department intends to make the same arrangements here.

(AQW 16893/11-15)

Mr Attwood: On 13 November 2012 the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (Swansea) (DVLA) is awarding a new contract to Post Office Limited to provide DVLA's services from the post office network with effect from 1 April 2013.

The current DVLA front office counter services contract is operated by Post Office Limited and is due to expire on 31 March 2013.

DVLA has responsibility, on behalf of the Department for Transport, for the collection of vehicle excise duty across the UK and the contract with Post Office Limited in relation to vehicle licensing services includes service provision at post offices in Northern Ireland.

Customers in Northern Ireland can renew their vehicle tax at 155 post office branches; however customers here do not have access to the wider range of services available to customers in Britain, including online and enhanced services through the post office. DVLA are developing a fully integrated IT system that would bring vehicle licensing services in Northern Ireland into line with those in Britain, including the enhanced services available to customers. These enhanced services and any additional services to be delivered through the new contract with Post Office Ltd will be available to customers in Northern Ireland once an integrated IT system is delivered.

DVLA plan to have an integrated IT system ready by June 2013 but its implementation is tied into proposals for the future of vehicle licensing services here. Following recent Ministerial changes at Westminster I have again written to the Secretary of State for Transport acknowledging the proposed expansion of improved services for customers here but emphasising my opposition to any reduction in jobs in NI as a consequence. I have had meetings with the previous Secretary of State for NI and the then Parliamentary Under – Secretary for Transport and further meetings are planned with the new Ministers. I have been assured that no decision will be made without further consultation with me.

The DVLA contract with Post Office Limited includes the provision of some driver licensing services; however driver licensing services in NI are not included in the DVLA contract as responsibility for driver licensing rests with my Department. While DVA provides an extensive driving licence application service, there are plans for the current driver licensing IT system to be replaced and the Agency will consider the use of external customer service providers when assessing future delivery plans.

Public Service Vehicle Licensing Process

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment what provisions are in place to speed up the Public Service Vehicle licensing process, given that taxi drivers are losing earnings during a waiting period; and what immediate provisions he can put in place to speed up the process, particularly in the Foyle area.

(AQW 16898/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Taxi drivers are advised to apply for public service vehicle licences, including taxi plates, well in advance of the expiry of their existing licences. Provided this advice is followed, it should be possible to have vehicles tested and licences issued prior to the expiry of existing licences. DVA issues reminders to taxi drivers at least 6 weeks prior to the expiry of their licences and information contained, both on application forms and on existing licences, advises drivers to make application well in advance of when the licence is needed.

The process for issuing licences and taxi plates is working well throughout Northern Ireland and the set targets for the issue of such licences are constantly being met.

DVA is currently running a pilot scheme aimed at further speeding up the process for clearing a vehicle for test. Indications are that this works well and should reduce the time taken to clear vehicles for testing. The new system will be rolled out to all test centres within the next 6 weeks.

It is also proposed that in future taxi plates will be issued from test centres, following successful public service vehicle testing. This change will be introduced next year in parallel with the introduction of new style taxi plates which will be displayed in new roof signs.

I would welcome further information as to how and where the process is failing.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Land Registry Computer System Supplier

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much the Land Registry computer system supplier has been paid each year since the contract was signed; and how much are the annual payment obligations.

(AQW 16513/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The Landweb Contract with BT was signed in July 1999 and payments to the supplier commenced in 2000. In 2007 the Department changed its accounting systems to Account NI. Financial records prior to this date were not migrated to the new system. Records in the table below prior to 2007 have been extracted from the former Land Registry's Agency Annual Report and Accounts.

Financial Year	Amount
1999-00	£ 185,000
2000-01	£1,258,000
2001-02	£2,560,000
2002-03	£4,309,000
2003-04	£6,733,000
2004-05	£7,038,000
2005-06	£7,850,000
2006-07	£8,605,000
2007-08	£7,752,000
2008-09	£5,611,883.70
2009-10	£4,559,907.03
2010-11	£4,209,321.95
2011-12	£4,261,674.47
2012-13	£2,387,624.58 - Oct

BT is paid on a transaction basis ie when applications are lodged in the Land Registry. The amount of transactions lodged, completed and generating a fee in any year is not known in advance since registration activity is entirely dependent on the property market. All the initial capital and implementation costs of the IT system were borne by BT and it continues to incur ongoing maintenance costs. BT recoups its initial investment by receiving a portion of the fee each time a chargeable transaction is completed using the system. However, not all transactions incur a payment to BT. As

evidenced by the table above, annual payments to BT have decreased in recent years in line with the fall in the property market.

Executive: Budget

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he has taken to prevent money having to be returned to the Treasury at the end of the financial year.

(AQO 2937/11-15)

Mr Wilson: At this stage in the financial year the key risk that I have to manage is the risk that unspent resources might have to be returned to HM Treasury. In this current financial year a major concern in relation to spending profiles is the ongoing delay to the A5 road scheme. Members will be aware that for each month of delay there will be around £10 million of capital funding made surplus. This would normally then need to be spent in this financial year to avoid this funding going back to HM Treasury.

Since the remaining amounts involved are very significant – potentially up to £50 million – I recently put a proposal to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury which sought some additional flexibility in terms of our RRI borrowing facility. I am pleased to say that the Chief Secretary has now agreed my proposal. This means that the Executive can now choose to borrow up to £50 million less in this financial year, against an equal increase in borrowing in 2014-15 when this A5 funding is likely to be needed. This also means that the funding to take forward the A5 road scheme remains secure.

There is therefore now significantly less risk that resources might be lost to HM Treasury at year-end.

Corporation Tax

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline whether, during the negotiations with the Treasury, agreement was reached that increases in National Insurance and Income Tax will be netted off in calculating the Corporation Tax cost to the Block Grant.

(AQO 2938/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The ability of the Northern Ireland Executive to retain the wider tax benefits from a reduction in the rate of corporation tax was one of the main issues for discussion at the final meeting of the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy, which took place on the 18th October.

Unfortunately the Joint Ministerial Working Group was unable to reach agreement on this matter, with the result that the issue will now be raised with the Prime Minister.

A5 Road Project: Finance

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what negotiations, if any, he has had with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on addressing the financial consequences of the delay in the A5 Project.

(AQO 2939/11-15)

Mr Wilson: At this stage in the financial year the key risk that I have to manage is the risk that unspent resources might have to be returned to HM Treasury. In this current financial year a major concern in relation to spending profiles is the ongoing delay to the A5 road scheme. Members will be aware that for each month of delay there will be around £10 million of capital funding made surplus. This would normally then need to be spent in this financial year to avoid this funding going back to HM Treasury.

Since the remaining amounts involved are very significant – potentially up to £50 million – I recently put a proposal to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury which sought some additional flexibility in terms of our RRI borrowing facility. I am pleased to say that the Chief Secretary has now agreed my proposal. This means that the Executive can now choose to borrow up to £50 million less in this financial year, against an equal increase in borrowing in 2014-15 when this A5 funding is likely to be needed. This also means that the funding to take forward the A5 road scheme remains secure.

There is therefore now significantly less risk that resources might be lost to HM Treasury at year-end.

Government Assets

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the findings of the Audit Office that management of Government property assets is highly fragmented and is some way from maximising value for money, what steps he proposes to rectify the situation.

(AQO 2940/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The potential to drive greater efficiencies from government property assets has previously been recognised and in January 2011 the Executive endorsed the establishment of the Asset Management Unit (AMU), which has been mandated by the Executive to introduce a more strategic approach to asset management across all aspects of central government. This unit sits within the Strategic Investment Board and reports to the Executive every 6 months. The Asset Management Unit is also working with the Permanent Secretaries Asset Management sub group to introduce property controls which will apply across government.

I would also note that the NIAO report recognises that over the last three years significant progress has been made in consolidating the office estate managed by DFP. The report identifies savings of £4m per annum since 2009 through reductions in rent, rates and service charges and estimates an additional £1m per annum saving associated with reduced maintenance costs.

Economy and Jobs Initiative

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the departmental slippage that led to the recently announced £200 million Economy and Jobs Initiative.

(AQO 2941/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive's £200 million Jobs and Economy Initiative was funded from a range of sources, with the main factor being unallocated Barnett consequentials resulting from the UK Government's recent Budget and Autumn Statements.

In addition, £37 million of reduced requirements were made available to the Executive for redistribution in the recent October Monitoring Round. Whilst details of these reductions were provided to the Assembly in my statement on 12 November, I can remind the Member that the main easements were within DETI, DSD and OFMDFM.

Carbon Price Floor

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he has made any representations to the Treasury on the ramifications of continuing to implement a carbon floor tax.

(AQO 2942/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have raised the very significant concerns that the Enterprise Minister and I have about the impact the Carbon Price Floor would have in Northern Ireland with the Treasury on numerous occasions since it was first proposed in a Government consultation in December 2010. Most recently I spoke to the Chief Secretary on the 8 November 2012 and wrote to the Economic Secretary on the 13 November 2012.

We believe that if implemented locally, the Carbon Price Floor would make our electricity generators uncompetitive in the Single Electricity Market (SEM), damage our security of supply and would increase not lower carbon emissions. We have made a very strong case to the Treasury that a full derogation for Northern Ireland is needed.

I have asked to meet the Chief Secretary again on this in the very near future.

DFP: Budget

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if his Department's target, to avoid overspend and ensure a less than 1.5 percent underspend in its budget, is to be met this year.
(AQO 2944/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The complexities within the DFP budget make it impossible to be certain that the target will be met in any given year, particularly in relation to underspend.

However, my Department will continue to monitor its spending and make every effort to meet its target whilst continuing to ensure that its spending provides value for money for the public purse.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Development of Pooled Budgets

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any legislative barriers which would prevent his Department from establishing a pooled budget, and which prevent the Health and Social Care Board from jointly commissioning services with other Departments or agencies from other Departments.
(AQW 16532/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Legislation has not been passed which would enable the establishment of a pooled budget. Notwithstanding this, my Department and the Health and Social Care Board work collaboratively with other Departments on a range of joint initiatives in order to address common needs and objectives.

Parenting Classes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department is responsible for providing parenting classes for first time parents; and to what extent parenting classes for first time parents are currently being provided.
(AQW 16534/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department is responsible for setting the policy direction for the delivery of health and social care services in Northern Ireland. It has a number of strategies and policies which aim to support all parents including Families Matter strategy, Healthy Child, Healthy Future and the Maternity Strategy which include parenting and family support programmes as key components of the strategies. However, it does not play a role in the commissioning or delivery of these services as this is the role of the HSC Board and associated HSC bodies.

It is important that all parents are supported and for some families, particularly first time parents, that support often needs to be more targeted and intensive to meet individual needs. This can be through individual or group support.

The services that are provided include universal provision of services such as antenatal classes, health visitors and family nurses. In addition to the universal provision, there are a wide range of other interventions available across the region for first time parents with additional needs.

I am advised that the HSC Board and PHA are currently working to develop a regional suite of evidence based parenting education and family support programmes which will include the Family Nurse Partnership and New Parent Programmes which provide support and education to first time parents.

Children's Congenital Heart Services

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the decision by the British Secretary of State for Health, to accept the Independent Reconfiguration Panel's

assertion that the Safe and Sustainable Team's recommendations on Children's Congenital Heart Services were flawed, will have on the way ahead here.

(AQW 16637/11-15)

Mr Poots: The work of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) that is currently underway in England is aimed at reviewing the decisions of the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts (JCPCT) regarding the configuration of paediatric cardiac services.

The Health and Social Board is aware of the review in England and has advised that it is not considered to have any direct influence on its consultation process for the 'Future commissioning of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery and Interventional Cardiology for the population of Northern Ireland'.

The consultation underway in Northern Ireland provides everyone with the opportunity to give their views on the draft service specification including the standards that are proposed for the future commissioning of this service, as well as a number of options for the future delivery of this service. The consultation is being carried out by the Health and Social Care Board and will run until 21 December 2012, following which I will take a decision on the future provision of this service for Northern Ireland.

Trafficked Children

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many trafficked children have been cared for by Health and Social Care Trusts since 2009; (ii) how many of these children have been allocated a guardian ad litem; (iii) for how many trafficked children have the Trusts established parental responsibility; and (iv) how many trafficked children are missing.

(AQW 16676/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not held centrally in the Department.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has provided the information in Table 1 below. Due to the small numbers involved, the figures are shown for the region overall to avoid personal disclosure.

TABLE 1 - TRAFFICKED OR SUSPECTED TRAFFICKED CHILDREN IN NI JANUARY 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2012 (NON-NI NATIONALS)

January 2009 – September 2012	Total
No. of Trafficked or suspected trafficked children cared for by Health and Social Care Trusts	8
No. allocated a Guardian Ad Litem	6
No. for whom HSC Trusts established parental responsibility	6
No. of trafficked children that are missing	3

The information provided is based on information returns submitted by Health and Social Care Trusts to the HSCB. Information returns seek clarity on whether trafficking has been confirmed or suspected and that trafficking concerns have been addressed as part of the assessment process. The information provided includes both categories of trafficked children.

Where the Trust has instigated legal proceedings the young person has an appointed Guardian Ad Litem.

Ministerial Directions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, since May 2011, how many decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of ministerial directions.

(AQW 16678/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since May 2011, only one decision with spending implications has been made as a result of a Ministerial Direction.

I issued a Direction in September 2012 to facilitate the provision of temporary funding for the Integrated Services for Children and Young People project until the end of March 2013. This was necessary to secure the scope needed to take better decisions about its future whilst maintaining service provision.

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16687/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department and its Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) are committed to ensuring that all suppliers, contractors and sub contractors are paid as quickly as possible and have a range of measures in place, including:

- Issuing guidance to ALBs which sets out their duty in relation to prompt payment (including requirements of Managing Public Money NI, the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Act and the 10 day prompt payment commitment);
- Monitoring the monthly prompt payment performance of both the Department and ALBs;
- Reporting monthly performance to the Departmental Board, raising formally at ALB accountability meetings and reporting overall performance for the year in the annual statutory accounts;
- Targeted interventions, such as performing internal audit reviews of compliance with the guidance, providing awareness sessions to staff to improve the payments process and providing clearer instructions to managers and suppliers on submission of invoices;
- Looking forward, the introduction of new financial systems as part of the Business Services Transformation Programme is expected to have a positive impact on the prompt payment performance of trusts and other ALBs and the Department will include specified objectives for inclusion in the ALB's business plans for future years;
- The Department requires Contractors to comply with the 'Code of Practice for Government Construction Clients and their Supply Chains'. The Code includes a 'Model Fair Payment Charter' which sets out the values and arrangements relating to payments practices, both between the Department as lead contractor and also throughout the supply chain; and
- Contractors have to provide access to accounts to enable verification of the timeliness of payments to subcontractors and suppliers. In addition, from January 2012, the Contractor has to provide a monthly update on the payment status of subcontractors.

Agenda for Change

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many employees in each Health and Social Care Trust are awaiting backpay and travel pay as a result of Agenda for Change.

(AQW 16701/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are 26 Health and Social Care staff, 18 in the South Eastern Trust and 8 in the Northern Trust, out of nearly 70,000 staff that have been through the Agenda for Change process, now waiting for back payments. Trusts are continuing with the Agenda for Change Job Evaluation process. This will affect 1,663 staff and any arrears due to those staff, as a result of that process, will be calculated and paid as soon as possible after any new grading is known. The Agenda for Change agreement did not change the payments made to staff for business travel.

Invest to Save Initiative

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the McCollum report showing that £2.27 million could be saved by reducing unplanned neuromuscular condition admissions, whether he plans to invest funding in neuromuscular services under Invest to Save.

(AQW 16720/11-15)

Mr Poots: I welcomed the publication of the McCollum report in June this year and again during the recent debate focusing on its recommendations I have undertaken to respond fully to the report's 15 recommendations before Christmas and I will include my assessment of this particular issue in that response.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many hospital appointments in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area have been missed in the last twelve months; and (ii) how many of these have been missed because of transport issues.

(AQW 16836/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Information on the number of number of consultant led appointments missed by the patient (Did Not Attend), in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, in each quarter of the last twelve months, is shown in the table below.

Quarter Ending	No. of Missed Appointments
December '11	4,329
March '12	4,649
June '12 ^P	4,242
September '12 ^P	3,915
Total	17,135

Source: Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR) Part 1

^P Data that relate to the June 2012 and September 2012 quarters are currently provisional

- (ii) A missed appointment is one in which the patient failed to attend, and did not give advance notice to the hospital (including patients who cancelled their outpatient appointment on the same day on which the appointment was scheduled). Consequently, information on the reason for a patient missing an appointment is not collected by the Department.

Electronic Cigarettes

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment he has made of the (i) use; and (ii) health side effects of electronic cigarettes.

(AQW 16838/11-15)

Mr Poots: Electronic cigarettes are currently unregulated. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) consulted publically in 2010 on whether to bring all non-tobacco nicotine containing products, including electronic cigarettes, within the medicines licensing regime. Following the consultation, further scientific and market research was carried out to explore the levels of nicotine which have a significant physiological effect and to gain a better understanding of the impact of potential regulation on public health and on business. The MHRA is expected to make a final decision on how electronic cigarettes will be regulated in 2013.

My Department has not made a separate assessment of the health side effects of electronic cigarettes as this would duplicate the work of the MHRA. At present, my Department has not made any assessment of the scale of use of electronic cigarettes in Northern Ireland.

Electronic Cigarettes

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why pharmacies continue to sell electronic cigarettes within a health care setting, even though there is a poisons warning on the back of the product.

(AQW 16839/11-15)

Mr Poots: Advice from a number of professional organisations is that pharmacists should consider the appropriateness of selling such products, in view of their safety and efficacy not having been established. Pharmacists should consider whether these transactions would satisfy the Regulator's standards of conduct, ethics and performance.

A coordinated programme of scientific and market research is being carried out to assess the physiological effect, and any health risks, of these products and to gain a better understanding of the impact of potential regulation on public health and on business. This work is being informed by the advice of an expert working group of the Commission on Human Medicines which is expected to report in spring 2013.

I intend to await the results of this research before determining my Department's policy on these products in terms of both their potential to contribute to smoking cessation and their safety.

Electronic Cigarettes

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there is no clear guidance on the use of electronic cigarettes for patients or hospital staff within the hospital environment.

(AQW 16840/11-15)

Mr Poots: The use of electronic cigarettes is not illegal under the current smoke-free legislation, which prohibits smoking in enclosed or substantially enclosed public and work places. Therefore, it is a matter for individual businesses or premises, including hospitals, schools, restaurants, bars, offices or public transport companies, to address through their own workplace smoking policies, if they wish to do so.

Galway Hospital

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the recent death of Mrs Savita Halappanavar in a Galway hospital from septicaemia after being refused an abortion, what action he will take to expedite guidelines on abortion for health professionals to avoid a similar case here.

(AQW 16841/11-15)

Mr Poots: It would not be appropriate to surmise on issues that occurred in Ireland based on media reports and I will not rush my deliberations on the guidelines given the importance of the subject.

Contract for Supplying Products to Hospitals

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the process for approving an interim contract for supplying soap and sanitising products to hospitals whilst waiting for a full tender process to be carried out.

(AQW 16851/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and social care organisations in Northern Ireland are able to access the supply of goods from NHS Supply Chain. As part of a contracting programme being undertaken by BSO, this facility has been accessed in respect of a range of soaps and sanitising products. The decision to use the NHS Supply Chain as a source of product is taken only where cost reductions are achievable, and it

is expected that this procurement will yield savings of approximately £17k per annum. The process was approved by BSO as the parent organisation of the Procurement and Logistics Service.

As with all contracts for the supply of goods to HSC facilities, supplier performance will be subject to monitoring and any necessary action will be taken to address performance failures.

The procurement of soaps will be conducted via a mini competition through the NHS Supply Chain framework. This approach has been agreed with HSC Trusts as being the most cost effective route, and the timetable will be agreed with NHS Supply Chain.

The procurement of sanitising products will be by competitive tender, to be let by BSO Procurement and Logistics Service with a July 2013 commencement date.

Contracts

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will ensure that future contracts are more cost effective and able to deliver an efficient service, so that wards are not left without essential products or with faulty equipment.

(AQW 16852/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and social care organisations in Northern Ireland are able to access the supply of goods from NHS Supply Chain. As part of a contracting programme being undertaken by BSO, this facility has been accessed in respect of a range of soaps and sanitising products. The decision to use the NHS Supply Chain as a source of product is taken only where cost reductions are achievable, and it is expected that this procurement will yield savings of approximately £17k per annum. The process was approved by BSO as the parent organisation of the Procurement and Logistics Service.

As with all contracts for the supply of goods to HSC facilities, supplier performance will be subject to monitoring and any necessary action will be taken to address performance failures.

The procurement of soaps will be conducted via a mini competition through the NHS Supply Chain framework. This approach has been agreed with HSC Trusts as being the most cost effective route, and the timetable will be agreed with NHS Supply Chain.

The procurement of sanitising products will be by competitive tender, to be let by BSO Procurement and Logistics Service with a July 2013 commencement date.

Tender Process for Supplying Products to Hospitals

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the formal tender process for supplying soap and sanitising products to hospitals will be completed.

(AQW 16853/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and social care organisations in Northern Ireland are able to access the supply of goods from NHS Supply Chain. As part of a contracting programme being undertaken by BSO, this facility has been accessed in respect of a range of soaps and sanitising products. The decision to use the NHS Supply Chain as a source of product is taken only where cost reductions are achievable, and it is expected that this procurement will yield savings of approximately £17k per annum. The process was approved by BSO as the parent organisation of the Procurement and Logistics Service.

As with all contracts for the supply of goods to HSC facilities, supplier performance will be subject to monitoring and any necessary action will be taken to address performance failures.

The procurement of soaps will be conducted via a mini competition through the NHS Supply Chain framework. This approach has been agreed with HSC Trusts as being the most cost effective route, and the timetable will be agreed with NHS Supply Chain.

The procurement of sanitising products will be by competitive tender, to be let by BSO Procurement and Logistics Service with a July 2013 commencement date.

Intensive Home Support Unit

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any planned changes to the work of the Intensive Home Support Unit within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 16870/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Trust advises that it has developed initiatives which will make existing services more effective and person centred. The Trust is working with service users and carers on development of these initiatives.

As part of those service improvements the Intensive Domiciliary Care Support Team, currently providing services in the Armagh/Dungannon area, is being reviewed.

Whatever the outcome of that review, the Trust remains committed to meeting the needs of those currently receiving services from that team and to fully utilising the skills of the team across the Trust area.

These reviews are in line with the recommendations set out in Transforming Your Care.

Health and Social Care Trusts

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether Health and Social Care Trusts have ceased providing shopping and cleaning services to clients who have been assessed as needing these services.

(AQW 16885/11-15)

Mr Poots: Older people are assessed for Domiciliary Care Services in accordance with the Departmental Circular ECCU 2/2008: Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care. . It is recognised that preventative 'low level' interventions can avoid deterioration in an individual's situation. Where services are not directly provided, trusts work in partnership with the individual, their family, carers, and the voluntary and independent sector. The HSC is in the process of rolling out reablement programmes aimed at helping individuals regain their independence. This approach is in keeping with the concept of Transforming Your Care and developing enhanced community and voluntary partner capacity within community settings, to support individuals remaining independently in their home.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware that older people in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area have been informed that the Trust will no longer provide shopping and cleaning services as part of their care packages.

(AQW 16886/11-15)

Mr Poots: Within the South Eastern Trust older people are assessed for Domiciliary Care Services in accordance with the Departmental Circular ECCU 2/2008: Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care. Due to demographic pressures and increasing demand for Community Care Services priority is given to older people who meet the critical and substantial levels of need.

The Trust acknowledges however that support with low level needs is important in helping older people to remain at home. The Trust has commissioned a range of services from the Voluntary/Community organisations to provide support which will help maintain older people's independence.

Trust Staff are aware that entitlement to benefits should not be taken into account in decisions about the provision of Community Care Services.

Transforming Your Care

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the removal of shopping and cleaning services for clients marries with the concept of the home as the hub of care in Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 16887/11-15)

Mr Poots: Older people are assessed for Domiciliary Care Services in accordance with the Departmental Circular ECCU 2/2008: Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care. . It is recognised that preventative 'low level' interventions can avoid deterioration in an individual's situation. Where services are not directly provided, trusts work in partnership with the individual, their family, carers, and the voluntary and independent sector. The HSC is in the process of rolling out reablement programmes aimed at helping individuals regain their independence. This approach is in keeping with the concept of Transforming Your Care and developing enhanced community and voluntary partner capacity within community settings, to support individuals remaining independently in their home.

Transforming Your Care

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions he will take to ensure the retention of shopping and cleaning services for older people which, by providing low intensity practical support services, as cited in Transforming Your Care, allow people to remain in their homes and thus reduce the need for hospital attendance, emergency admissions and institutional care.
(AQW 16888/11-15)

Mr Poots: Older people are assessed for Domiciliary Care Services in accordance with the Departmental Circular ECCU 2/2008: Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care. . It is recognised that preventative 'low level' interventions can avoid deterioration in an individual's situation. Where services are not directly provided, trusts work in partnership with the individual, their family, carers, and the voluntary and independent sector. The HSC is in the process of rolling out reablement programmes aimed at helping individuals regain their independence. This approach is in keeping with the concept of Transforming Your Care and developing enhanced community and voluntary partner capacity within community settings, to support individuals remaining independently in their home.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why clients in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, who are having cleaning and shopping services removed from their care packages, are being advised to use their Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance to pay for these services, given that it is contrary to departmental guidance which states that receipt of Attendance Allowance or other disability benefits should not be taken into account in decisions about the provision of community care services.
(AQW 16889/11-15)

Mr Poots: Within the South Eastern Trust older people are assessed for Domiciliary Care Services in accordance with the Departmental Circular ECCU 2/2008: Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care. Due to demographic pressures and increasing demand for Community Care Services priority is given to older people who meet the critical and substantial levels of need.

The Trust acknowledges however that support with low level needs is important in helping older people to remain at home. The Trust has commissioned a range of services from the Voluntary/Community organisations to provide support which will help maintain older people's independence.

Trust Staff are aware that entitlement to benefits should not be taken into account in decisions about the provision of Community Care Services.

Mid-Ulster Minor Injury Unit

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients were taken by ambulance to the Mid-Ulster Minor Injury Unit in 2012.
(AQW 16897/11-15)

Mr Poots: Between 1st January and 31st October 2012, 1 patient was taken by ambulance to the Mid Ulster Minor Injuries Unit.

Deep Brain Stimulation

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the current availability of Deep Brain Stimulation for the management of motor function symptoms in patients with movement disorders.

(AQW 16909/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has advised me that Deep Brain Stimulation is not currently available in Northern Ireland. Where patients require this highly specialised service, the Board considers requests for the transfer of patients to providers outside Northern Ireland.

The Board has also advised me that neurology staff in the Belfast Trust have expressed an interest in developing this service locally.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the waiting time for treatment of children who are referred from primary care for paediatric restorative dental services at the School of Dentistry in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 16934/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below outlines the number of patients currently waiting for a first outpatient appointment for paediatric restorative dentistry services at the School of Dentistry.

	Waiting time (in weeks)							Total Waiting
	0-6	6-9	9-13	13-18	18-21	21-26	>26	
School of Dentistry	3	1	4	4	0	1	0	13

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Binding Silence Agreements

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many binding silence agreements were (i) signed; and (ii) broken in (a) 2009; (b) 2010; and (c) 2011; and what actions were taken as a result of an agreement being broken.

(AQW 16967/11-15)

Mr Poots: A system of openness and transparency should underpin public accountability in the use of public funds. My Department's policy is that there are no binding silence agreements made in cases where public money is used in a negotiated financial settlement.

Fire and Rescue Service: International Trade Fair

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to state the purpose of the visit by representatives of the Fire and Rescue Service to an International Trade Fair, held on 3 to 6 November 2009 at Messe, Dusseldorf in Germany; (ii) who attended; (iii) the cost of the visit; (iv) to detail any contracts that were agreed.

(AQW 16977/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The purpose of NIFRS' attendance at the international Trade Show in Messe was to research a range of tools, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and operational equipment for ensuring health and safety, and security, in the workplace.
- (ii) NIFRS' Stores Manager attended the Trade Show.
- (iii) The total cost of the trip was £11159.02.
- (iv) NIFRS is not aware of any contracts agreed as a result of this visit.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the outcomes from the recent investigations into (i) the disposal of wood materials by the Fire and Rescue Service; and (ii) other items that were reported as missing.

(AQW 16982/11-15)

Mr Poots: The outcome from the investigation into the disposal of wood materials by the Fire and Rescue Service and into the other items that were reported as missing will be reported when the investigation is concluded.

Direct Payments

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what proportion of people who are eligible, are in receipt of Direct Payments.

(AQW 16984/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available. However, information on the number of direct payments paid during the quarter and the amount paid can be found on the DHSSPS website at the following address:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-guide/statistics_and_research-cib-direct-payment.htm

Senior 2 Podiatrists

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 14036/11-15, why Senior 2 Podiatrists in the Southern sector were able to use the Enablement process to raise their banding to Senior 1 when this option was not available to staff in the Northern sector.

(AQW 16997/11-15)

Mr Poots: All HSC non-medical staff are on Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment and there is no Enabling Agreement within these employment arrangements. The Southern sector is not a recognised area within the HSC; I believe that you are referring to the Southern HSC Trust area. I understand that appointments to Band 6, Senior 1 Podiatrist posts in that trust area were filled by open competition.

Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 16102/11-15, to detail all the current proposals for the removal of services from Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 16999/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no plans to remove particular services from Altnagelvin Area Hospital at this time.

Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether operations for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms are performed in Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 17013/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that the Trust stopped performing planned abdominal aortic aneurysm surgery in October 2010. All patients requiring this procedure are transferred to Belfast.

Flu Vaccine

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the uptake of the most recent flu vaccine in the North Down area.

(AQW 17014/11-15)

Mr Poots: Uptake rates for flu vaccine in the North Down area are not available. The closest available rates are for the South Eastern Local Commissioning Group area. Their uptake rates to 31 October 2012 were:

- Patients aged 65 years and over: 62.7%,
- Patients under 65 years in “at risk” groups: 64.6%
- Pregnant women: 52.4%

It should be noted that these figures show the uptake up to the end of October, and the vaccination programme is continuing, so the final uptake figures will be higher. These figures are very similar to those from the same time last year, when one of the highest uptake rates ever was subsequently achieved across Northern Ireland. All figures produced part way through the flu vaccination campaign should be regarded as provisional.

North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many GPs are practising on a permanent basis in North Down.

(AQW 17017/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures provided by the Family Practitioner Services Information and Registration Unit in the HSC Business Services Organisation, show that as at November 2012, there were 49 GPs working in practices located in North Down Local Government District. The figure includes principal and salaried GPs only, locums are not included.

Minor Injury Unit, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have used the Minor Injury Unit in Bangor over the last three years.

(AQW 17018/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on how many people have used the Minor Injury Unit in Bangor over the last three years is not available. However, information on the number of attendances at the Bangor Minor Injury Unit is published on an annual basis and is available to view or download at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency-care-stats.htm

Prisoners' GPs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a prisoner's GP is contacted on their arrival to a facility to verify any illness or health conditions, and to ascertain what medication the prisoner has been prescribed; or whether this information is relayed to Northern Ireland Prison Service staff by the prisoner.

(AQW 17046/11-15)

Mr Poots: If a newly committed prisoner is registered with a general practitioner in the community, a member of healthcare will contact that GP to ascertain which drugs are currently being prescribed. The prisoner will also be given the opportunity to discuss medical conditions, chronic disorders and any outstanding hospital or GP appointments. The prison GP will then consult with the prisoner and prescribe and order treatment as appropriate. Whether or not a prisoner consents for prison healthcare staff to share or seek any health-related information with another individual or organisation would be entirely at his or her own discretion.

Organ Donation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions his Department has taken on the issue of organ donation following the Assembly debate on 21 February 2012; and whether he has any plans to introduce an opt-out system of organ donation.

(AQW 17069/11-15)

Mr Poots: Organ donation is an issue that I have a keen interest in and I am still exploring all options for increasing organ donation in Northern Ireland, including the introduction of an opt-out system.

I have established a Northern Ireland Committee for Organ Donation, which is made up of commissioners, clinicians, NHS Blood and Transplant representatives and the voluntary sector. The remit of the group is to take forward the work of the former Northern Ireland Organ Donations Task Force Implementation Group to ensure the momentum of progress in the field of organ donation is maintained and built upon following the final report of the Organ Donation Taskforce. My Department is also represented on national groups, who are working towards increasing organ donation and transplantation on a national level, and is liaising with the Department of Health, Social Services and Children in Wales which is in the process of introducing an opt-out system.

Nursing and Residential Homes

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the (i) statutory; and (ii) independent; (a) nursing homes; and (b) residential homes that are located within the (1) Larne Borough Council; (2) Carrickfergus Borough Council; and (3) Newtownabbey Borough Council areas; and the number of registered places each provides.

(AQW 17100/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available in the format requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Information is available for the Northern HSC Trust, the area in which the three Borough Councils fall. This information was requested from the Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and is detailed in the tables below.

At 23rd November 2012, there were no Statutory Nursing homes located in the Northern HSC Trust.

TABLE 1: LIST OF INDEPENDENT* NURSING HOMES LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN HSC TRUST, AT 23RD NOVEMBER 2012

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Abbeylands	Belfast	87
Antrim Care Home	Antrim	53
Ashwood House	Glengormley	36
Ballyclare Nursing Home	Ballyclare	34
Ben Madigan Care Home	Newtownabbey	64
Bohill House	Coleraine	104
Braefield	Ballymena	50
Broadways Private Nursing Home	Larne	33
Brooklands	Antrim	62
Brooklands	Magherafelt	55
Brookmount	Coleraine	48

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Camphill	Ballymena	72
Castlehill	Castledawson	34
Castleview	Carrickfergus	36
Cherry Tree House	Carrickfergus	56
Chester	Whitehead	43
Clareview House	Ballyclare	35
Clonlee	Antrim	45
Craigdun	Cullybackey	35
Cromore House	Portstewart	40
Drapersfield House	Cookstown	45
Drummaul House	Randalstown	43
Dunanney Care Centre	Newtownabbey	40
Edenmore	Whiteabbey	47
Fairfields Care Centre	Cookstown	70
Galgorm	Ballymena	35
Garvagh Care Home	Coleraine	67
Gillaroo Lodge	Larne	25
Glendun	Cushendun	46
Glenkeen House	Randalstown	40
Hamilton Care Home	Ballyclare	24
Jordanstown	Jordanstown	53
Karina Lodge	Kilrea	15
Kingscourt	Templepatrick	19
Kintullagh Care Home	Ballymena	62
Ladyhill Lodge	Antrim	31
Lakeview	Crumlin	42
Larne Care Centre	Larne	83
Leabank	Ballycastle	52
Madelayne Court	Portstewart	64
Magherafelt Manor	Magherafelt	64
Maine Nursing Home	Randalstown	25
Marina Care Centre	Ballyronan	42
Massereene Manor	Antrim	74
Milesian Manor	Magherafelt	34

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Moneymore	Moneymore	41
Prospect	Ballymena	52
Queenscourt	Ballyclare	43
Ratheane Private Nursing Home	Coleraine	79
Rathmena	Ballyclare	29
Ravenhill	Greenisland	38
Rivervale Country	Cookstown	20
Rose Martha Court	Ballymena	100
Rylands	Ballymena	59
Slemish House	Ballymena	45
Tamlaght	Carrickfergus	45
The Cottage	Coleraine	41
The Court Care Home	Ballymoney	45
The Glebe Care Centre	Newtownabbey	38
The Martin Residential Trust	Glengormley	19
The Model Care Centre	Ballymoney	36
The Montague Care Home	Portstewart	54
Three Islands	Toomebridge	40
Weavers House	Cookstown	65
Whiteabbey	Newtownabbey	59
Whitehead Nursing Home	Whitehead	41
Total: 66		Total: 3,153

Source: Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)

* Independent refers to both private and voluntary providers.

TABLE 2: LIST OF STATUTORY RESIDENTIAL HOMES LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN HSC TRUST, AT 23RD NOVEMBER 2012

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Clonmore House	Newtownabbey	42
Ellis Court Respite Unit	Carrickfergus	6
Greenisland House	Carrickfergus	31
Hollybank	Magherafelt	9
Joymount House	Carrickfergus	44
Lisgarel	Larne	41
Moylinney EMI Unit	Whiteabbey	38

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Pinewood	Ballymena	36
Rathmoyle	Ballycastle	39
Rosedale	Antrim	38
The Brook	Coleraine	6
The Roddens	Ballymoney	29
Westlands	Cookstown	29
Total: 13		Total: 388

Source: Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)

TABLE 3: LIST OF INDEPENDENT* RESIDENTIAL HOMES LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN HSC TRUST, AT 23RD NOVEMBER 2012

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Andena	Ballymena	36
Anniscliff House	Maghera	17
Ard Na Grainde	Randalstown	3
Benbradagh	Maghera	22
Bluegate Lodge	Garvagh	5
Bridgeview	Ballymena	3
Carnmoyne	Ahoghill	16
Carn-vaddy	Ballymena	3
Castle Lodge Care Home	Antrim	39
Clairville	Rasharkin	17
Clanrye	Larne	17
Colebrooke House	Larne	12
Croft Lodge	Ballymena	5
Edenmore	Coleraine	15
Englewood	Larne	3
Fairways	Portrush	21
Garryduff House	Ballymoney	7
Glens	Cushendall	16
Hillview	Ballycastle	3
Hob Green Country Home	Ballymoney	9
Innisfree	Broughshane	22
Karingmore	Carnlough	16
Karuna Home	Carrickfergus	9

Name of Home	Town	Number of Registered Places
Kirkhill Manor	Ballymoney	3
Knockan Lodge	Ballymoney	25
Marriott House	Magherafelt	13
Mountview	Magherafelt	9
Naroon House	Crumlin	12
Oriel House	Antrim	6
Redford	Cullybackey	18
Rosemary Lodge Care Home	Antrim	44
Ross Lodge / Ross House	Ballymoney	13
Rowandale	Carnlough	15
Seabank	Portrush	37
SENSE	Carrickfergus	10
Strawberry Fields	Randalstown	6
The Cara	Rasharkin	18
The Gables	Antrim	10
Victoria House	Rasharkin	11
York House	Portrush	32
3 Manor Downs	Magherafelt	3
41 Mount Street	Coleraine	1
9 Gortead Park	Maghera	1
Total: 43		Total: 603

Source: Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)

* Independent refers to both private and voluntary providers.

Liverpool Care Pathway

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Liverpool Care Pathway is practised by any Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 17102/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department published 'Living Matters:Dying Matters a Strategy for Palliative and End of Life Care in Northern Ireland in March 2010. The Strategy recommends the use of improvement tools to improve the quality of care in the last few days of life. The Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) which was developed by Marie Curie Cancer Care is such a tool. It is an established and respected tool that is recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) and it has been used in all Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland for a number of years.

The LCP is initiated by clinicians who are trained and competent to do so. The use of the LCP is discussed with patients, if appropriate, and with relatives/carers before use. No Health and Social Care Trust or hospital in Northern Ireland has received financial rewards for placing terminally ill patients on the Liverpool Care Pathway.

Dialysis Treatment

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people living in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust catchment area travel outside the Trust area for dialysis treatment.

(AQW 17180/11-15)

Mr Poots: We assume that this question relates to patients receiving dialysis as regular attenders.

A regular day/night attender is a patient who is admitted electively and regularly for a planned sequence of days or nights and who returns home for the remainder of the 24 hour period. This method of admission is particularly common for renal dialysis.

During 2011/12, there were 62 patients living in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust catchment area who travelled outside the Trust area for dialysis treatment as a regular attender in a hospital setting. This information has been taken from the Hospital Inpatient System.

Transforming Your Care: Residential Care

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on proposals for residential care in the Transforming Your Care consultation.

(AQO 2949/11-15)

Mr Poots: The proposal in respect of statutory residential care is one of a series of proposals emerging from Transforming Your Care which is currently the subject of public consultation which is open until January 15th 2013. On conclusion of the consultation the results will be analysed and the findings will be published. Therefore, it is not possible to provide an update on any of the proposals at present.

Neurology: Funding

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline any plans he has for reform of funding for neurological services.

(AQO 2947/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently, I have no plans to reform funding for neurological services. However, on 1 October I opened the new 23 bed Neurology Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital at a cost of £4.94m, which provides neuro-palliative care, assessment, rehabilitation, and respite care for patients with neurological conditions.

Health Service: Waiting Lists

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline how the additional money he received in the October monitoring round will be used to tackle waiting lists.

(AQO 2955/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department was allocated additional funding of £9 million in October monitoring respect of elective care. This is in addition to the £10 million which was allocated in the June monitoring round. This is a welcome investment and will allow the HSC to make significant progress this year in reducing lengthy waiting times in a number of key specialties. The two allocations will enable the HSC Board to deliver almost 30,000 additional treatments this year in some of the specialties with the highest waiting lists, including orthopaedics, general surgery, ophthalmology, gynaecology and dermatology. This will help to reduce waiting times across these specialties.

Accident and Emergency Departments: Waiting Times

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there has been an increase in waiting times in a number of A&E departments despite his commitment to reducing them.

(AQO 2956/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been significant improvement in waiting times in Emergency Departments across Northern Ireland since the establishment of the Emergency Department Improvement Action Group in April this year, particularly in relation to the number of people waiting longer than 12 hours. Some progress has also been made against the 4 hour standard, although not to the same extent, as the focus has been on eliminating the longest waits.

The improvement in waiting times is a welcome improvement and it is important that this performance is sustained and built upon throughout the winter months which can be challenging for all of us. I am aware that some hospitals have been experiencing an increase in numbers attending emergency Departments. The HSCB is monitoring the position closely with the Trusts and I look to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to continue its significant work with the Trusts to ensure that a focus remains on improving the performance of our emergency departments.

Health: Research and Development

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what he is doing to support the need for increased Research and Development in health matters.

(AQO 2958/11-15)

Mr Poots: Earlier this year, I was very pleased to announce our contribution to the funds for the research programmes of the National Institute for Health Research, thereby increasing directly, by up to 25%, our annual investment in health and social care research. This gives our researchers an opportunity to compete with colleagues UK-wide for very significant funding. Their track record in recent years has been to attract to Northern Ireland over £4 in R&D funding for every £1 that we allocate directly.

The very important MoU on 'Connected Health and Prosperity' which the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and I signed jointly last year will contribute to the Programme for Government commitment to support £300 million investment by businesses in R&D. On 24th October in Boston, I announced a further £4.7 million investment in health research by InvestNI which is an early confirmation of this.

Another focus is on ensuring increased drawdown of EU Commission R&D funding. From our own HSC R&D Fund we are providing researchers with initial support to undertake preliminary work and develop competitive applications. We are working closely with other Departments to enable effective collaborations among HSC researchers, academics and the business community.

Good research leads to innovation and the delivery of more effective health and social care services. Our work in Connected Health, for which R&D is essential, will make a vital contribution to the success of Transforming Your Care.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children: MRI Scanner

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the recently announced new MRI scanner services in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children will have on health outcomes for patients.

(AQO 2959/11-15)

Mr Poots: My recent announcement to provide £2.75m capital investment for the provision of MRI services within the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children will: enhance the existing comprehensive range of regional paediatric specialist services available at the hospital; help meet increasing demand for MRI services; and, reduce the need for paediatric patients to share adult facilities. My Department's investment will be enhanced by a £2m contribution being made by the MRI Scanner Appeal charitable organisation and I would like to thank all those who have been involved in fund raising for this much needed service.

Territorial Army Field Hospital

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the contribution made by 204 Territorial Army Field Hospital.

(AQO 2960/11-15)

Mr Poots: 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Volunteers) Regiment will be deploying a Hospital Squadron to Afghanistan early in the New Year under the auspices of Operation HERRICK in support of 3 Medical Regiment and will be commanding the medical unit in Camp Bastion. 204 will be the lead unit and in this period will be commanding the Medical Unit in Camp Bastion. Camp Bastion is like a large town with population of 28,000. A contingent of medical teams from USA and Denmark will also be deployed at Camp Bastion at this time.

Casualties are not restricted to coalition forces but also include the Afghan National Army and Taliban, as well as civilians being caught between warring factions.

The Deployment has been planned well in advance and staff have been released to allow minimal impact on delivery of HSC services. The staff deploying include nurses, surgeons, physicians, paramedics, AHPs and managers and are spread across HSC Trusts.

As part of the training for the deployment 204 have participated in hospital exercise assessment to identify skills that need updated or refreshed. Training has included,:

- Military operational surgical training for surgeons, theatre nurses and operation department practitioners (ODP).
- Battlefield advance trauma life support for all staff. This is similar to Advanced Life Support training in the HSC.
- ALERT training – a multi-professional course to train staff in recognising patient deterioration and act appropriately in treating the acutely unwell.

They have also undertake routine training on military skills, team building and leadership.

The skills and knowledge gained from this experience will be invaluable as the 21 staff return to work in the HSC Trusts.

Department of Justice

Regulations Provided for in Statutory Rules and Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14503/11-15, to detail the legislation that authorised the Secretary of State's private secretary to approve any aspect of the NIPS Code of Conduct and Discipline provided for in the Prison and Young Offenders Rules (NI) 1995.

(AQW 16541/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Secretary of State's private secretary did not have the power to approve any aspect of the NIPS Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Grooming of a Child for Sexual Purposes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been convicted of grooming of a child for sexual purposes in each of the last five years,

(AQW 16542/11-15)

Mr Ford: Offences of 'Meeting a child following sexual grooming' may be prosecuted under the Section 15 (1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and Article 22 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

The table below gives the number convicted for the calendar years 2005 -2009, the latest year for which figures are currently available.

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS FOR MEETING A CHILD FOLLOWING SEXUAL GROOMING

Year	Convictions
2005	0
2006	2
2007	0
2008	1
2009	0

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data from 2007 onwards are not directly comparable with previous years.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Nursing Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16049/11-15, 16052/11-15 and AQW 16165/11-15, to detail (i) where the training was conducted; and (ii) who carried out the training.
(AQW 16563/11-15)

Mr Ford: Records indicate that the training took place at the Prison Service College by qualified Staff Training Officers.

Internet Sex-Offender Treatment Programme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the format of the new internet sex-offender treatment programme, including who developed the programme and how it is delivered.
(AQW 16612/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Internet Sexual Offending Treatment Programme (I-SOTP) was developed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). It is offered in two formats: group-work or one to one. PBNI introduced this programme in 2008 for adult male offenders convicted of offences such as possession, making or distributing indecent images of children. Offenders with an IQ of 80 or more and no mental health or substance abuse problems can participate in the programme. The purpose of the programme is to reduce the likelihood of further sex offending.

The format of the group programme is 35 sessions of two hours duration weekly, which is 70 hours of treatment over a nine month period. It is delivered by specially trained probation officers at Probation offices throughout Northern Ireland.

The I-SOTP is offered to the Court as an additional requirement of court orders and post-custody licences.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Nursing Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16049/11-15, AQW 16052/11-15 and AQW 16165/11-15, to detail (i) what accreditation is given to staff who take part in Supporting Prisoners at Risk training; and (ii) whether Supporting Prisoners at Risk can be used in any prison facility, regardless of where the training is delivered.
(AQW 16613/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that staff who take part in Supporting Prisoners At Risk (SPAR) training do not receive accreditation. The SPAR training can be used in any prison facility, regardless of where the training is delivered.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why Northern Ireland Prison Service staff who were invited to the Regional Clinical Governance Committee meetings have not been attending; and how many meetings they have missed.

(AQW 16614/11-15)

Mr Ford: A Prison Service Governor attended two of the last four quarterly meetings of the Regional Clinical Governance Committee.

NIPS, in partnership with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SET), recently reviewed the effectiveness of such meetings and it was agreed that the prison healthcare meeting structure would be revised to ensure that the appropriate officials attend relevant meetings.

A Strategic Health Board has now been established and this is attended by the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, a Prison Service Director, the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Director of Prison Healthcare.

Governors and Prison Healthcare management now attend a monthly Operational Management meeting and, where appropriate, issues raised at this meeting will be brought to the attention of the Regional Clinical Governance Committee.

Pearson Review Team Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 9151/11-15, to detail (i) the number of Northern Ireland Prison Service staff who are experienced investigators, broken down by grade; (ii) the extent and nature of the training provided to the investigators in each of the last five years; and (iii) the duration and the provider of the training.

(AQW 16619/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are currently 44 governor grade staff within the Northern Ireland Prison Service who are authorised to conduct investigations in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and Discipline (COCD).

Specific training is not provided. However, a number of managers have received specific training to conduct harassment investigations.

With effect from the New Year, following the establishment of a Professional Standards Unit, all investigations will be conducted by professionally trained staff.

Alleged Payment of Prisoner Drug Debts

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11413/11-15, in the absence of any investigation, how the conclusion was reached that the allegations published were without foundation.

(AQW 16620/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Assessment Unit investigation was not reopened because there was no new credible evidence presented.

None of the staff or prisoner witnesses interviewed during the PAU investigation made any mention of any other drugs debts being paid in the manner suggested in the Sunday World article. In addition, the Sunday World article was considered by senior management at Maghaberry Prison but there was not deemed to be any evidence which would have warranted staff and prisoners being re-interviewed.

Assault of Tony Taylor

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the circumstances surrounding the assault of Tony Taylor, a prisoner in Roe House, where he sustained a broken wrist while awaiting transport to court; (ii) the Prison Service reasons for the incident; (iii) whether, as has been mooted, Mr Taylor began the altercation, how he did so when handcuffed and connected to a chain which meant that

he could not lift his hands; and (iv) whether any prison officers have been charged by the PSNI or reprimanded by the Prison Service in relation to misconduct.

(AQW 16622/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following an investigation into the circumstances surrounding this incident, it was found that the prisoner became aggressive when refused permission to bring documents to court.

Under the Data Protection Act (1998) it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specific details of the investigation other than to confirm that the prisoner has been informed that no evidence has been found to support his complaint that he was assaulted by a member of prison staff.

Bonus Payments

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) what extra duties departmental staff carried out to receive bonus payments; and (ii) how many staff received a bonus in (a) 2009/10; (b) 2010/11; and (c) 2011/12.

(AQW 16631/11-15)

Mr Ford: In line with the Northern Ireland Civil Service policy, the extra duties departmental staff carried out to receive bonus payments fall into the following categories:

- Exceptional performance in particularly demanding tasks;
- Exceptional performance in particularly demanding situations; and
- Good performance achieved under particularly adverse conditions.

(ii) The numbers were:

Year	Number of Staff
2009/2010	285
2010/2011	420
2011/2012	329

Prison Officers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many prison officers have taken sick leave due to depression and stress in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16632/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of prison officers who have taken sick leave due to depression and stress in each of the last three years is shown in the table below:

Dates	Number of prison officers
16 November 2009 – 15 November 2010	118
16 November 2010 – 15 November 2011	113
16 November 2011 – 15 November 2012	125

These figures include Governors, Principal Officers, Senior Officers, Main Grade Officers, Prison Custody Officers, Custody Officers, Night Custody Officers, and Operational Support Grades.

Prison Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost to the Prison Service of repairing the damage to prisons caused by dissident republican prisoners in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16633/11-15)

Mr Ford: The cost to the Northern Ireland Prison Service in relation to repairing damage caused by separated republican prisoners in each of the last three years is £1,122,720. The costs are broken down as follows:

Year	Period	Amount
2010-11	April 2010 – March 2011	307,420
2011-12	April 2011 – March 2012	435,100
2012-13	April 2012 – October 2012	380,200
Total		1,122,720

Thompson House, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, for each of the last 10 years, to detail how many people placed at Thompson House, Belfast, have (i) breached the rules of their release; (ii) re-offended whilst a resident; and (iii) been returned to custody.

(AQW 16695/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to provide this information without incurring disproportionate cost.

Legal Aid to Challenge Parades Commission Ruling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14945/11-15, (i) whether he will review his decision to disclose the information, given that he does not have to identify the resident and that Legal Aid is paid from the public purse; and (ii) to detail the reasons for withholding the information requested.

(AQW 16698/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 24 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 prohibits the disclosure of information relating to both an application for and the grant of civil legal aid without the consent of the applicant. The disclosure of such information is an offence.

Consequently I am unable to disclose any information relating to legal aid in this matter.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether a decision has been made to close Bangor Courthouse; and what responsibility his Department will have in making sure the building is secure and protected as a listed building after its closure.

(AQW 16717/11-15)

Mr Ford: My decision on the future of the five court hearing centres in Northern Ireland was announced on 22 November. Following consideration of responses to the consultation exercise, I have decided that Bangor Courthouse will be closed by April 2013 and that the business will be transferred to Newtownards Courthouse. Until such times as Bangor Courthouse is disposed of, my Department will retain responsibility for ensuring that it is appropriately maintained and secure.

As my Department has no alternative plans for Bangor Courthouse, it will be offered to other Departments and public sector bodies to utilise and, if not required, may be placed on the open market. I would be happy to consider alternative uses for the community provided they are cost neutral for my Department.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department will work with the local community to ensure that a use can be found for Bangor Courthouse which will be of benefit to the community, if the building becomes vacant.

(AQW 16718/11-15)

Mr Ford: My decision on the future of the five court hearing centres in Northern Ireland was announced on 22 November. Following consideration of responses to the consultation exercise, I have decided that Bangor Courthouse will be closed by April 2013 and that the business will be transferred to Newtownards Courthouse. Until such times as Bangor Courthouse is disposed of, my Department will retain responsibility for ensuring that it is appropriately maintained and secure.

As my Department has no alternative plans for Bangor Courthouse, it will be offered to other Departments and public sector bodies to utilise and, if not required, may be placed on the open market. I would be happy to consider alternative uses for the community provided they are cost neutral for my Department.

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16729/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice (DOJ), its agencies and arm's length bodies meet their obligations to pay invoices promptly in order to comply with the following measures:

- 1 – The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988 which provides suppliers with a statutory right to claim interest on late payment of commercial debt. Payment is regarded as late if made outside the agreed terms, or 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice where no terms are agreed; and
- 2 – The 10 day administrative target introduced by the Finance Minister in 2008 as a commitment to speed up the payments process.

The DOJ, its agencies and arm's length bodies have put in place practices and protocols that are appropriate to the size and complexity of each organisation to ensure that:

- staff are aware of the payment targets and the importance placed on meeting these targets;
- invoices and all supporting documentation is validated and checked promptly so that invoices are authorised for payment as quickly as possible;
- approved invoices are released for payment without unnecessary delay;
- systems and processes are reviewed to identify where improvements to the efficiency of the payment process can be made; and
- management information systems are used to target underperforming areas and the necessary corrective action taken.

From July 2012, Account NI provides shared financial services to the Core Department, four agencies (Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, Youth Justice Agency, Compensation Agency and Forensic Science Northern Ireland) and two Executive NDPBs (Probation Board for Northern Ireland and Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland). As a result, these organisations comply with the relevant Account NI procedures for paying suppliers and there is a particular focus on using the Purchase Order Solution as the most efficient method of meeting the prompt payment targets.

DOJ agencies and arm's length bodies provide monthly 10 day prompt payment performance statistics to the Core Department and this is reported at Board level. Since April 2010, the Department has

consistently achieved more than 90% compliance against the 10 day target as outlined below. This provides evidence that the processes and protocols in place are operating effectively:

Financial Year	Number of Invoices paid	% of invoices meeting the 10 day target
2010-11	167,952	90.3%
2011-12	155,702	90.2%
2012-13 (6 months to September)	71,799	91.4%

Supporting Prisoners at Risk Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16108/11-15 and AQW 16046/11-15, (i) why the figures were omitted from the annual reports; (ii) who approved the omission and why; and (iii) in light of the increase in non-natural deaths in custody and concern about prisoners at risk, whether the figures will be included in all future relevant reports.

(AQW 16743/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the member to my previous answer to AQW 16046/11-15, dated 8 November 2012.

The format of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) Annual Report and Accounts was revised following the publication of the 2009/10 Annual Report with a view to streamlining the content of the report. The decision was taken to rationalise a number of appendices, including the one referred to in the question. The revised format was approved by the Director General of NIPS and the Acting Director General of NIPS in the 2010/11 and 2011/12 reports respectively.

Whilst information relating to self-inflicted injuries and deaths in custody in Northern Ireland prisons was not included as a separate appendix, information relating to deaths in custody, including the number of deaths recorded during the reporting year, was contained in the Statement on Internal Control in both of these reports and will be included in the 2012/13 report.

In addition, NIPS 2012-13 Business Plan sets a specific Key Performance Target (KPT) for the Service for reducing the number of instances of self harm and the 2012/13 Annual Report will provide information on performance against this KPT.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) for his assessment of the compliance of senior management in the Northern Ireland Prison Service with the Council of Europe-Committee of Ministers on the European Prison Rules in terms of staff training, particularly staff who work with prisoners that are (a) mentally ill; (b) vulnerable; (c) at risk of self-harm or suicide; (d) women; (e) juveniles; and (f) foreign nationals; and (ii) whether the training needs of staff are being met in relation to these issues.

(AQW 16744/11-15)

Mr Ford: Although the Northern Ireland Prison Service is not bound by the European Prison Rules, the European minimum requirements are taken into account when amending Prison Rules. In training staff in relation to the areas highlighted in the question, management seeks to ensure compliance with Prison Rules and best practice.

Trafficked Children

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many trafficked children have been identified since 2009/10.

(AQW 16753/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Service of Northern Ireland has provided the information below.

Year	Number of potential child victims of human trafficking
2009/10	4
2010/11	3
2011/12	8
1 April 2012 to 15 November 2012	1

Legal Aid to Challenge Parades Commission Ruling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14945/11-15, for an estimate of the total cost of such a High Court case.

(AQW 16783/11-15)

Mr Ford: In 2011/12 the average costs paid in respect of Judicial Review cases in which Legal Aid was granted was £4,443.

Sexual Offence

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the charge of indecent behaviour is classed as a sexual offence.

(AQW 16785/11-15)

Mr Ford: Indecent behaviour is an offence under section 9 of the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1968. This offence covers a range of behaviour, some of which is not considered to be of a sexual nature, for example, it is generally used to cover urination in the street. The offence is not listed in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which sets out the offences for the purposes of sex offender notification requirements in Part 2 of that Act.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Governors

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW13948/11-15, to detail (i) the number of Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) Governors, broken down by grade, who are on secondment to prison services outside Northern Ireland; (ii) the dates of the commencement and expected return to NIPS; (iii) the reasons for each secondment; (iv) each secondment post and prison establishment; (v) whether any of these Governors was promoted or temporarily promoted; and (vi) the cost to his Department.

(AQW 16786/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are currently no Governors on secondment to prison services outside Northern Ireland.

Misconduct in Public Office

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14677/11-15, whether this figure includes case 12/066430.

(AQW 16787/11-15)

Mr Ford: The figures provided in response to AQW 14677/11-15 did not include case 12/066430 as this case was dealt with by way of an order to spilt the Bill of Indictment before the answer was prepared. Two new cases (12/107901 and 12/109721) are currently before Newry Crown Court, one is awaiting sentence and one is listed for trial.

Equality Impact Assessments

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost to his Department over the last three financial years of undertaking equality impact assessments.

(AQW 16823/11-15)

Mr Ford: The costs of undertaking Department of Justice (DOJ) Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) is mainstreamed within DOJ business processes. It is not possible therefore to disaggregate staff costs or those associated with internal processes. There were no non-staff costs, such as advertising or publication, outside business processes.

Prison Service Museum

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what progress has been made in creating a permanent home for the Prison Service museum which was previously located in Millisle.

(AQW 16844/11-15)

Mr Ford: A collection of historical documents and artefacts from the Prison Service is currently located at the prison service college in Millisle.

NIPS is continuing to explore its legal obligations with respect to the material held at the college and has conducted a number of meetings with stakeholders, and in particular with the Public Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI) in order to determine how the documents and artefacts should best be managed and located in the future, including identifying what material might be offered on loan to museum locations.

This work is still ongoing.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline the plans or proposals for the future usage of the Bangor Courthouse building.

(AQW 16845/11-15)

Mr Ford: Bangor Courthouse will be closed by April 2013 and, having confirmed there is no requirement for it within the Department of Justice estate, will be offered to other Departments and the wider public sector to utilise.

Malicious Communications (NI) Order

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) prosecutions; and (ii) convictions there have been under the Malicious Communications (NI) Order.

(AQW 16881/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Malicious Communications (Northern Ireland) Order was brought into legislation in 1988. It contains a number of offences which may be prosecuted summarily:

- Sending article conveying indecent or offensive message
- Sending article conveying a threat
- Sending article conveying false information
- Sending article of indecent or offensive nature

The table below gives the number prosecuted and convicted for the calendar years 1993 (the earliest year for which figures are currently available) to 2006 and the number convicted for the calendar years 2007 to 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available). It is not possible to provide prosecution data for 2007 to 2009.

Number of prosecutions and convictions for Malicious Communications, 1993-2009

Year	Prosecution	Convictions
1993	5	4
1994	0	0
1995	1	1
1996	2	2
1997	1	1
1998	1	1
1999	2	1
2000	0	0
2001	0	0
2002	0	0
2003	0	0
2004	0	0
2005	0	0
2006	0	0
2007	N/A	1
2008	N/A	1
2009	N/A	0

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Thompson House, Belfast

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Justice what alternative facilities were examined for the placement of the sex offenders due to be located at Thompson House, Belfast.

(AQW 16890/11-15)

Mr Ford: Thompson House has been in operation for 30 years providing accommodation for offenders, including sex offenders. There has been no change in that role, other than to modernise and upgrade the facilities, including the security measures. In view of this, the issue of alternative facilities does not arise.

Thompson House remains an important facility in the provision of effective public protection from the risk posed by a variety of offenders, including sex offenders.

Strabane Courthouse

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Justice (i) when the Equality Screening Process into the proposed closure of Strabane Courthouse will be completed and (ii) in light of the responses to the consultation process, whether a full Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted.

(AQW 16899/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Equality Screening process was reviewed and re-performed in advance of my announcement on 22 November that Strabane Courthouse would remain open pending the development of a Department of Justice Estate Strategy.

The Equality Screening document (which is available on www.courtsni.gov.uk) explains that the screening panel assessed the overall impact as minor and concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment was not necessary.

Fine Collection Scheme

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice how much it cost to implement the Fine Collection Scheme.
(AQW 16901/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Fine Collection Scheme was implemented in May 2009 and incurred one off capital costs of £6,850 for the purchase of IT equipment and running costs which are currently £149,200 per annum. This figure does not include office accommodation costs in Laganside Courts.

Civilian-Based Fines Enforcement Service

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice what are the estimated costs of establishing and maintaining a civilian-based fines enforcement service.
(AQW 16902/11-15)

Mr Ford: My current estimate of establishing and maintaining a civilian-based fines enforcement service is £1.4 million in the first year with an anticipated annual running cost of around £1 million per year thereafter.

A project is being established, an early task for which will be to review these estimates.

Fine Income

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the proposal to extend to Northern Ireland arrangements that have been implemented in England and Scotland, that a certain amount of fine income be retained locally to assist resourcing new procedures, what proportion of costs can be retained.
(AQW 16903/11-15)

Mr Ford: The retention of any fine income revenue to assist with the funding of a civilian-based fines enforcement service will be the subject of discussion with the Department of Finance and Personnel and Her Majesty's Treasury in due course.

Teebane Massacre

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice (i) on whose authority were Royal Ulster Constabulary records of the Teebane massacre destroyed due to asbestos contamination; (ii) when the records were destroyed; (iii) what records were destroyed; (iv) whether any contaminated records survived; (v) what type of asbestos was involved; and (vi) whether any attempt was made to copy the records before destruction or to examine them using personal protective equipment.
(AQW 16904/11-15)

Mr Ford: The management of Royal Ulster Constabulary records 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.

Thompson House, Belfast

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Justice why sex offenders are being located at Thompson House, Belfast, which is close to five schools and next to a facility for vulnerable young adults, against the wishes of the local community.
(AQW 16920/11-15)

Mr Ford: Hostel accommodation provides for a high level of protection to the public, as those housed there can be closely monitored and their behaviour supervised by staff and relevant public protection agencies. Such facilities also help offenders deal with the “real life” situations they will face when they leave and, by so doing, reduce the prospect of reoffending.

Without such a facility, the safety of the community would be reduced if the same offenders lived in private rented accommodation or social housing.

Thompson House has, for 30 years, been providing an important facility in the effective management of risk posed by a variety of offenders. I am unaware of any incidents of further sexual offending against children by its residents.

The recent refurbishment of Thompson House provides for more effective public protection with the provision of much improved and modernised security measures.

Magilligan Prison

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice when he intends to make an announcement on the future of Magilligan Prison, following the consultation on the future of the prisons estate.

(AQW 16964/11-15)

Mr Ford: My interim statement to the Assembly of 26 November set out my view that a convincing case might be made for the retention of a prison in the North West on the Magilligan site, subject to NIPS providing evidence that the challenges around maintaining family links and providing adequate employment and rehabilitation opportunities can be addressed.

My officials are continuing to work on these issues, and I have indicated that I intend to return to the Assembly to announce my final decision on the future of Magilligan Prison in the New Year.

Direct or Indirect Funding

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Justice to detail the arm's-length bodies that have received direct or indirect funding from his Department since the start of this mandate.

(AQW 16965/11-15)

Mr Ford: The following arm's-length bodies of the Department of Justice (DOJ) have received direct or indirect funding from the Department since 12 May 2011:

- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Policing Board
- Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Police Fund
- RUC George Cross Foundation
- Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission
- Probation Board Northern Ireland
- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Law Commission
- Policing Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust
- Prisoner Ombudsman
- Independent Monitoring Boards
- Independent Assessor for PSNI Recruitment Applications

These arm's-length bodies may in turn have provided indirect funding to other organisations that have no direct link to the DOJ.

Magheraberry Prison: Protest

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice to detail the weekly costs associated with the dirty protest at Magheraberry Prison by 41 dissident prisoners.

(AQW 17002/11-15)

Mr Ford: Between 1 April 2012 and 31 October 2012 Magheraberry has incurred approximately £16,296 per week in costs associated with the protest by the 41 separated prisoners.

Thompson House, Belfast

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Justice what steps are taken when a sex offender fails to return to Thompson House, Belfast, including the timescales and the agencies that are informed.

(AQW 17004/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the event of a sex offender breaching the conditions of his licence by failing to return to a hostel, the hostel staff would immediately notify the Probation Board. The actions open to the Board, depending on the individual circumstances of the case, range from a warning, in the event of a late return, to initiating applications for immediate return to custody. If such applications, either to the court or for executive recall, were successful, the PSNI would aim to locate the offender and return him to custody. If the offender had breached a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) by failing to return to the hostel as required, the PSNI would also be immediately advised by the hostel staff. A breach of SOPO gives the police the power of immediate arrest.

Interpreting Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice to detail the minimum standard his Department requires for interpreting services provided by outside organisations; and how the Department assesses whether the interpreters are trained to this standard.

(AQW 17065/11-15)

Mr Ford: The standard the Department requires for interpreting services is set out in the interpretation contract for criminal justice agencies. Interpreters must be "fully competent in the task assigned to them, through qualification and proven experience." Foreign language interpreters must possess, as a minimum, Open College Network Level 3 accreditation in community interpreting and be fluent in both English and the language/s they are offering to interpret. Sign language interpreters must be a member of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters.

The Contractor is required to provide appropriate training for all interpreters engaging with the criminal justice organisations. Training may be generic or unique to the main users of the contract and is laid out in the specification schedules of the contract.

The Contractor must provide and routinely update criminal justice organisations with information about how the professional development, accountability and quality of interpreters are being managed. Performance monitoring is conducted by the Contract Manager together with the Contractor and takes place bi-annually or more often if required. Issues such as performance of interpreters and queries regarding standards of training may be addressed at these monitoring meetings.

Prison Officers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what level of protection his Department provides for Prison Officers who are under threat from dissident republicans.

(AQW 17113/11-15)

Mr Ford: As this question refers to the personal security of Prison Service staff, it would not be appropriate to provide specific details of the measures in place.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Justice to outline the management of contractual arrangements, service level agreements or commercial transactions between the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust and private sector companies which have recruited agency, consultancy or associate staff for the PSNI since 1 April 2007.

(AQO 2986/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust does not have any contractual arrangements, service level agreements or commercial transactions with private sector companies which have recruited agency, consultancy or associate staff for the PSNI since 1 April 2007.

Policing: Interface Areas

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Justice to outline the cost of policing at interfaces between April and September 2012 compared with the equivalent periods in 2010 and 2011.

(AQO 2981/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI does not hold specific information on the cost of policing at interfaces.

Dealing with interface areas engages a complex set of issues. These areas are among the highest ranked in terms of multiple deprivations. This in itself is a challenge, but when added to sectarianism, violence or the fear of violence, and the legacy of the past, the challenge is even greater.

As the Chief Constable indicated in his report to the Policing Board on 4 October, a significant investment is made to police disputes between communities, resources which undoubtedly impact on their ability to provide an even more enhanced service to deal with issues of greatest concern to local communities, such as drug dealing and anti-social behaviour.

That is why I am pleased to highlight the Executive commitment on interfaces. The Department of Justice are leading on the delivery of that commitment, through a collaborative approach from Departments, statutory agencies, community and voluntary groups. The key element, of course, is engagement with communities.

The need to deal with issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour is also recognised in my Community Safety Strategy, Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Justice how many former police officers have availed of the provision of funding and services from the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust, broken down by gender and community background.

(AQO 2984/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) does not provide funding to any of its clients.

It provides training and education, personal development, psychology and physiotherapy services to retired, retiring officers and a support service to serving officers. PRRT makes no distinction as to a client's employment status so does not record whether a client is a retired, retiring or serving officer.

The total number of clients to whom PRRT provided services since 1 April 2007, was 7200. The information prior to 1 April 2007 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Also a breakdown of clients' gender is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost and PRRT do not collect or record information regarding community background as there is no requirement on it to do so.

PSNI: Agency, Consultancy and Associate Staff

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the Audit Office finding, on the use of agency, consultancy and associate staff by the PSNI, that ‘there is potential for conflicts of interest to arise’, particularly in PSNI investigations of legacy cases.

(AQO 2985/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Audit Office report found that there is potential for conflicts of interest to arise within the Historical Enquiry Team. It recognised that there are established procedures for identifying potential conflicts of interest but stopped short of making any recommendations.

I believe the proportionate use of agency staff can be justified in cases where there is a clear business need and I await the recommendations of the PAC report, which is due in early 2012.

As I have previously stated in the Assembly, the awarding and management of contracts by the Police Service is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, for which he is accountable to the Policing Board.

Sentencing: Murder

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the review of sentencing legislation for murder.
(AQO 2988/11-15)

Mr Ford: Research work on the review is underway and is considering arrangements in other jurisdictions, including England and Wales, but, while it is useful to learn from other models, I do not necessarily want to replicate these, but to find a way forward that is right for Northern Ireland.

The Court of Appeal has been asked by the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider the tariffs set for Wootton and McConville for the murder of Stephen Carroll, on the grounds of undue leniency. Lord Justice Girvan himself commented that the current sentencing guidelines in this area require reconsideration. The PPS referrals would provide the opportunity for the Court to do so.

I understand that Wootton and McConville have lodged appeals against their convictions. Any Court of Appeal consideration of tariffs will, of course, have to await the outcome of their appeals.

As the review will need to reflect any reconsideration of guidelines, timing of the publication of the recommendations of the review, following Justice Committee consideration, will be dependent on Court of Appeal findings.

PSNI: Agency, Consultancy and Associate Staff

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the tax avoidance issues raised by the Audit Office in its investigation into the use of agency, consultancy and associate staff by the PSNI.
(AQO 2989/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Audit Office found that some temporary staff engaged by PSNI are being paid as limited companies. The issue was discussed at the recent PAC hearing on the NIAO report of the PSNI’s Use of Agency Staff.

The Northern Ireland Treasurer of Accounts informed the PAC hearing that DFP have been working on the issue with colleagues in the Treasury over the past six months and are re-surveying Departments and public bodies to find out whether any of those arrangements exist. In addition, they are looking at situations, such as this case, in which the arrangements may not be with a public body but with an employment agency or other intermediary body. They are working with CPD to look at additional requirements that could be placed into contracts to protect against any tax avoidance.

It is important to note that the staff are not employed by PSNI, but by Grafton.

I recognise the Chief Constable’s concerns, quoted in the NIAO report, that the sustainability of HET could be placed at risk, at least in the short to medium term, if individuals’ contracts were to be

cancelled. I also note his comments to the PAC that there would be a legal challenge if he tried to interfere in private taxation arrangements, particularly those paid through a limited company.

I welcome the Chief Constable's comments to PAC, when he said that PSNI will comply with any HM Treasury and DFP guidance which may issue.

As I have conveyed to the Assembly on numerous occasions previously, the awarding and management of contracts by the Police Service is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, for which he is accountable to the Policing Board.

PSNI: Grafton Recruitment

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Justice when the PSNI first notified his Department about the proposal to proceed with a Direct Award Contract with Grafton Recruitment for the retention of agency, consultancy and associate staff within the PSNI beyond December 2013.

(AQO 2990/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI's existing contract expires in December 2012.

The PSNI first shared a draft of the business case, to continue employing temporary staff, with my Department in July 2012.

In the knowledge that there was a live NIAO investigation into the PSNI's Use of Agency Staff, my officials advised the PSNI that it was inappropriate to review the business case until after the report had been published and the PAC hearing had taken place. That being the case, my officials agreed with PSNI that the only appropriate course of action available to PSNI was to enter a Direct Award Contract (DAC) with Grafton, if PSNI were to have a contract in place beyond December 2012.

My officials also advised at that time that in the unique circumstances, the Departmental Accounting Officer, whose approval is required before any DAC may awarded, would consider any such request from the Chief Constable favourably.

It is important that any recommendations made by PAC are considered and, if appropriate, included within any new contract.

The PSNI has not submitted an updated draft since the initial PAC hearing.

Department for Regional Development

Water and Sewerage Infrastructure

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much of the water and sewerage infrastructure is not fit for purpose.

(AQW 16472/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that approximately £1.3 billion of capital has been invested in the water and sewerage infrastructure since 2007. This investment along with operational commitment on the ground means Northern Ireland currently has the highest ever level of drinking water quality and the best wastewater discharge consent compliance. However, there are still areas of the water and sewerage infrastructure which require investment to achieve compliance or achieve compliance due to restrictions imposed on development.

For the calendar year 2011, the measure of drinking water quality (Mean Zonal Compliance – MZC) achieved was 99.80% against a target set in the DRD Social & Environmental Guidance 2010-13 (agreed by the Executive on 15 April 2010) of 99.7%. For the calendar year 2011, approximately 96% of the population were served by a wastewater treatment works which was compliant with the discharge consent set by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. For the calendar year 2011, approximately

93% of wastewater treatment works complied with their discharge consent. The difference comes from some treatment works serving large population numbers but overall it represents a good performance by NIW.

Over the last 10 years Northern Ireland has made significant progress on compliance due to investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure. This investment will need to continue to maintain these high levels of compliance, to address areas of non-compliance and to continue to deal with areas of development and new environmental requirements.

Rail Network

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has any plans for further improvements to the rail network

(AQW 16543/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are plans for improvements to the rail network already agreed within the current budget up to 2015. Given the pressures on the railway capital budget and other priority railway projects, resources for new projects have not been identified within the period of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

I plan to carry out a public consultation in the coming months on what should be our priorities for future railways investment. The responses to this consultation will be used to inform future budget decisions within the policy prioritisation framework to be developed under the new approach to Regional Transportation Strategy.

Translink

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to Translink for maintaining their buses in each of the three financial years.

(AQW 16547/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised me that the relevant costs for the last 3 years are as follows:-

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Total Engineering Costs £	20,105,528	19,501,728	19,033,042

It should be noted that this represents an increase of less than 3% per year and overall costs per vehicle in use are currently £14209 per year.

Traffic Wardens

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether traffic wardens know the specific provisions of the regulations that they enforce.

(AQW 16587/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a Traffic Attendant's role is to provide enforcement of the parking restrictions that are in place on public roads and in Roads Service car-parks. Traffic Attendants are not required to be aware of the specific legislative details relating to parking restrictions.

Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what implications the Executive's economy and jobs initiative will have for car parking charges.

(AQW 16621/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Executive decision announced on 7 November 2012 means there will be no further increases to car parking charges for the remainder of the current budget period, i.e. until the end of March 2015.

Parking at Waterloo Road

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will intervene to allow eligible taxis to stop for five minutes, where possible, in Waterloo Place to pick up passengers at new retail outlets without the taxis being automatically moved on by NSL enforcement officers.

(AQW 16625/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: All vehicles, including taxis, are required to comply with the parking restrictions that are in place at Waterloo Place, Londonderry. These restrictions are contained in The Parking Places and Loading Bays on Roads (Londonderry) Order (Northern Ireland 2010). This Order can be viewed at: http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/management_and_policy/mp-doc-details.htm?docid=6666

The role of Traffic Attendants is to provide enforcement of the restrictions which are in place. Where a driver is present with a vehicle which is parked in contravention of restrictions, a Traffic Attendant may request that the vehicle be moved, rather than issue a Penalty Charge Notice immediately.

Car Parking Charges

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration has been given to suspending car parking charges in Bangor town centre during the Christmas shopping period.

(AQW 16630/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There have been no suspensions of charges in Roads Service car parks in Bangor in previous years in the run up to Christmas, and I am not considering any such proposal for this year.

Charging in Roads Service car parks helps to prevent all-day parking, which means that parking spaces are more likely to be available for shoppers and visitors. This is important for town centres and traders, particularly in the run-up to Christmas.

As you will also be aware, following my announcement of September 2011, free limited on-street parking still continues to be available in Bangor.

Door-2-Door Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 15811/11-15, what strategy his Department will pursue to increase the number of people in North Down using the Door-2-Door Service.

(AQW 16664/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Door-2-Door services are provided across Northern Ireland on the basis of agreed contract terms with relevant providers. Eligible members can book services from such providers but clearly some resource constraints apply. Members are of course free to use alternative Public Transport services.

Currently there are 1351 members of the Door-to-Door scheme in the North Down area (1128 in Bangor and 223 in Holywood), however our figures (AQW 1158/11-15) show the actual number of users compared to the number of members is quite low. The Consumer Council is currently undertaking a customer satisfaction exercise on Door to-Door schemes across all of Northern Ireland which includes the North Down area. The results from this exercise, due early in 2013, will give an indication of how passengers view the service provided. There is also an on-going consultation exercise regarding eligibility criteria for the Door-to-Door service; when this is completed the Department will be considering how best any future service should be provided.

Door-2-Door Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 15811/11-15, whether his Department has an explanation for the reduction in the number of people in North Down using the Door-2-Door Service.

(AQW 16665/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Statistics for this year show that 267 members used the scheme from 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012. The average number of users at 30 September over the last three years was 240. This would suggest that user numbers may actually be higher this year than in the last few years. Department officials have not received any persistent complaints about the level or quality of service in the area.

Decisions with Spending Implications

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, since May 2011, how many decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of ministerial directions.

(AQW 16681/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise that, since May 2011, no decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of ministerial directions within my Department.

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16690/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department and its arms length bodies adopt a pro active approach to ensuring suppliers are paid as quickly as possible.

My Department and its arms length bodies, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) are committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received with payment generally due within 10 working days of receipt of a valid invoice.

In addition, my Department and its arms length bodies are bound by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988 as amended by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002 which requires that payment should be made within agreed terms or if no terms have been agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

Performance against the 10 day and 30 day requirements is monitored on an ongoing basis.

With regard to the payment of sub-contractors, when the Department or its arms length bodies enter into contracts with suppliers for construction projects, all contracts include clauses relating to economic sustainability. Main contractors are required to:

- pay subcontractors and suppliers promptly and ensure that the payment terms within subcontracts match those of the main contract;
- verify timeliness of payments to subcontractors; and
- comply with the Code of Practice for Government Construction Clients and their Supply Chains.

A6 Dualling Project

Mr Molloy asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the public inquiry on the A6 dualling project.

(AQW 16691/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that I will announce my decision on the February 2012 Inquiry into the Annaghmore Road/Bellshill Road junction, at Castledawson, in early December 2012.

Following my announcement, notices will be published in the local press to inform the public of the decision and where both my decision and the Inspector's report can be viewed.

Emergency Calls to Roads Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what telephone number MLAs should use to make emergency calls to Roads Service during the Christmas period.

(AQW 16704/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that the contact telephone numbers that should be used to make emergency calls to Roads Service during the Christmas period are detailed below.

Northern Division

County Hall, Castlerock Road,
Coleraine, BT51 3HS
Tel: 0300 200 7891
Tel: (028) 7035 3202 (24 Hours)

Southern Division

Marlborough House, Central Way,
Craigavon, BT64 1AD
Tel: 0300 200 7892
Emergency After Hours (028) 3752 9500

Eastern Division

Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road,
Belfast, BT8 8JL
Tel: 0300 200 7893
Tel: (028) 9025 3000 (24 Hours)

Western Division

County Hall, Drumragh Avenue,
Omagh, BT79 7AF
Tel: 0300 200 7894
Emergency After Hours (028) 8224 1999

These numbers are also listed on the NI Direct website at the following address:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/ice-and-snow-on-roads-and-streets>

In addition, the contact numbers are included in the Roads Service 'Winter Service Information Leaflet', which is currently being distributed to all homes in Northern Ireland. This leaflet can be viewed online at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/5352_ws_info_leaflet_2012__2_.pdf

Advertising

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much his Department has spent on advertising in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16707/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: AQW 16707/11-15

The amount spent by the Department on advertising in each of the last three years is detailed as follows:

Year	Spend (£'000)
2009 – 2010	538
2010 – 2011	674
2011 – 2012	587

The majority of advertising expenditure (80%) relates to Roads Service public notices. The Department has a statutory obligation to inform the public of temporary or permanent road closures, works being carried out or speed restrictions.

The other 20% relates to Public Recruitment Notices and Campaign Advertising, such as the development of the 'Travelwise Sustainable Transport' advertising campaigns.

Grit Lorries

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many grit lorries are operated by his Department.

(AQW 16709/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that my Department's Roads Service operates 132 gritting vehicles.

Derry City Council

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what arrangements his Department has put in place with Derry City Council to deal with the clearing of any ice and snow on footpaths this winter.

(AQW 16711/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with Derry City Council, in respect of the clearing of snow and ice from footways. A copy of this document has been placed in the Library.

Economy and Jobs Initiative

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development where on the Antrim Coast Road the funding detailed in the Economy and Jobs Initiative will be spent.

(AQW 16754/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: AQW 16754/11-15

My Department's Roads Service has advised that additional funding secured in the October Monitoring Round, that was announced in conjunction with the Economy and Jobs Initiative, is to be spent on the scaling and netting of rock faces at Garron Point, Carnlough.

Written Assembly Questions

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the cost to his Department from answering Written Assembly Questions from Alex Easton MLA since May 2011; and what proportion of the questions relate to matters where the information is already available in the public domain.

(AQW 16755/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Regional Development does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions.

The preparation of responses to Assembly Questions is an intrinsic part of the responsibilities of civil servants and has, therefore, not traditionally been separated out from other duties for costing purposes. Such costs would also vary in line with, for example, the nature of the question, the number of individual members of staff involved in preparing the reply and the involvement of other Departments or bodies in providing information.

From May 2011 to 16 November 2012 my Department received 1596 Written Assembly Questions from MLAs of which 199, or 12.5%, were asked by Alex Easton, MLA. During the period 1 July 2012 to 16 November 2012, Alex Easton asked 84 of the 353 questions received, some 23.8% of questions. Some of the information requested was already available in the public domain.

The Department does not routinely monitor the types of Questions asked; where information requested is already in the public sector, Members are directed to appropriate sources.

British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2898/11-15, to outline any actions of the Sub-Group of British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference has taken in relation to the mutual recognition of concessionary fare schemes throughout the UK.

(AQW 16756/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The mutual recognition of concessionary fare schemes by administrations throughout the United Kingdom is being taken forward by the Accessible Transport Sub-Group of the British-Irish Council. This Sub-Group has carried out a study and reported to a summit of Ministers on 22 June 2012.

The Sub-Group's report expressed concerns about differing financial burdens on administrations, about the technological challenges for a common clearing system and about the possibility of EU legal implications. It also identified a need to standardise eligibility arrangements across administrations and, in some cases, with local authorities. It concluded that the goal of mutual recognition remains a desirable aim but recommended that, in the prevailing economic climate, it is not feasible at this time to pursue its introduction. The Sub-Group, however, believed that when circumstances allow, the issues should be re-examined.

BIC Ministers noted these conclusions and recommendations and proposed that a review of the issues should be undertaken in three years time.

Concessionary Fare Schemes

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he has taken to pursue the mutual recognition of concessionary fare schemes throughout the UK.

(AQW 16757/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My officials chair a working group, which has been considering the mutual recognition of concessionary fares in schemes operated by the different administrations and local authorities throughout the UK.

The issue has been the subject of a study by the Accessible Transport Sub-Group of the British-Irish Council (BIC). At a summit in Stirling in June 2012, BIC Ministers noted the conclusions of the study that the introduction of mutual recognition is not feasible at this time but agreed that a review of the issues should be undertaken in three years' time.

My officials continue to chair the Accessible Transport Sub-Group, which will include in its work programme for 2013 the possible future interoperability of smartcard technology. The technological challenge of administering a common clearing system was identified as one of the barriers to mutual recognition of concessionary fares. I fully support the endeavors of the Sub-Group.

Street Lights

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of contracts for street light repair; (ii) how many of the contracts are (a) filled; and (b) out to tender; (iii) how many street light faults were noted or reported in each of the last 12 months, broken down by council area; (iv) how many street light faults were repaired in each of the last 12 months, broken down by council area; and (v) what is the (a) target time; and (b) average time for the repair of a street light from when it is reported.

(AQW 16766/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised me that:

- (i) There are 10 contracts for street lighting repairs across Northern Ireland;
- (ii) All of the contracts are currently filled, and none are out to tender;
- (iii) Details of the number of street lighting faults noted or reported in each of the last 12 months, broken down by council area, are provided in Appendix A, a copy of which has been placed in the

Library. Please note that the quantities given may include multiple reports of the same defect in some instances;

- (iv) Details of the number of street lighting faults repaired in each of the last 12 months, broken down by council area, are provided in Appendix B, a copy of which has also been placed in the Library;
- (v) Roads Service has a range of target response times for different categories of street lighting defects, depending on the nature of the fault. In general terms, it aims to repair individual street lighting defects within five working days of discovery, unless the fault is due to a failure in the electricity supply, when the repair may depend on the response of the electricity transmission and distribution company.

The majority of routine repairs are undertaken within 5 days. However, the overall average repair time for all street lighting defects over the past 12 months, which includes all categories of repairs such as cable faults, supply failures etc., is 5.56 days.

Portaferry to Strangford Ferry

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what are the running costs to his Department of the Portaferry to Strangford ferry service.

(AQW 16770/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that running costs for the Strangford Lough Ferry Service, for the last three financial years, are shown in the table below:

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Costs	£1,312,465	£1,429,619	£1,856,818

* Figures for running costs incorporate staff, fuel and operations and maintenance costs but exclude indirect and notional costs.

Strangford to Portaferry Bridge

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many passengers have used the Portaferry to Strangford ferry service in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16771/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the passenger numbers on the Strangford Lough Ferry Service, for the last three financial years, are detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of Passengers	575,448	561,400	554,982

These passenger numbers have been taken from the Strangford Ferry Passenger Counting System, and exclude crew members.

Portaferry to Strangford Ferry

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many cars have used the Portaferry to Strangford ferry service in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16776/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service maintains records of the number of vehicles carried on the Strangford Ferry Service but does not maintain figures specifically relating to cars. However, for the purpose of this answer, the ticket class "Vehicles less than 6m" has been identified as the measure that provides the best indicator of the numbers of cars using the ferry.

I should also advise that Ferry customers are entitled to concession vehicle fares when either the driver or passenger in a vehicle holds a valid Blue Badge.

Officials have advised that vehicle numbers on the Strangford Lough Ferry Service, for the last three financial years, are detailed in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Vehicles less than 6m	170,075	156,198	150,296
Vehicles greater than 6m	4,486	3,803	3,577
Motorcycles	3,984	3,738	3,167
Concession vehicles	15,560	16,663	15,444
Total	194,105	180,402	172,484

Portaferry and Strangford

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the costs of maintaining the two ferries operating between Portaferry and Strangford.

(AQW 16777/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that the Strangford Lough Ferry Service operates with three vessels. The main vehicle ferry is the MV Portaferry II. The MV Strangford is the backup vehicle ferry, and is used during particularly busy periods and when the main vessel is undergoing maintenance. The service also has a passenger-only ferry, MV Rachlyn, which provides cover for the very rare occasions when neither of the vehicle ferries are available for service.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that the ferry maintenance costs for the Strangford Lough Ferry Service, for the last three financial years, are detailed in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
MV Portaferry II			
Routine Maintenance	£139,789	£134,845	£124,281
Annual Refit	£101,406	£122,524	£81,801
MV Strangford			
Routine Maintenance	£12,899	£8,337	£152,352
Annual Refit	£93,472	£71,332	£119,869
Exceptional Maintenance	£0	£0	£323,000
MV Rachlyn			
Routine Maintenance	£6,795	£0	£1,200
Annual Refit	£0	£2,594	£5,778
Total	£354,361	£339,632	£808,281

Freedom of Information

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of Freedom of Information requests received by his Department in each year since 2007; (ii) the proportion of requests each year that were not answered within the time limit; (iii) the number of requests currently

outstanding by more than (a) one to two months (b) three to four months; (c) five to six months; (d) seven to twelve months; and (e) more than twelve months.

(AQW 16781/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Regional Development received a total of 1,713 information requests between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2011. 35 of these requests were not answered within the time limits set by the legislation.

The breakdown for 2007-2011 is as follows:

Year	Requests Received	Proportion of Requests not Answered within Time Limit
2007	300	0%
2008	360	0%
2009	306	1% (2 requests)
2010	377	4% (14 requests)
2011	370	5% (19 requests)

The figures for DRD include information requests made under both the Environmental Information Regulations (2004) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

None of the requests for information currently being processed by the Department are outstanding by one month or more.

	Requests Currently Outstanding
1-2 months	0
3-4 months	0
5-6 months	0
7-12 months	0
More than 12 months	0

Road Gritting

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what tonnage of road grit is currently available for the winter road gritting schedule; and what was the comparable amount on the same date in 2011.

(AQW 16788/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the tonnage of Rock Salt available to Roads Service on the 16 November 2012 was approximately 110,000 tonnes. The amount available on the same date in 2011 was approximately 111,000 tonnes.

Street Lighting

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will liaise with the authorities in Sheffield regarding their replacement of street lighting with LED lighting, which is estimated to result in a 40 percent cost saving, to establish whether a pilot project in Northern Ireland could be considered.

(AQW 16813/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has been maintaining a keen interest in the ongoing development and use of LEDs for street lighting over recent years, through contacts with other roads

authorities, professional organisations, manufacturers and contractors. In April of this year, senior officials in Roads Service attended a presentation on LED street lighting by Amey, the contractor who won Sheffield City Council's PFI contract for highways maintenance, which includes the renewal and maintenance of street lighting using LED lanterns.

The use of LEDs for street lighting undoubtedly offers great promise of long life and reduced operational and maintenance costs. However, LED lanterns are still substantially more expensive than conventional options and, despite their lower running costs, payback periods do not make a compelling case for such investment at this time.

Roads Service already has a number of modest trials of LED lighting under way, and hopes to expand and learn from such trials and from the experience of other users before proceeding to wider use of LEDs. I readily acknowledge that LED technology is developing very rapidly, and my Department's Roads Service will continue to monitor developments in LED technology and seek to adopt the use of LED equipment more widely when the benefits and costs warrant such use.

Cost of Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to his Department over the last three financial years of undertaking equality impact assessments.

(AQW 16822/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The costs of undertaking DRD's Equality Impact Assessments are mainstreamed within the Department's business process. It is not therefore possible to identify separately the staff costs associated with carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

The figures below set out publishing and other costs incurred on Equality Impact Assessments. They include costs incurred as part of wider consultations where it has not been possible to disaggregate figures.

Financial Year	EQIAs Costs £
2009/10	£22,844.86
2010/11	£ 7,893.19
2011/12	£ 6,443.26

Taxi Spaces

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many taxi parking spaces are available in North Down.

(AQW 16842/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by my Department's Roads Service that there are two formal taxi ranks in the North Down Council area, both of which are located at Abbey Street, Bangor. While these ranks are not sub-divided into individual parking spaces, officials estimate that they could accommodate approximately 12 taxis.

A5 Public Inquiry

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will act in accordance with the clear, unequivocal findings and recommendations of the A5 Public Inquiry regarding the exceptional and untoward impact of the proposed A5 WTC route upon the homes of dwellings of residents of Glenfinn Park.

(AQW 16900/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As indicated at our meeting with the Glenfinn Park residents on Tuesday 20 November 2012, I am aware of and appreciate the substantial impact that the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor scheme would have on them. However, recommendations arising out of the Public Inquiry process must be considered in light of current legislation and policies to ensure that all property owners are treated fairly and equitably.

As advised at the meeting I intend to visit Glenfinn Park and then give the matter further consideration.

Door-2-Door Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on the Door-2-Door service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 16923/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information requested is as follows:-

2007/2008	£2,427,732
2008/2009	£2,868,292
2009/2010	£2,959,185
2010/2011	£2,729,587
2011/2012	£2,905,490

Tourism Signs

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to amend the criteria for the erection of brown tourism signs, given the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's recommendations on the proposed changes.

(AQW 16927/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that it is my intention to amend the tourist signing policy to reflect the changing nature of the industry. Any changes to the policy will be largely based on the recommendations recently received from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Cherrymount Link, Enniskillen

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development how much, per week, the delay to the work on the Cherrymount Link, Enniskillen, has cost to date due to the work on the crannog.

(AQW 17000/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, to date, the estimated cost per week, of the delay to the work on the Cherrymount Link Road arising from the archaeological excavation of the crannog, is £50,000. This estimate includes the cost of archaeological excavation work, costs incurred by the contractor and supervision costs incurred by Roads Service.

Door-2-Door Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the rationale behind the proposals to restrict the categories under which people can avail of the Door-2-Door service.

(AQW 17007/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have recently published a consultation document setting out the rationale for proposals arising from a review of the Door to Door scheme. The aim of these proposals is to target resources towards those people who experience the greatest difficulty in accessing mainstream public transport, as a result of their age or disability.

Gritting: Ebrington, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the Ebrington site in Derry will be gritted this winter.

(AQW 17223/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Ebrington site is not part of the public road network and consequently is not included in its gritting schedule.

Department for Social Development

Traveller Sites

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to publish a map of the location of the permanent, temporary and halt traveller sites in each district council area; and the number of sites available at each location.

(AQW 16131/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The location of Traveller sites of all types by council area and with the number of associated units at each location can be seen below. A site map for further illustration can be located in the Assembly Library:

Group Housing		
Tattykeel, Omagh	District Council	8 units
Hillhead, Toomebridge,	Antrim Borough Council	5 units
Monagh Road	Belfast City Council	21 units
Briar View	Belfast City Council	6 units
Ballyarnett	Derry City Council	10 units
Ballinamullan	Omagh District Council	6 units
Fr Cullen Park, Bessbrook	Newry & Mourne District Council	6 units (under construction)
Serviced Sites		
Acorn Grove,	Craigavon Borough Council	7 pitches
The Glen, Coalisland	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	16 pitches
Glen Road Heights	Belfast City Council	10 units (site vacant)
Greenbrae	Strabane District Council	8 pitches (7 vacant)
Daisyfield	Derry City Council	6 units (4 vacant)
Transit Sites		
Daisyfield	Derry City Council	6 units (Site vacant)
Ballyarnett	Derry City Council	11 units
Glen Road Heights	Belfast City Council	6 units (site vacant)

Emergency Halting Site		
Legahory Close	Craigavon Borough Council	8 units (6 vacant)
Co-Operated Site		
Glen Road,	Belfast City Council	6 units

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail any volunteering projects which have been promoted by his Department in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

(AQW 16242/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department, through its Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund supports a number of projects which specially relate to volunteering. I have attached a table detailing the projects and the Areas in which they work. In addition to these there are projects, which do not primarily seek to promote volunteering but do seek to engage communities in volunteering activities.

Furthermore, my Department's Voluntary and Community Unit provides funding to support a local volunteering infrastructure comprising a number of Volunteer Centres across Northern Ireland. The funding contracts for these Centres include a clause to increase the number of volunteers and placement organisations with a particular focus on Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
Upper Springfield Whiterock	Children, Young People & Families Theme - Upper Springfield Development Trust	Youth Programme delivering support and detached youth services. DSD/BRO funds the post of a Detached/Volunteer Development Worker. Key aim: provide volunteer training for 15 young men and women aged 15 to 18 years to enable them to provide peer support/mentoring through the youth programme.	01 April 2012 to 31 March 2015	£77,839.08
Greater Falls	Social Environment - Springfield Charitable Association	Provides range of community services from, day care facility for older people, advice centre providing independent advice and information and training in retail, Health and Social Care and Administration. Key Aim to employ 60 people directly to volunteer work and provide advice to 3750 people over the 3 year period	01 April 2012 to 31 March 2015	£53,823.96

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
Colin	Community Development Theme - Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	<p>The Colin Volunteer Empowerment Project is part of the Live and Learn Neighbourhood Empowerment Project managed by Colin Neighbourhood Partnership</p> <p>The Project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase and support volunteering activities; increase opportunities for learning, skills development and employability through volunteering and to enhance community involvement, active citizenship and ownership of the Live and Learn project. There are over 300 volunteers supporting statutory, community and voluntary organisations. 19 organisations are actively promoting volunteering opportunities through the Project. There is a variety of 	01 April 2014 to 31 March 2015	£28,640.00

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
		<p>volunteer roles: youth workers, befrienders for older people, fundraisers, environmentalists, administrators, personal tutors, women's and men's support workers and community safety workers. To date, the project has recruited over 100 new volunteers since January 2010 and continues to recruit 2-3 new volunteers per week. The project provides on-going support and development to individuals and to groups and organisations in the Colin area and has the capacity to develop new and innovative volunteer led projects.</p>		

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
Colin	Health Theme -(Good Morning Colin) Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	<p>Good Morning Colin is a telephone support service for elderly and vulnerable adults (twice daily) 365 days per year. It uses volunteers as "telephone carers". The main aim of the projects is to address the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour through offering daily telephone calls to vulnerable people living in the Colin area checking on their feelings of well being and health. The twice daily calls (morning and evening) results in a reduction in fear of crime, isolation, vulnerability, and promotes social inclusion providing advice and information regarding relevant services and other community activity for clients every day.16</p> <p>Volunteers at present and 3 Bank Volunteers. Clients are through referrals. Services 250 clients Volunteers are trained and vetted.</p>	01 April 2012 to 31 March 2015	£94,323.96

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
West, North & South Belfast	Health Theme -(Belfast Good Morning Services)	<p>Good Morning Services Belfast is a telephone support service for elderly and vulnerable adults (twice daily) 365 days per year. It uses volunteers as “telephone carers”. The main aim of the projects is to address the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour through offering daily telephone calls to vulnerable people living in the areas covered checking on their feelings of well being and health. The twice daily calls (morning and evening) results in a reduction in fear of crime, isolation, vulnerability, and promotes social inclusion providing advice and information regarding relevant services and other community activity for clients every day. Clients are through referrals.</p>	01 June 2012 to 31 December 2012	£109,314.00

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
Inner East Belfast	East Belfast Community Development Agency(EBCDA)	<p>EBCDA has run a volunteer project in Inner East Belfast since 01/09/2006. This project is now part of a collaborative proposal for the Inner East Neighbourhood Renewal Community Development Programme. The main aims of the project are as follows: To raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering and promote good practice; to build links between groups that use volunteers and encourage co-operation; to help groups in the NRA to recruit new volunteers; to create a solid "bank" of volunteers to support groups in the NRA; to facilitate links with volunteering/ support schemes such as Volunteer Development Agency(VDA), Business in the Community and Belfast City Council Prohelp scheme and Voluntary Service Belfast (VSB); to ensure a wide range of opportunities and to contribute to New Targeting Social Need.</p>	<p>01/09/06-31/08/08 01/09/08-31/03/11 01/04/11-31/03/12 01/04/12-31/03/14</p>	<p>£63,563, £86,317, £90,545 and £51,473</p>

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
Craigavon	Health Improvement Project (run by Southern Health and Social Care Trust)	<p>Promotion of volunteering initiatives - establish a Volunteer Network - develop a core programme to recruit, train and support a network of volunteers to work with (a) older people and (b) Men's Health. Male volunteers to be trained as Male Health Educators in each locality. Establish network of volunteers to provide a good neighbour scheme across the 3 Neighbourhood Renewal areas. This includes a Male cancer awareness accredited programme provided to 6 male volunteers.</p>	1 April 2012 to 31 March 2014.	£30,000.00

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
Triax	Gasyard Wall Feile - Volunteer Investment Project	<p>The aim of the project is to promote active citizenship through engagement with individuals living in the Triax NR area. This project professionalises volunteering through a structured recruitment process, provides accredited training, policies and procedures for volunteers and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities. Volunteers are given the opportunity to participate in the Millennium Volunteers Programme where they can obtain a nationally recognised Award of Excellence. This project addresses community renewal through increasing the number of residents involved in volunteering and social renewal through providing alternatives to anti-social behaviour and crime within the Triax Action Plan.</p>	<p>2006/2007 2007/2008 2008/2009 2009/2010 2010/2011 2011/2012 2012/2013</p>	<p>£5,879.83 £24,479.21 £10,537.33 £11,474.07 £28,913.33 £29,425.35 £29,463.20</p>

Name of NRA	Name of Project/Group Supported	Brief description of volunteering project and key aims and outcomes	Year(s) during which volunteering project was promoted/ supported	Amount of funding, where appropriate
		<p>The objectives and outcomes are to increase the numbers and diversity of volunteers within the VIP throughout the Triax NR Area, to provide diversity of volunteer roles to encourage maximum participation, to enhance the quality of the volunteering experience with training and mentoring support tailored to the needs of individuals and groups, to increase the skills and knowledge of volunteers to improve opportunities for employment and quality of life and to achieve sustainability as an accredited training provider.</p>		

Sites Acquired by the Belfast Regeneration Office

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how much has been spent to date on the sites acquired by the Belfast Regeneration Office; (ii) to list the sites that have been acquired; and (iii) how each site has been developed.

(AQW 16560/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The aim of Belfast Regeneration Office is to help regenerate the most deprived areas of Belfast by acquiring and redeveloping sites in line with my Department's priorities. Since April 2009 Belfast Regeneration Office has acquired 10 sites which are listed below. However due to the current market conditions which are limiting private sector interest it has not been possible to develop any of these sites to date. My Department has spent a total of £102,500 on maintenance costs on these sites since acquisition.

SITES ACQUIRED SINCE APRIL 2009

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Land at Alliance Crescent	42-48 Shankill Road	Land to rear of 141 Shankill Rd	2 Connswater Street
Land at North Howard Link		Land at Denmark St	
		12-14 Castlereagh Street	
		Craven St Youth Club	
		3 Stormount Lane	
		Ainsworth Community Centre	

Frequency of Payments

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for the exact definition of exceptional circumstances when determining frequency of payments.

(AQW 16594/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In my statement to the Assembly on 22 October (please see link below) I said I had tasked my officials to develop and consult public representatives and voluntary sector representatives on a set of guidelines for determining the circumstances when the Universal Credit payment should be split or made on a twice-monthly basis.

I launched the exercise to develop criteria for flexible payments at a Welfare Reform engagement event, to which MLAs were all invited, in the Long Gallery on 15 November. This was the start of comprehensive engagement with public representatives and the voluntary and community sector to ensure development of local criteria.

I hope to agree the criteria which will set out the definition of exceptional circumstances by Spring 2013.

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Reports-12-13/22-October-2012/#1>

Welfare Reform

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the proposed savings associated with Welfare Reform in each of the first three years after implementation.

(AQW 16595/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The work that my Department has undertaken on the financial implications of Welfare Reform shows that overall spending on social security benefits on Northern Ireland is expected to continue to increase over the SR10 and 14 periods, with welfare reform controlling the rate of the increase. This spending relates directly to those social security benefits funded directly by HM Treasury and does not include any funding managed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Early estimates indicate that spending controls from Welfare Reform for the first three years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 are in the region of £36 million, £86 million and £166 million.

This excludes the overall impact of Universal Credit which is expected to result in an increase in social security spending, Housing Benefit Reform, increased Benefit Uptake or measures such as Social Fund Reform and Housing Benefit Rates Relief Rebate, where spending will move from Annually Managed Expenditure and into Departmental Expenditure Limits.

These estimates will continue to be updated as further information becomes available and work is progressed.

Under Occupancy

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current level of under occupancy in (i) publicly; and (ii) privately owned houses in which the residents are in receipt of housing benefit. **(AQW 16650/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because in the private rented sector Housing Benefit is based on the actual number of occupants in the dwelling irrespective of its actual size so it is not possible to identify levels of under-occupation in this sector.

With regard to the social rented sector the Housing Executive advise the table below details levels of under-occupancy among working age tenants on Housing Benefit. Pensioners are exempt from the planned legislation on this matter and no information is currently available for this group.

Under occupancy in the social rented sector

	NIHE Tenants	Housing Association Tenants	Total
Under occupied by 1 bedroom	18,850	5,046	23,896
Under occupied by 2 bedrooms or more	7,318	1,216	8,534
Total	26,168	6,262	32,430

Welfare Reform

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the recent media reports about the problems being experienced by the Department for Work and Pensions with the Welfare Reform programme in Great Britain, what impact this will have on the issue here.

(AQW 16657/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform programme involves significant changes to the existing social security system including the introduction of new benefits and reform of other benefits. Many of these reforms involve either new or upgraded IT systems which are progressing in accordance with the timelines for the reforms.

I am aware there has been recent media coverage with regard to delays with the Department for Work and Pensions' IT systems required for delivery of Universal Credit. I am being kept fully apprised on developments and my officials are continuing to work with Department for Work and Pensions officials to take forward the launch of Universal Credit for Northern Ireland in April 2014. The costs

of implementing the programme of Welfare Reform continue to be reviewed taking account of implementation dates.

Benefits Payments

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been saved in benefits payments in the last three years as a result of the emigration of people under the age of 25 years. **(AQW 16663/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Information is not held in the format requested.

Welfare Reform Concessions

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether the Welfare Reform concessions afforded to Northern Ireland will require a rewrite of the relevant software; (ii) how much this rewrite will cost; and (iii) how long it is likely to take. **(AQW 16670/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The payment flexibilities which I have secured for Northern Ireland following detailed discussions with Lord Freud will require new software to be developed to deliver the specific changes for Northern Ireland. They will also require amendments to the existing Universal Credit core systems for integration purposes.

Officials have now commenced detailed engagement with the Department for Work and Pensions' to design, build and test the required software. This process will continue through to Autumn 2013 at the earliest. The full costs will not be available until that work has been completed. It is still intended that Universal Credit will be launched in Northern Ireland in April 2014.

Welfare Reform

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether there will be a delay in writing the software for Welfare Reform; (ii) how long of a delay; and (iii) whether such a delay will lead to increased costs in implementing Welfare Reform. **(AQW 16671/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform programme involves significant changes to the existing social security system including the introduction of new benefits and reform of other benefits. Many of these reforms involve either new or upgraded IT systems which are progressing in accordance with the timelines for the reforms.

I am aware there has been recent media coverage with regard to delays with the Department for Work and Pensions' IT systems required for delivery of Universal Credit. I am being kept fully apprised on developments and my officials are continuing to work with Department for Work and Pensions officials to take forward the launch of Universal Credit for Northern Ireland in April 2014. The costs of implementing the programme of Welfare Reform continue to be reviewed taking account of implementation dates.

Liquor Licences

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of liquor licences. **(AQW 16675/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: My Department is responsible for liquor licensing legislation. The Northern Ireland Courts Service is responsible for the granting of all liquor licences and the maintenance of any relevant data. The latest data furnished to my Department by the Courts Service is for 2011. The relevant data for 2012 is not yet available. The latest available data shows that the number of licences in force at 31 December 2011 was as follows:

Type of Premises (Article 5(1) The Licensing (NI) Order 1996)	
Public Houses	1426
Off-licences	500
Hotels	157
Guest Houses	46
Restaurants	563
Conference Centres	17
Higher Education Institutions	16
Places of Public Entertainment	16
Refreshment Rooms	10
Seamen's Canteens	1
Non-seagoing Vessels	2
Indoor Arenas	1
Total Number of Liquor Licences in Northern Ireland in force at 31 December 2011:	2755

Decisions with Spending Implications

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, since May 2011, how many decisions with spending implications have been made as a result of ministerial directions.

(AQW 16683/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There have been no Ministerial Directions in my Department since May 2011.

Prompt Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16689/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Dear Accounting Officer letter 12/08 re-issued by the DFP Treasury Officer of Accounts to Departments in February 2010, drew to attention the need to ensure that all possible steps are taken by NICS departments, their agencies and their public bodies, to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to seek to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment made in response to the economic position.

The Department for Social Development is committed to paying all suppliers promptly in accordance with these requirements. Payments are made through the Account NI Shared Service Centre and, where practical, by raising requisitions and purchase orders up-front, to allow invoices to be sent by suppliers direct to Account NI for processing. Cost centre managers are given monthly management information to allow them to monitor performance in relation to prompt payment and take corrective action if required. This is also monitored at Directorate level.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the Foyle constituency have (i) registered for the new Boiler Replacement Scheme; (ii) been sent their application forms; and (iii) been awarded a grant.

(AQW 16699/11-15)

Mr McCausland: To date there has been 904 enquiries from Foyle constituency residents and 869 application forms issued, with 1 approval been granted. The Housing Executive have received an unprecedented number of enquires to the scheme and their Londonderry Grants Office who also deal with Magherafelt, Strabane and Limavady councils have received a total of 2,882 enquiries, issued 1,7000 application forms and issued 37 approvals to replace their old boilers. They have allocated additional staff to reduce the backlog and also to assist in providing advice and guidance to a lot of applicants who have sent in incomplete forms.

Housing Executive Tenants

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants, in each constituency, have been rehoused over the past three years due to incidents of hate crime.

(AQW 16700/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency and nor do they collate information on tenants rehoused due to incidents of hate crime.

Employment and Support Allowance

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many Employment and Support Allowance medicals have been carried out as 'home visits'; and how this figure compares to (i) England; (ii) Scotland; and (iii) Wales.

(AQW 16736/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Atos Healthcare began providing medical assessments on behalf of the Social Security Agency on 20 June 2011. Since June 2011, there have been 306 Employment and Support Allowance medicals carried out as home visits.

The Social Security Agency does not hold information in relation to Employment and Support Allowance medical assessments carried out as home visits in (i) England;(ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development how many families with complex needs and requiring four or more bedrooms are on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive waiting list to be rehoused in (i) South; and (ii) East Belfast.

(AQW 16798/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive currently has seven complex cases that require four or more bedrooms and have chosen to be rehoused in a common landlord area within South or East Belfast.

Neighbourhood Renewal in Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development how much finance and resources have been used under Neighbourhood Renewal in Belfast in the last twelve months.

(AQW 16809/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are fifteen Neighbourhood Renewal Areas across Greater Belfast which receive support through the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund (Annex A). To oversee and support the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal in Belfast the Department also supports 5 Area Partnership Boards and maintains 3 local departmental Development Offices.

The accounting methodology employed by the Department cannot provide details on a rolling basis. Figures have therefore been provided for the financial year ending 31 March 2012.

Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund	£13,330,504
Belfast Area Partnership Boards	£ 1,065,441
Development Offices – Salaries and associated costs	£ 1,164,360

Annex A

Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Inner East Belfast
- South West Belfast
- Greater Shankill
- Greater Falls
- Upper Springfield/Whiterock
- Crumlin/Ardoyne
- Tullycarnet
- Inner South
- Lenadoon (Outer West)
- Colin
- Inner North
- Upper Ardoyne/Ballysillan
- Ligoniel
- Rathcoole
- Andersonstown

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister for Social Development how much finances and resources have been used under Neighbourhood Renewal in west Belfast in the last twelve months.

(AQW 16810/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are five Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA) which fall within the remit of the West Belfast Development Office; Greater Falls, Andersonstown, Lenadoon (Outer West), Colin and Upper Springfield/Whiterock.

The Greater Shankill Neighbourhood Renewal Area also covers areas across west and north Belfast and falls within the remit of the North Belfast and Greater Shankill Development Office. Therefore for completeness I have provided information on the West Belfast NRAs and all of the Greater Shankill NRA.

To oversee and support the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal in west Belfast and Greater Shankill the Department also supports 2 Area Partnership Boards.

The accounting methodology employed by the Department cannot provide details of finance on a rolling basis; therefore figures have been provided for the financial year ending 31 March 2012.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL INVESTMENT FUND 31 MARCH 2012

West Belfast NRA	£3,949,427
Greater Shankill NRA	£1,110,656
Area Partnership Boards	£451,417
Development Offices salaries and costs	£249,000

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how much finances and resources will be transferred under Neighbourhood Renewal to Belfast City Council.

(AQW 16811/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Executive has agreed that functions which transfer from central to local government under the local government reform programme should be fit for purpose, sufficiently funded and cost neutral to the ratepayer at the point of transfer. DSD is currently working with the DOE-established Transfer of Functions Working Group to firm up the detail around the resources to be transferred. This group is advisory and ultimately final decisions on the resourcing of all transferring functions will be a matter for individual Ministers and the Executive.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to outline the terms of reference that have been established for the transfer of finance and resources from Neighbourhood Renewal to Belfast City Council; (ii) who produced the terms of reference; and (iii) who signed off on the terms of reference.

(AQW 16812/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Executive has agreed that functions which transfer from central to local government under the local government reform programme should be fit for purpose, sufficiently funded and cost neutral to the ratepayer at the point of transfer. DSD is currently working with the DOE-established Transfer of Functions Working Group to firm up the detail around the resources to be transferred. This group is advisory and ultimately final decisions on the resourcing of transferring functions will be a matter for individual Ministers and the Executive.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down have (i) registered for the new Boiler Replacement Scheme; (ii) been sent their application forms; and (iii) have been awarded a grant.

(AQW 16856/11-15)

Mr McCausland: For the North Down Council area there have been 409 enquiries registered for the boiler replacement scheme and 373 applications issued. There have been 14 approvals issued to commence boiler replacement works with one being completed. Householders have up to 3 months to have the work completed and they are being encouraged to have replacement works carried out as quickly as possible once approval has been received.

High Streets Taskforce

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the findings of the High Streets Taskforce consultation meeting that was held in Strabane; and what actions his Department will take to help further regenerate local town centres in the district.

(AQW 16892/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Earlier this year my Department organised a series of meetings across Northern Ireland to review the support which it provides to city and town centres and to ascertain the views of

traders and high street business on matters of concern to them. A meeting attended by approximately one dozen local businesses and council officials was held in Strabane on 22nd May 2012.

Attendees raised a number of concerns relating to; vacant premises in the town centre, out-of town planning, car parking, non-domestic rates, the appearance of the town centre streets, the location of the Translink Bus depot, DSD involvement in the SCORE site and coordination of Government Departments.

My Department published the Strabane Town Centre Masterplan in September 2010. The Masterplan, which was prepared in conjunction with Strabane District Council and other statutory agencies sets out recommendations for the development of the town centre over a 15-20 year period. The recommendations have been prioritised and work to implement them has begun.

In the current financial year, the Department is funding a £335,000 Public Realm scheme on Castle Place and part of Lower Main Street in partnership with the Department for Regional Development's Road Service. In addition, tenders will be invited shortly for the appointment of a consultant to prepare a development brief for the SCORE site in Strabane and the Department is working with Council officials to progress the Strabane Community Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge project.

The Department is also working with Strabane District Council to design town centre revitalisation schemes for implementation in 2013 and later years subject to the availability of the necessary funding. It is also assisting the Council to prepare terms of reference for the appointment of a team to design and manage the implementation of a major public realm scheme focusing on Market Street, Abercorn Square, Castle Street, Leeper's Brae and part of Railway Street. This project, of which the Department is likely to be the main funder, is expected to commence during the 2013/14 financial year and be phased over several years.

The Department's Urban Development Grant Scheme is also available to assist projects in Strabane town centre. With regard to the regeneration of other towns in the Strabane District, these would fall outside my Department's urban remit and would therefore be primarily the responsibility of the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Bank Liaison Section

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW15888/11-15, for an update on the co-location of Bank Liaison team.

(AQW 16998/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As part of the Social Security Agency's Modernisation Programme and in preparation for Welfare Reform, the Payment Management Service is to be co-located in Belfast alongside other financial services. The co-location has impacted 14 staff from Administrative Assistant to Executive Officer 2 from the Bank Liaison team in Lisahally.

To date 4 staff are being relocated to the Pension Centre, Carlisle House and another 2 staff are due to relocate to the North West Development Office, Orchard House. Work is ongoing to redeploy the 8 remaining staff whilst taking account of the individual circumstances and business needs.

Energy Efficiency Measures in Homes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the budget that has been set aside to cover the proposals to boost economic activity through the retro-fitting of energy efficiency measures in homes.

(AQW 17080/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has a budget of £35.8 million available to improve the energy efficiency of homes. This resource funds the Warm Homes Scheme, the Boiler Replacement Scheme and the Housing Executive's Heating Replacement Scheme.

My Department is awaiting further information on the commitment made in the recent Economy and Jobs Initiative announced by the Northern Ireland Executive to fund the retro-fitting of energy efficiency measures in homes.

Energy Efficiency Retro-Fitting

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development whether, in considering options for energy efficiency retro-fitting, he will pro-actively engage with representatives from the Green New Deal Group.
(AQW 17081/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Before I can assess the options for energy efficiency retro-fitting I am seeking further information on the commitment made in the recent Economy and Jobs Initiative announced by the Northern Ireland Executive to fund the retro-fitting of energy efficiency measures in homes.

Energy Efficiency Measures in Homes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development when he will publish the proposals for the retro-fitting of energy efficiency measures in homes.
(AQW 17082/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Before I can assess the options for energy efficiency retro-fitting I am seeking further information on the commitment made in the recent Economy and Jobs Initiative announced by the Northern Ireland Executive to fund the retro-fitting of energy efficiency measures in homes.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department can take to ensure that all Winter Fuel Payments are paid before December 2012.
(AQW 17131/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A Winter Fuel Payment is paid to eligible customers each winter to provide help with fuel bills. During 2012, payments started on the 3rd November and continued up to the 18th November with the last payments crediting to customers accounts by 27th November. The specific payment dates are determined by the benefit the customer is entitled to.

For the small amount of customers who applied for the payment for the first time and made their application before 21st September 2012, the Winter Fuel Payment Centre will make payments to successful applicants by the 9th December.

Payments will therefore have been made to over 300,000 customers before Christmas.

For the few remaining successful applications received after 21st September and before the closing date of 31st March 2013, payments will be issued during the period 9th February to 2nd May 2013. Last year this amounted to just over 1,000 customers.

Co-ownership Scheme

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been purchased under the co-ownership scheme from 2011/12 to date as a result of the extra money that has been made available.
(AQO 2933/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the 2011/12 financial year the total funding of £28.25 million made available to the Co-Ownership Scheme supported the purchase of 643 homes.

While it is too early in the current year to identify the purchases supported from specific funding streams, it is expected that the scheme will deliver an additional 375 homes from the additional funding provided this year.

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