

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 25 October 2013

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They should be sent to:

The Editor of Debates, Room 248, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX.
Tel: 028 9052 1135 · e-mail: simon.burrowes@niassembly.gov.uk

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

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Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 25 October 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Departmental Appointment of Applicants

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the findings by the Industrial Tribunal in Lennon-v-the Department for Regional Development, what steps will be taken to ensure that there is no material bias in Departments against the appointment of applicants, on the basis of community background.

(AQW 13169/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Commissioner for Public Appointments, Mr John Keanie, makes clear in his Code of Practice that only those individuals judged to best meet the requirements of the post should be recommended to Ministers for appointment to public bodies. He underlines in his Code that the Departments must not discriminate unlawfully when fulfilling his duties.

Transfer of Powers

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of whether transferring any of the powers, similar to those transferred to the Scottish Government under the Scotland Act 2012, would be of benefit to the Executive.

(AQW 14695/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Each devolution settlement is unique and the powers reserved to the UK government are kept under review to determine whether any benefit would accrue to the Executive in seeking their devolution.

In 'Building a Prosperous and United Community', announced on 14 June 2013, and ratified by the Executive on 27 June 2013, it was agreed to take forward further work on Corporation Tax devolution and it also indicated that the UK Government would make a final decision on the devolution of powers no later than the Autumn Statement 2014. It was also agreed that the UK Government and the Executive would examine the potential for devolving specific additional fiscal powers. Last year the power to set the level of Air Passenger Duty on long haul flights was devolved to the Assembly.

Certain provisions in the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, currently before Parliament at Westminster, would make reserved matters a range of functions which are currently excepted matters – the power to legislate to reduce the size of the Assembly, and functions relating to the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and local government district electoral areas. If the Bill is enacted, the Assembly will be able to legislate on these matters with the consent of the Secretary of State.

Designated Days Under the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their Department's role in the determination and dissemination of information on the designated days under the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

(AQW 17760/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM has no role in the determination of designated flag flying days. OFMDFM does disseminate information annually to departments regarding the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

National Congress

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 17446/11-15, on what date did they become aware that the date of the National Congress was confirmed, which resulted in the postponement of the political element of the visit.

(AQW 20153/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials were initially contacted by the Chinese Government on 27 September and again on 28 September concerning the proposed date for the National Congress.

However, we had been aware of the possibility of a Congress during the Autumn and had factored this into the planning for the visit.

Commissioner of Public Appointments Code of Practice

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the work to date of the cross-departmental working group looking at compliance with the Commissioner of Public Appointments code of practice; and when they will receive its recommendations.

(AQW 20154/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The cross departmental working group has completed its work.

A standing Public Appointments Forum has been set up and departmental representatives have met on three occasions to address compliance and other issues.

Visit to the United States and Brazil

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will publish the itinerary of their trips to Brazil and the USA in March 2013.

(AQW 21015/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Details of the itinerary relating to our visit to Brazil and the USA were published by the Executive Information Service through a series of press releases and photographs. Copies of all those releases and photographs are available at the following websites:

- www.northernireland.gov.uk/news
- www.flickr.com/photos/niexecutive/sets/72157633036155586/ and
- www.flickr.com/photos/niexecutive/sets/72157632960681381

Visit to Brazil

Mr I McCrea asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their recent trip to Brazil.

(AQO 3706/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer you to our answers to AQO 3702/11-15 and AQO 3711/11-15 on 8 April.

Visit to Brazil

Mr Newton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the value of their recent business trip to Brazil.

(AQO 3709/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer you to our answers to AQO 3702/11-15 and AQO 3711/11-15 on 8 April.

Visit to Brazil

Mr Hilditch asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their recent visit to Brazil.

(AQO 3713/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer you to our answers to AQO 3702/11-15 and AQO 3711/11-15 on 8 April.

Visit to Brazil

Lord Morrow asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what benefits they anticipate as a result of their recent visit to Brazil.

(AQO 3714/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer you to our answers to AQO 3702/11-15 and AQO 3711/11-15 on 8 April.

Annual Report to Parliament on the Armed Forces Covenant

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the contribution that the Executive has made, on a yearly basis, to the preparation of the annual report to Parliament on the Armed Forces Covenant.

(AQW 23760/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Armed Forces Act 2012 requires an Armed Forces Covenant Report to be laid in Parliament each year. The first Annual Report on the Armed Forces Covenant for 2012 has already been laid in Westminster. In relation to that Report, our officials offered to discuss the details of the input with the Ministry of Defence. We have also asked our officials to liaise closely with officials from the Ministry of Defence on any input for the next Report and to report the position to us.

Armed Forces and Veterans Advocate

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the Executive will appoint an Armed Forces and Veterans Advocate, as is the case in the UK's other devolved legislatures; (ii) when the appointment will be made; and (iii) why an appointment has not yet been made.

(AQW 23761/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There are no plans for the Executive to create an Armed Forces and Veterans Advocate. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has established an Armed Forces Liaison Forum that meets at least twice a year. This provides opportunities for representatives from the Armed Forces and Veterans' organisations to discuss issues with departmental representatives and, where appropriate, service commissioners and providers. That is the appropriate vehicle for such discussions.

Department Information Service: Staff

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide the answer to AQW 20172/11-15 which was tabled on 20 February 2013.

(AQW 24063/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A response to AQW 20172/11-15 was issued on 14 October.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the work of the group dealing with flags, symbols and emblems, parades and the past, as announced in the Together: Building a United Community strategy.

(AQO 4421/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: An All-Party Group, chaired by Richard Haass, will consider and make recommendations on matters, including parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and dealing with the past.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what were the costs associated with the proposals to develop the now withdrawn Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 25225/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The estimated costs associated with the proposals to develop the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre are £24m.

Victims and Survivor Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for the Victims and Survivor Service's best estimate of the number or percentage of victims who have never availed of funding or assistance.

(AQW 25658/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service, as part of its Individual Needs Review, asks clients what services they are currently accessing and the services they have accessed in the past. This includes the extent to which they have accessed assistance and support from victims groups and the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund. The Service is currently collating this data.

Childcare Strategy

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the areas of the Childcare Strategy on which agreement has yet to be reached; and when these issues will be resolved.

(AQW 25723/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 25 September 2013 we launched the first phase of Bright Start – the Executive's Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare (A Strategic Framework and Key First Actions). This first phase of Bright Start sets out the strategic direction for the Childcare Strategy and a set of 15 key first actions. The first actions will help deliver the Executive's vision for childcare, addressing the main childcare priorities identified during consultation and research.

Affordable Childcare

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their definition of affordable childcare, as outlined in their written statement of 25 September 2013.

(AQW 26492/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our written statement of 25 September 2013 announced the launch and publication of the first phase of the Bright Start Childcare Strategy – a Strategic Framework

and 15 key first actions. While Bright Start does not define the term ‘affordable’ childcare, providers applying for funding will be required to demonstrate that their proposed fees reflect parents’ ability to pay. We are actively giving consideration to the introduction of maximum tariffs for Bright Start funded schemes under an ‘ability to pay’ approach.

Chair of Ilex Urban Regeneration Company

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why they wrote to Mr Matt McNulty on 25 May 2012 inviting him to act as interim Chair of Ilex Urban Regeneration Company, given that by then they had knowledge, or means of knowledge, of the findings against him in the Latitude Report in respect of his governance role in the Temple Bar Cultural Trust; and what due diligence exercise was conducted in this regard.

(AQW 26644/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Sir Roy McNulty resigned as Chair from the Ilex Board in February 2012. Pending a process to secure a suitable substantive successor to the post through open competition, Sir Roy, with the Ilex Board’s support, recommended the appointment of Matt McNulty, an experienced member of the Board to the position of Chair on an interim basis. Mr McNulty accepted the temporary arrangement in March 2012. We wrote to Matt McNulty on 25 May 2012, thanking him for his agreement to fill the position of interim chair of the Ilex Board on a temporary basis, thus facilitating the ongoing business of the company.

We had no knowledge of the report you refer to as the “Latitude Report” or any specific issues relating to Matt McNulty at that time.

Women’s Centres Childcare Fund

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Women’s Centres Childcare Fund will be sustained by Bright Start: the Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy.

(AQW 26655/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The £12 million set aside by the Executive to support the development of the Childcare Strategy over the period 2011/12 to 2014/15 is additional funding intended to cover new childcare initiatives, not existing projects supported from departmental baselines. The fund will be used to resource the Bright Start key first actions, which reflect the main childcare needs identified during consultation. The Women’s Centres Childcare Fund is an emergency package of funding, delivered by the Department for Social Development (DSD). We understand funding is currently in place until March 2014 and that DSD is currently in the process of putting in place arrangements for further funding to March 2015

Report on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Management of Response Maintenance Contracts

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the person criticised for unethical behaviour in paragraph 37 of the Public Accounts Committee Report on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Management of Response Maintenance Contracts of March 2013, currently holds a paid post in a public body; (ii) if so, what posts he holds; (iii) when he was appointed; (iv) whether he has been relieved of any such posts in consequence of the findings of the PAC report; and if so, (v) which posts he was removed from and when.

(AQW 26688/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The person referred to does not currently hold a paid post in a public body.

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action their Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 26951/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework is the main vehicle for delivery of the Executive's new Disability Strategy, "A strategy to improve the lives of disabled people – 2012 to 2015" and can be accessed via www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/disability-strategy-2012-2015.

The purpose of our Disability Strategy is to give coherence and guidance to government departments' activities across general and disability specific areas of policy. It provides a framework for the implementation of the UNCRPD, to take forward work to improve the lives of children and adults with a disability.

There are seven work signature projects within the Disability Strategy which will aim to achieve early momentum on delivery. The projects will deliver outcomes in the following areas:

- 1 Disability Awareness/Advocacy
- 2 Access, particularly access to Transport, and Digital Inclusion
- 3 Housing
- 4 Employment and Standard of Living
- 5 Tackling crime against people with disabilities
- 6 Access to Sports and Leisure
- 7 Monitoring and Reporting

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail their Department's performance against the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.

(AQW 26981/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 17 July 2013, the United Nations Committee that oversees the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) formally examined the UK's performance in terms of its CEDAW obligations. Officials from OFMDFM, DOJ, DHSSPS, and DSD took part in the Examination in Geneva and via videolink in London. All Departments contributed to the briefing material for the Examination.

The CEDAW Committee has now published its Concluding Observations based on the Examination; these can be accessed at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

Our Department has overarching responsibility for ensuring that CEDAW is implemented here and this is done via the Gender Equality Strategy, which is currently under review. OFMDFM officials are working in conjunction with Departments to develop an action plan to deliver the objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy and the recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee will be considered as part of this process.

Peace IV

Ms Brown asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they will ensure that the positive work that women have undertaken through successive Peace Programme funding is not lost if the focus of Peace IV shifts towards children and young people.

(AQO 4770/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM remains committed to ensuring the right of women to full and equal participation in political and public life, including peace building. This is a key aim of the cross departmental Gender Equality Strategy.

The Gender Equality Strategy 2006-2016 sets out an overarching framework for departments, their agencies and other relevant statutory authorities to promote gender equality.

The Gender Equality Strategy is currently under review and OFMDFM is working with the principal gender equality stakeholders, including representatives of the women's sector, via the Gender Advisory Panel to identify the priorities for women that need to be addressed in the years remaining of the Strategy.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Wildlife Programmes for Waterways

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants are available to community groups to develop wildlife programmes for waterways.

(AQW 26870/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development offers funding to enhance habitats for wildlife through its agri-environment schemes. If a community group is currently managing land under an agri-environment scheme the group may receive funding to manage habitats along the marginal area of a waterway. With careful management this margin can be a valuable wildlife habitat and can act as a buffer zone to help improve water quality.

At present, agri-environment schemes are not open to application, however my Department is currently developing a new scheme which will be delivered under the Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020.

Preparations for Winter Conditions

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what preparations have been made for potentially difficult winter conditions; and what liaison she has had with other Departments in respect of farmers assisting in keeping rural and minor roads open.

(AQW 26915/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Last winter we saw the difficulties that severe weather can cause our farmers. In May I established a joint DARD and industry fodder taskforce to support our livestock farmers and help them prepare for the winter months ahead. The Taskforce has agreed an Action Plan, which is available on the DARD website. I met Taskforce representatives recently for an update, and although they don't intend to meet as a group until mid winter, they will get together in the interim if a situation develops and new actions are required.

There is much that farmers can do to plan for the winter ahead, and DARD has been active implementing the Action Plan, providing advice and support to ensure that they are well prepared. CAFRE has embarked on a comprehensive programme of workshops, advisory events and publications, helping farmers to maximise fodder production, to stocktake their individual fodder supply and to manage their stock to make most efficient use of the available fodder.

Responsibility for emergency road clearance lies with the Department of Regional Development. I welcome the action by Minister Danny Kennedy in August to seek additional support to supplement the existing snow clearing arrangements. Farmers, agricultural contractors and other owners of suitable equipment were encouraged to apply for the contract and I understand that this additional assistance will be in place for the winter.

Sports Facilities: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the funding offers made for sports or partial sports facilities in the North Down constituency, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26932/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No such offers have been made by DARD. The Quality of Life Axis (Axis 3) of the Rural Development Programme is delivered through the LEADER approach by seven Joint Council Committees working with Local Action Groups in council cluster areas. Down Rural Area Partnership (DRAP) covers the North Down constituency referred to in your question and is responsible for opening calls, assessing applications and awarding funding.

Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme does not provide funding for sport facilities for direct sporting activity. However, where an organisation wishes to promote a project that benefits the wider rural community and which is separate from their primary activity, this may be considered for funding by the LAG and JCCs.

In the last five years, no such projects were funded in the North Down constituency area.

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 27070/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

Disability Action Plans

DARD has submitted two Disability Action Plans to the Equality Commission, both covering three year periods; 2007 – 2010 and 2010 – 2013. We consulted on both Plans with equality and disability representative groups on our consultee list and also sought the views of staff and the DARD Disability Forum. The Plans were approved by the Permanent Secretary and I, circulated to staff and consultees, and made available on the Department's internet and intranet websites along with the accompanying Easy-read versions. See the attached link for previous Disability Action Plans and annual reviews:

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/equality/disability.htm>

The Action Plans contained a range of measures including the provision of disability training, developing partnership working with others to facilitate outreach events, more accessible information services and pro-actively seeking to raise awareness of disability issues through continued engagement with the disability sector.

A new three year Action Plan (2013-2016) is currently being developed and we will continue to liaise with the disability sector during its development and implementation.

DARD Disability Forum

The DARD Disability Forum was set up in 2002. Since then through its membership, it has sought to raise awareness of disability issues that impact on staff; and to provide opportunities for individuals to have a voice in decision-making processes and to take forward different aspects of the Forum's work plan; such as contributing articles for publication, reviewing websites, consultation exercises and project work. The Disability Forum meets at least twice a year and the Forum attends the Department's Equality Steering Group meetings.

The Forum has developed its own intranet webpages and in recent years has also undertaken a range of projects most recently the review of disabled car-parking arrangements at DARD HQ.

The Forum continues to raise awareness of its work on disability issues by delivering presentations to other organisations and Departments on the benefits of having this Group.

Communication

DARD has produced a number of Easy-Read versions to accompany our documents that run to 30 pages or more. These type of publications can assist customers who may have dyslexia or a reading, learning or comprehension difficulty. The use of Plain English is also promoted across the Department.

Web authors and approvers are aware of the DARD web publishing policy and have a written procedures manual to refer to.

Training

Disability training has been provided for many of the Department's front line staff. This has included deaf and Aspergers Syndrome awareness training for DARD Direct staff, HR staff and line managers.

Named individuals have been appointed at key CAFRE (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise) locations to help co-ordinate disability and accessibility issues for students.

Dyslexia training and training for supporting students with special educational needs and disabilities has taken place for teaching staff in the 3 CAFRE campuses.

NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) 2007-2013

The Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is jointly funded by the European Union and DARD. £100m has been allocated to supporting a wide range of projects to improve the quality of life in rural areas, (known as Axis 3). These Axis 3 measures are implemented by seven joint council committees working in partnership with Local Action Groups (LAGS).

The pro-active outreach work undertaken with leading disability groups at the outset of the Programme increased our knowledge of the key issues for them and encouraged our business areas to think differently about the services they provide for customers. Significant improvements have been made to ensure the information provided in relation to the NIRDP is accessible and more widely available. We also sought to ensure that disabled people were directly involved or able to contribute to the work of the delivery bodies of the Programme and Disability Action is also represented on the NIRDP Monitoring Committee.

Work Placements

Work placements have been arranged in some DARD offices, including a student from Erne Special School in Enniskillen and two further placements for young people supported by the CEDAR organisation. A special needs work experience student was also hosted at the Greenmount Campus for a 3 day placement.

Forest Service

A new user friendly signage system has been introduced and is operational at 10 of the most popular forests. Information about the provision of accessible facilities for disabled people in forest parks has been published on the NI Direct website.

We will continue to work to improve access to services for people with disabilities and to encourage partnership working arrangements with others to facilitate further projects where possible.

Meat Products: Country of Origin

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of meat products being sold in local supermarkets without details of origin; and to outline the plans she has in place to ensure that all meat products are labelled with their country of origin in order to increase industry and consumer confidence.

(AQW 27123/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At the outset I should point out that DARD is responsible for the labelling of fresh or frozen beef and veal only. All other food labelling in the north of Ireland is the responsibility of the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

All beef and veal, sold fresh or frozen, must be labelled with the country, or countries, in which the animal was born, reared and slaughtered. This is a legal requirement under EU law in all Member States and applies also to beef and veal imported from countries outside the EU. It is enforced in the north by DARD inspectors in meat plants and by local authority Environmental Health Officers in retail outlets. Compliance levels are generally high and any cases of absent or incorrect labelling are investigated and appropriate action taken.

In relation to the labelling of other meats, new arrangements for Country of Origin Labelling are set to come into force under the EU Food Information to Consumers Regulation and will apply from December 2014. In the north, the FSA has responsibility for this Regulation.

Due to our relationship with Britain and the south of Ireland, local producers are keen to have the choice to label their food products as either "British" or "Irish" depending on customer requirements. Representations have been made by industry to the FSA, who have noted the importance of maintaining this flexibility. I have actively supported our industry in this respect by liaising with Defra Secretary of State, Owen Paterson MP, as the EU negotiations are conducted to ensure that a robust case is made for this flexibility.

I fully support the introduction of such labelling which increases consumer confidence by providing as much information as possible about food, including the country of origin. My Department will continue to liaise with the FSA on the introduction of this new legislation to ensure that the terms used fully inform customers, and at the same time, meet the requirements of industry in relation to domestic and export sales.

TB Biosecurity Study

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 16933/11-15, for an update on when the findings of the TB Biosecurity Study will be published.
(AQW 27237/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The DARD commissioned TB Biosecurity Study, which was undertaken by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, is currently being finalised and I expect the report to be published in early November 2013.

Help for Young Farmers

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what help is being given to young farmers to encourage them to remain in farming and develop their level of expertise in modern farming methods.

(AQO 4868/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's College, CAFRE, provides support through its education programmes to those who are preparing for a career in farming with enrolments at a five-year high. In addition, last year the College piloted a programme for graduates and over 200 young farmers participated. CAFRE also continues to support farmers throughout their careers through programmes of business development planning, business benchmarking, training, and knowledge and technology transfer.

Currently farmers, under the age of 40, also receive financial support through the New Entrants Scheme. This scheme has helped young farmers to develop their business by contributing towards their bank interest rate payments. While this scheme is now closed for new applications, almost 250 young farmers received funding.

Furthermore, as part of the current Rural Development Programme, young farmers were given priority for funding under the Farm Modernisation Programme. Almost 60 percent of all successful applicants under Tranche 3 were young farmers and received support to modernise their business.

I am conscious that the decision for young people to enter farming can be complex and have an impact on the whole farm family. For this reason, as part of the Rural Development Programme, my Department developed the Family Farm Options programme. This programme provides the family with an agriculture mentor who helps them consider the key business issues.

In looking to the future, as part of the local implementation of the reformed Common Agricultural Policy, my Department is consulting with industry stakeholders. The main areas affecting young farmers include additional support through the Basic Payment Scheme and a top-up to financial support available to support investment.

As Minister, I am focussed on encouraging young farmers to remain within the agri-food industry and to help them build a successful career which will assist the industry achieve its full potential.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether, under the new Common Agriculture Policy, she intends to transfer money from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2.

(AQO 4873/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have not made any decision on whether funds will be transferred from the Pillar 1 direct payments budget to the Pillar 2 allocation for the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. There will be a number of factors which need to be considered before any decision is made. The key issue will be how much EU and national funds will be available for a future rural development programme. First of all we need official confirmation from Defra of what our Pillar 2 allocation will be in the north.

We will also need to look at the responses we have received from stakeholders to the public consultation that has just closed on our proposals for a future programme. We have asked a number of key consultation questions in relation to the financing of a future programme. This includes asking stakeholders for their views on which of the proposed schemes should be prioritised in the event that that are insufficient funds available and whether funds should be transferred from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 to ensure that a future rural development programme is adequately funded.

I intend to carefully consider the responses to the consultation and the outcome of the budget negotiations before making a final decision.

Circus Animals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what work is taking place on a north/south basis to look at the issue of wild animals in circuses.

(AQO 4874/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Although there are no circuses based here, a number of circuses registered in the south travel here. My Department has an agreed protocol with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, which provides for an inspection of animals from these registered circuses before they move back to the south.

I raised the issue of wild animals in travelling circuses at the North South Ministerial Council, or NSMC, Agriculture meeting on 10 July 2013. Minister Coveney and I agreed that officials would investigate the possibility of an All-island approach to the issue of these animals in travelling circuses, and that the findings and proposals would be reported at a future NSMC Agriculture meeting.

My officials met officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine under the auspices of the North South Animal Welfare and Transport Working Group on 5 September 2013. The issue of wild animals in circuses was discussed in detail and a number of actions were agreed to be taken forward. These include engagement with stakeholders who would be directly affected by any proposals on the use of these animals in travelling circuses. Officials will report back to Minister Coveney and I once these actions have been completed.

Beef Cattle and Sheep Farming

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how beef cattle and sheep farming in Less Favoured Areas will be sustained following the current Common Agricultural Policy Reform negotiations.

(AQO 4875/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have been consulting with stakeholders on how we implement the reforms to create a framework across both Pillar I and Pillar II which will underpin the sustainability of the entire farming sector.

The Pillar I regulations introduce a more complex direct payments system than currently. For example, we will be moving from a single payment to a minimum of three separate payments with options for more, including the option to introduce coupled payments. We are also moving towards a flat rate support regime that is expected to cause some redistribution away from more intensive systems towards extensive production. I am currently consulting on a suggested package of measures to be implemented under Pillar I from 1 January 2015. That consultation will close on 17 January 2014. I welcome all views on my proposals.

Under the Pillar II regulations, there is a range of options which could be used to sustain cattle and sheep farming in the LFAs. These include knowledge transfer measures to enhance competitiveness, preserving our ecosystems and promoting social and economic development in rural areas. LFAs include the majority of land which is designated under environmental legislation because of its high environmental value. Many of these valuable habitats are sustained by appropriate agricultural activity, including grazing by cattle and sheep. Farmers in agri-environment schemes can receive payment for delivering environmentally sensitive land management practices.

The opportunity exists now for us all to consider the full range of options that CAP reform presents to us. Our key challenge is to use these options to position farmers better to meet market opportunities and to enhance their overall sustainability and resilience.

Agri-food Strategy

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps have been taken to formulate and implement an Agri-Food Strategy development plan.

(AQO 4876/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Going for Growth was developed by the Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB) as part of the Executive's Programme for Government. The industry, through the Board, has identified opportunities for sustainable growth and targeted increased employment in these sectors and this is something that we all hope for.

Going for Growth is currently being considered by Government Departments, Agencies and the Board itself to identify the best way to take forward its numerous and wide-ranging recommendations. At Government level, this is being taken forward through an Inter-Departmental Steering Group comprised of senior officials from the relevant Departments and Agencies. The AFSB continues to meet and will be responsible for driving forward the industry led recommendations.

We are also exploring the various mechanisms that could provide funding to support sustainable growth in the sector, including the new Rural Development Programme and European Regional Development Fund, as well as Invest NI's Selective Financial Assistance Programme. In the current economic climate, implementation of some of the recommendations will be very challenging for the Executive and we will need to look carefully at the resource implications of the proposals.

I very much welcome the recently announced DETI and DFP Agri-Food Loan Scheme. Access to finance was one of the key areas highlighted in Going for Growth and this will help producers involved in integrated supply chains to access finance that they need to expand production.

As Going for Growth was developed as part of the Programme for Government, it will be necessary for the Executive as a whole to issue a formal response we to seek Executive endorsement in the near future.

Going for Growth

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on the implementation of the Going for Growth Agri-Food strategy.

(AQO 4877/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Going for Growth was developed by the Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB) as part of the Executive's Programme for Government. The industry, through the Board, has identified opportunities for sustainable growth and targeted increased employment in these sectors and this is something that we all hope for.

Going for Growth is currently being considered by Government Departments, Agencies and the Board itself to identify the best way to take forward its numerous and wide-ranging recommendations. At Government level, this is being taken forward through an Inter-Departmental Steering Group comprised of senior officials from the relevant Departments and Agencies. The AFSB continues to meet and will be responsible for driving forward the industry led recommendations.

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As Going for Growth was developed as part of the Programme for Government, it will be necessary for the Executive as a whole to issue a formal response we to seek Executive endorsement in the near future.

Infraction Fines

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the current accumulated level of EU infraction fines charged against her Department, including the steps that have been taken to rectify the issue.

(AQO 4878/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has not incurred any EU infraction fines. I would add that DARD has never received a fine in relation to infraction proceedings.

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

An infraction is levied at Member State level and DEFRA would lead on any proceedings for Britain and the north of Ireland.

Equine Sector: Rate Relief

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the case her Department is making, with the assistance of the Equine Council for Northern Ireland, to the Department of Finance and Personnel concerning rates relief for the equine sector.

(AQO 4879/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: It will be a matter for the equine sector to make a case for rates relief to my Department for consideration before any formal engagement with the Department of Finance and Personnel. My officials are working closely with the Equine Council for NI (ECNI) on the matter.

Any consideration of rates relief for the equine sector must establish the need, assess the economic benefit, be affordable, consider alternative support measures, align with Programme for Government priorities, and be compliant with EU State Aid rules.

The ECNI has recently submitted a discussion paper to my Department and this will be the basis for future consideration of the issue.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Participation in Rugby

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps she is taking to increase participation in rugby.

(AQW 17879/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Responsibility for taking steps to increase participation in rugby rests, in the first instance, with the governing body for the sport, the Irish Rugby Football Union, Ulster Branch. Having said that, my Department's strategy for sport, Sport Matters, identifies a number of high level targets aimed at increasing participation rates in sport generally, including rugby. To help achieve these targets, a Sport Matters Action Plan has been developed which outlines the key actions and steps being taken to achieve the Sport Matters participation targets. This Action Plan is published on the Sport NI website and Ulster Rugby is one of the contributors to the plan.

In addition, and in line with the Sport Matters Action Plan, Sport NI is supporting Ulster Rugby in the employment of a Participation Manager whose work focuses on improving rugby club structures, club capacity and participation in the sport. Sport NI is also supporting a Women's Development Officer for Ulster Rugby who is responsible for developing the game and increasing participation amongst girls and women from grassroots to senior level. Furthermore, under the Regional Stadiums Programme, £14.7m has been earmarked for Ulster Rugby to assist in redeveloping Ravenhill Rugby ground. The development of this facility is expected to enhance the sustainability of Rugby in the longer term and so encourage more people to take up the sport.

Salmon and Sea Trout Stocks

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how (i) her Department; and (ii) the Loughs Agency is protecting salmon and sea trout stocks along the sea shore.

(AQW 26581/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 as amended gives my Department responsibility for the conservation and protection of salmon and inland fisheries in its jurisdiction. My officials carry out a range of functions including enforcement activities to ensure compliance with domestic and European legislation and with commitments to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation.

My Department has consulted widely on a range of additional conservation measures to protect salmon and sea trout in coastal and inland waters and the draft legislation is currently being prepared. The legislation will include proposals to bring about a mandatory cessation of commercial salmon and sea trout netting in coastal waters off the DCAL jurisdiction.

The work carried out by Loughs Agency for salmon and sea trout conservation is to ensure domestic and European legislative obligations are complied with, and international treaty obligations are honoured.

The Loughs Agency has dedicated protection and conservation staff, consisting of Fishery Officers and Fishery Inspectors, in the Foyle and Carlingford catchments.

These staff enforce a suite of regulations in relation to the protection of salmon and sea trout, for both coastal and inland fishing, in these areas, and they carry out annual work programmes including scientific surveys, habitat improvement and reinstatement.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail her Department's plans for the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQW 26731/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for the Giro d'Italia rests with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. However, my Department and Sport NI are represented on a number of key groups, established to provide support to the delivery of the Giro d'Italia 'Big Start' in the north of Ireland next year.

These groups include the NI Steering Committee, NI Activation Committee, the Race Committee and the cycling sub group.

Through representation on these groups, DCAL and Sport NI will be contributing to the organisation and delivery of all aspects of the Giro d'Italia 'Big Start' such as technical requirements of the event, community involvement and legacy outcomes.

Supporting the Success of Local Cyclists at World Level

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department plans to build on, and support, the success of local cyclists at world level.

(AQW 26734/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, continues to build on, and support the success of local talented cyclists through the provision of funding to the governing body, Cycling Ireland, under the Athlete Investment Programme.

Over the past three financial years (up to 31 March 2013) total funding of £660,778 has been provided to the sport of cycling.

In addition, the Sports Institute NI (SINI), which is supported by my Department, provides specialist support to local, talented cyclists in the form of Sports Medicine, Physiology, Performance Skills, including lifestyle management, Performance Analysis and Strength and conditioning.

While responsibility for the Giro d'Italia rests with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, my Department and Sport NI are represented on a number of key groups, established to provide support to the organisation and delivery of the Giro d'Italia 'Big Start' in the north of Ireland next year. My Department is also considering opportunities to maximise outcomes from the legacy of the Giro d'Italia for local communities within the north of Ireland.

SINI will also support a number of cyclists in preparation for the Commonwealth Games.

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 26950/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The DCAL Disability Action Plan is an illustration of my department's on-going commitment to the promotion of equality for disabled people, and complements the Departmental Equality Scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Plan, through the completion of actionable measures, outlines the Department's proposals for fulfilling its statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995). I am committed to harnessing the transformative power of culture, arts and leisure to deliver step changes and a lasting social and economic transformation for all of the people of the North. My Department's Business Plan emphasises my commitment to the promotion of equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion across all sections of society.

DCAL supports a wide range of statutory bodies which are designated public authorities in their own right and are required to produce their own Disability Action Plans. The DCAL DAP therefore relates

only to the activities of the core department and more information on the arts, creative industries, museums, libraries, language and sport will feature in the published plans of our Arms Length Bodies (ALBs).

It is widely recognised that participation in culture, arts and leisure activities has the potential to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities by enhancing mental well being, providing opportunities for social interaction and assisting in the development of communication skills. The DAPs contain a range of measures designed to improve accessibility to culture, arts and leisure for people with disabilities. Other measures cover the provision of training and guidance to staff on disability and equality legislation and disability awareness. The Department has recently undertaken a 5 year review of its DAP which highlights the key outcomes and outputs achieved and outlines key priorities going forward. A copy is available on the Department's website at http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/draft_5_year_review_dcal_disability_action_plans__final_version_.doc

The Department provides details of progress on how it is fulfilling the disability duties by means of the Annual Report to the Equality Commission. There is a specific section on the disability duties within the report which is published on the Equality section of the DCAL website.

Numbers of Users in Libraries

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of users, broken down by year, in each library that opened in the last six years.

(AQW 27026/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI was formed in April 2009 and the figures are only available from this time. These are attached at Annex A.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA Annex A

Library	Project Description	Year	Active members				
			Apr-09	Apr-10	Apr-11	Apr-12	Apr-13
Antrim	New Build	2010	2,166	3,567	4,098	4,111	4,147
Ballymena Central	New Build	2007	8,081	8,108	7,070	7,471	7,406
Cookstown	New Build	2008	5,596	5,800	6,885	5,528	5,333
Draperstown	New Build	2013	846	888	798	968	937
Dungiven	New Build	2012	1,157	1,136	1,453	1,833	1,713
Grove	New Build	2007	1,644	1,186	2,360	2,460	2,444
Lisburn City	New Build	2007	12,359	12,182	10,981	12,169	12,029
Newtownstewart	Refurbishment	2010	432	649	559	664	602
Ballynahinch	Refurbishment	2011	2,442	2,378	1,733	2,292	2,246
Bangor Carnegie	Refurbishment	2008	11,191	13,456	9,924	11,399	10,575
Brownlow	Refurbishment	2011	2,043	2,290	2,088	2,079	1,977
Carrickfergus	Refurbishment	2011	5,399	5,344	6,766	6,065	5,839
Carryduff	Refurbishment	2011	1,325	1,256	1,225	1,236	1,150
Comber	Refurbishment	2012	2,720	2,515	2,292	2,488	2,324
Dromore	Refurbishment	2012	1,224	1,198	933	959	1,445

Library	Project Description	Year	Active members				
			Apr-09	Apr-10	Apr-11	Apr-12	Apr-13
Dungannon	Refurbishment	2012	5,800	6,148	11,824	4,854	6,193
Falls Road	Refurbishment	2011	1,932	2,008	3,072	2,206	2,573
Hollywood	Refurbishment	2010	3,301	3,260	2,606	3,006	3,029
Keady	Refurbishment	2010	1,395	1,313	1,424	1,630	1,614
Larne	Refurbishment	2013	4,140	4,319	4,058	4,095	3,689
Newry	Refurbishment	2011	7,281	7,579	5,714	6,985	7,124
Newtownards	Refurbishment	2012	4,463	4,174	3,452	3,949	3,508
Ormeau Road	Refurbishment	2012	3,863	3,822	3,451	3,465	3,955
Rathfriland	Refurbishment	2012	1,472	1,584	1,619	1,515	1,521
Shankill Road	Refurbishment	2012	1,797	1,929	1,715	1,900	1,991
Whitehead	Refurbishment	2010	1,358	1,314	1,531	1,619	1,487
Whiterock	Refurbishment	2012	1,263	1,203	882	1,548	1,754

New Library in Kilkeel

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the development of a new library in Kilkeel, including the expected completion date.

(AQW 27117/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The project to build a replacement library in Kilkeel commenced in March 2013. The initial construction phase is due to last for 10 months, ending in December 2013.

The library's furniture, stock and other equipment is to be installed during December and January with the new library on course to be opened to the public in February 2014.

Hydroelectric Schemes: Fish Stocks

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assessment has been made of the overall impact of hydroelectric schemes on fish stocks.

(AQW 27205/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL are routinely consulted as part of the process for DOE planning applications involving hydroelectric schemes and Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) abstraction licence applications.

Each application is assessed by a Technical Assessment Group consisting of senior DCAL fisheries officers and AFBI fisheries scientists. Proposals are assessed on compliance with the relevant sections of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 (as amended) and the potential impact of abstraction operations on the fisheries ecology and fish migratory behaviour, both within and above the depleted stretch of the river.

Fish passage arrangements are assessed in operation before approval under Section 54 of the above Fisheries Act is granted. DCAL Fisheries technical staff also undertakes physical inspections of abstraction operations to determine compliance with relevant fisheries protection sections of the Act.

Outsourcing of Department's Functions

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she intends to outsource any of her Department's functions in a bid to achieve efficiencies.

(AQW 27255/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have no plans to outsource any of my Department's functions in a bid to achieve efficiencies.

Sports and Partial Sports Facilities: Funding

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 26411/11-15, for a breakdown of the funding received by each sports or partial sports facility, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27360/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided total Exchequer funding of £5,620,921 for sports or partial sports facilities in Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and West Tyrone in the last five years up to 31 March 2013. A table showing the breakdown of this amount is attached at Annex A.

Annex A

Fermanagh and South Tyrone

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Project Title	Total
2008/09	Brookeborough Heber McMahon GAC	Places for Sport	Reconstruction of full size GAA grass pitch.	68,987
	Derrygonnelly Harps GFC	Places for Sport	Construction of full size GAA grass pitch	142,302
	Derrylin O'Connells GAA	Places for Sport	Construction of a natural turf pitch	137,604
	Fermanagh District Council	Places for Sport	Upgrade of indoor sports hall floor at Lakeland Forum	40,082
	Tempo Maguire's GAC	Building Sport	4 room changing pavilion	245,000
2009/10	Aghadrumsee St Macartan's GFC	Places for Sport	Construction of a full size GAA pitch (138m x 88m) with fencing	205,704
	Aghaloo O'Neills GFC	Places for Sport	New grass (sand carpet) training pitch with floodlights	245,000
	An Maigh Tir Na nOg GAC	Places for Sport	Floodlighting to training pitch	97,329
	Ballinamallard United FC	Places for Sport	Floodlighting to main full size pitch	132,978
		Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities Programme	87,050
	Dungannon Golf Club	Awards For Sport	Introducing Golf to Schools, Girls specifically and Special needs Students	2,082

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Project Title	Total
	Dungannon RFC	Awards For Sport	PAD Programme (Player Analysis & Development Programme)	2,500
	Dungannon Swifts FC	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities	Soccer Strategy Playing Facilities Programme	232,000
	Dungannon Thomas Clarke GFC	Places for Sport	Construction of second full size grass pitch including floodlights and fencing,	226,675
	Eglish St Patricks GAC	Places for Sport	Construction of a full size grass pitch and floodlights	245,000
	Fermanagh District Council	Places for Sport	Bawnacre Centre - Construction of 3G pitch with floodlighting	172,702
2010/11	1st Aghnacloy Scouts	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Construction of a level play area for children	30,000
	Campa Chormic	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchase of portable goals and Hurling/Camogie equipment with trailer.	8,556
	Carrowshee Park/ Sylvan Hill Community Association	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchase of wheel away nets for Multisport use.	1,517
	Derrylin Boxing Club	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchase of a boxing ring, punch bags and additional boxing associated equipment.	8,959
	Dungannon RFC	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchasing of performance analysis equipment to help develop the performance players at Dungannon RFC.	3,801
	Dungannon Thomas Clarke GFC	Stadia Safety Urgent Works (Equipment)	Safety Equipment from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	29,628
		Stadia Safety Urgent Works (Infrastructure)	Infrastructure Works from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	17,483
	Enniskillen Gaels GAA	Stadia Safety Urgent Works (Equipment)	Safety Equipment from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	28,624
	Erne Paddlers	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchase of kayaking equipment	26,778

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Project Title	Total
2010/11	2010/11 Lisnaskea Rovers FC	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Football equipment packs	4,987
	North Fermanagh Cricket & FC	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Upgrade and extension of changing pavilion	29,830
	Ren Bu Kan Judo Club	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchase of portable mats for schools programme.	4,000
	St Molaise GAC (Irvinestown)	Stadia Safety Urgent Works (Infrastructure)	Infrastructure Works from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	28,515
	The Sports Centre Management Group	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Purchase of 14 spin cycles	8,400
2011/12	Aughintober Regeneration	Sport Matters: Community Capital Programme	Construction of 3G synthetic pitch (70m x 40) with floodlights and fencing.	235,667
	Omagh District Rifle and Pistol Club	Sport Matters: Community Capital Programme	Replacement of nissen with a newly developed 25m full bore indoor shooting range plus electronic targeting systems and scoring systems to aid and improve performance. To inc kitchen, classroom, toilets.	245,000
2012/13	Portora Royal Grammar School	Ring Fenced	purchase of 1 coxless four / quadruple scull, 1 pairs/ double sculls, 2 coxboxes, 1 safety / coaching boats, 1 section of 14.3x2.4m launch jetty and 10 rowing machines / ergometers	50,000
Grand Total				3,044,740

West Tyrone

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Project Title	Total
2008/09	Dergview FC	Places for Sport	Installation of floodlighting to full size soccer grass pitch	152,084
	Drumragh Sarsfields GAC	Building Sport	2nd full-size floodlit pitch; and 2 storey four room changing pavilion with ancillary services.	798,000
	Strabane District Council	Building Sport	Upgrade of current pitch to a natural grass surface (with floodlights) and upgrade of small training area	175,585
2009/10	Beragh Clay Target Club	Awards For Sport	Beginners & Juniors Project (Upgrade)	3,200
	Beragh Red Knights GAC	Awards For Sport	Coaching Excellence	3,697
	Bready Cricket Club	Awards For Sport	Healthy Minds & Healthy Bodies	9,689
	Clann na nGael Aughnabrack	Places for Sport	Construction of a MUGA (70m x 40m) with floodlighting and fencing	235,000
	Dromore St Dymphna GFC	Building Sport	Reviewed application following rejection of original Stage 1 application BS/2528. 2nd training pitch with floodlighting and fencing.	230,000
	Drumragh Sarsfields GAC	Awards For Sport	From Cradle to Success	2,837
	Eskra Childcare Ltd	Awards For Sport	Develop Multi-use Games Area	10,000
2009/10	Eskra Community Association	Awards For Sport	Eskra Fitness Suite	10,000
	Fintona Pearses GAC	Places for Sport	Construction of a full size training grass pitch (136mx86m) with floodlights.	245,000
	Omagh Boys and Girls Club	Awards For Sport	Multisport training facility	4,500
	Omagh Golf Club	Awards For Sport	Junior and Ladies Golf Development Project	3,310

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Project Title	Total
	Omagh Youth & Community Trust	Places for Sport	Construct a multi purpose training facility to accommodate boxing and a range of fitness programmes.	192,700
	St Eugenes GAC (Castlederg)	Awards For Sport	Staying Active Staying Well Programme	1,285
		Places for Sport	Construction of a 4 changing room pavilion.	220,000
	St Eugene's GFC	Awards For Sport	Newtownstewart St Eugene's Fit For Life	2,500
	Strabane District Council	Places for Sport	Upgrade of existing athletic track at Melvin Sports Complex.	112,439
	Tattyreagh St Patrick's GAC	Awards For Sport	Community Fitness Suite	9,600
	Tyrone GAA County Board	Awards For Sport	1. Promoting and developing Gaelic Games at all levels within the County. 2. Enhancing the performance of our elite athletes	7,300
2010/11	Aghyaran Development Association	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Community GYM project.	30,000
	Dromore Education & Community Partnership	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Equipment - Provision of Spin Bikes for schools programme and community programme	9,432
	Newtownstewart Golf Club	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Construction of natural turf short games skills practice area	8,490
	Omagh Academicals RFC	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Upgrade of changing facilities to include 2 female changing	29,234
	Omagh Golf Club	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Golf teaching bays, ball dispenser,	29,959

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Project Title	Total
2011/12	Omagh Riding For The Disabled Association	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Upgrade and relaying of riding arena from sand to rubber surface and purchase of show jumps.	9,024
	St Enda's (Omagh)	Stadia Safety Urgent Works (Equipment)	Safety Equipment from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	6,460
		Stadia Safety Urgent Works (Infrastructure)	Infrastructure Works from Stadia Safety Urgent Works Programme	24,856
	Strabane Athletic FC	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	Applicant received storage container from TNOC	0
Grand total				2,576,181

Cultural Awareness Strategy

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action she has taken as part of the Cultural Awareness Strategy.

(AQO 4846/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department provides funding up to £37,500 per annum for each of the two projects over the 3 year Cultural Awareness Strategy which seeks to reduce distrust and misunderstanding by:

- delivering 4 events to organisations/groups linked to their declared community but outside of its own membership;
- delivering 8 events to organisations/groups linked to the other cultural tradition funded by this strategy; and
- all events must be open to persons of all Section 75 categories.

Under the umbrella of my Department's Strategy the two organisations continue to engage in positive dialogue with each other when delivering their projects and have organised and delivered their first joint good relations event. I was delighted to attend and open the event which was delivered in March 2013 at the Magee Campus in Derry under the City of Culture celebrations to local school children in year 11 and above. Plans are under way for the organisations' second joint good relations event which I look forward to.

Angling

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given the success of the recent World Youth Trout Angling Competition, for an update on any plans to have similar angling events, particularly using Loughmacrory.

(AQO 4838/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department was pleased to support the 12th World Youth Fly Fishing Championships, which were held at a number of angling venues across Ireland. The event was a major success and attracted teams, managers and supporters from across the globe, including South Africa, the United States, France and Poland, with a resultant benefit for the local economy.

This was also the first fishing competition in which the three regulatory bodies for angling in Ireland, DCAL, the Loughs Agency and Inland Fisheries Ireland, came together to showcase the angling product

in Ireland. I was pleased that Lough Macrory was one of the six locations used in the Championships. The Lough offers excellent facilities for local and visiting anglers and I am keen that we use this venue in future events.

My officials will continue to work closely with colleagues in the Loughs Agency, Inland Fisheries Ireland and Tourism Ireland to promote fishing and in utilising the excellent facilities available.

Irish Language Academy

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the proposal for an Academy for the Irish Language, specifically whether the proposals include a building where the Academy will be based.

(AQO 4843/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have commissioned a feasibility study to examine the possibility of establishing an Irish Language Academy.

The study will consider the strategic rationale for creating an Irish Language Academy, its potential role and the process through which it might be established. The study will assess ways in which the proposed Academy could complement the work of other Irish Language organisations and colleges and a potential location.

The study will also consider how the Academy could:

- Make the Irish Language more accessible to all.
- Establish a uniform spoken curriculum which provides consistency in content, teaching strategies, resources and assessment across the north.
- Address the gap in provision of the development of the Irish Language on a non-academic basis.
- Address the discrepancy between knowledge of the language and spoken usage.
- Provide support to the parents of Irish-medium children.
- Provide training, resources, quality assurance for Irish language classes across the north.
- Contribute to reducing poverty and addressing social exclusion.

The study will commence by the end of October and will take 6 -8 weeks to complete.

A detailed Business Case will then be developed to identify a preferred option and secure the necessary funding.

Arts Funding

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department, or the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, has met with the BBC since the Director General announced a 20 per cent increase in television funding for the arts.

(AQO 4844/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Neither myself nor the Arts Council have met with the BBC since the Director General's announcement on 6 October. At this early stage we don't have any specific information about the impact on local programme-making and other BBC activities in the North of Ireland. I have, however, asked the BBC to keep me updated on developments, including any new funding and/or creative opportunities.

I have had a series of meetings with stakeholders including BBC NI to discuss how the commissioning of locally made programmes can be increased and how opportunities for local companies in this area might be improved.

It is my intention to hold a symposium in early/mid 2014 to bring broadcasters and the creative industries sector together to help connect companies and create cohesiveness within the sector.

Catch and Release Legislation

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has reached a decision in relation to controlling the return of injured and damaged fish to waters, through her mandatory Catch and Release legislation, due to be implemented in 2014.

(AQO 4845/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials are currently assessing the responses submitted as part of the recent consultation on draft legislation on salmon conservation measures which closed on 27 September 2013. This will inform the draft legislation that will be brought before this house in the near future.

In relation to the matter of injured or damaged fish, the current guidance issued by my Department on catch and release for salmon indicates that all salmon caught should be returned to the water, regardless of condition. If this advice is followed, any fish that do not survive will be the subject of natural processes within the river.

I believe that this position provides the best protection for our salmon stocks in that there is no grey area that may be exploited by the small minority of individuals who would wish to continue killing salmon.

Windsor Park

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the redevelopment of Windsor Park.

(AQO 4847/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Provided that significant delays around any legal challenges are avoided and IFA provide assurance to DCAL that appropriate governance and accountability structures are in place, then the Windsor Park development can remain on programme.

The IFA IST tenders were returned on 23rd September 2013 and are currently being assessed with a view to appointing the contractor in the near future, subject to the necessary assurances being received around IFA governance.

Sporting Events

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the efforts her Department is currently making to secure major sporting events.

(AQO 4848/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department continues to work closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI), who have responsibility, in the first instance, for the funding of events – including major sports events. For example, my Department and Sport NI have key roles to play with regard to the local arrangements for the Giro d'Italia next year. I have also been in discussions with DETI and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) to see how we can all work together to bring the Rugby World Cup to Ireland in the future.

In addition, Sport NI's International Sports Events Programme, a one year pilot programme, will provide funding totalling just over £200k to support six international events being held here during this financial year. This purpose of this programme is to complement the funding already provided by DETI.

We have proved already that we can stage world-class events, the World Police and Fire Games (WPPFG) was the largest sporting event ever held in the north of Ireland. We have a lot to look forward to in the future, especially with the ongoing development of our new stadia at Ravenhill, Casement Park and Windsor Park. However, we also have to be realistic for our future aspirations.

As a first step, and to build on the success of the WPPFG, the Senior Sports Coordinator responsible for the WPPFG will be carrying out work on my behalf in the coming months which will include identifying further opportunities for major sporting events. He will report back to me in early 2014.

iPad Scheme

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has any plans for the further development of the iPad scheme for areas of multiple deprivation.

(AQO 4850/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During this financial year my Department will provide start-up support to several pilot community initiatives across Belfast to highlight the benefit of mobile technologies in supporting numeracy, literacy, lifelong learning and health and wellbeing.

Digital technologies and innovative approaches to learning can transform the way young people engage with education and formal learning. The initial pilot in Lower Falls is helping several primary schools to introduce new approaches to transforming the confidence and motivation of children.

Other projects in development will test similar approaches to enhancing the education, social and emotional skills of pupils and involve parents and communities. These will support activities inside and outside the classroom and stimulate broader community based approaches.

All these projects will be supported by my Department's learning strategy and will involve the resources and activities of sponsored bodies across the DCAL family.

Angling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the plans she has to deal with unlicensed angling at departmental controlled waters.

(AQO 4851/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department is empowered through the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 to protect and conserve salmon and inland fisheries throughout the DCAL jurisdiction. Under this legislation any individual fishing any water across the North is required to be in possession of an appropriate licence and failure to do so constitutes an offence.

DCAL Fisheries Protection Officers undertake regular patrols on land, rivers, lakes and coastal areas throughout the DCAL operational area. They also carry out intelligence led operations, to detect, disrupt and deter those involved in illegal fishing activities.

In the case of the Public Angling Estate waters controlled by my Department, Fisheries Protection Officers also check that anglers are in possession of an appropriate DCAL permit and regulations governing methods of fishing and size and bag limits are adhered to.

My staff also work closely with local angling clubs, many of which have Private Water Bailiffs, and play an important role in supporting the Department in combating illegal fishing activities.

Common Funding Formula

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on any discussions she has had with the Minister of Education on the proposals within the Putting Pupils First: Reforming the Common Funding Scheme regarding Sports and Premises, whereby the proposed new Common Funding Formula would distribute funding according to pupil, rather than institutional, need.

(AQO 4849/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have had no discussions with the Minister of Education on the Department of Education's proposals within the 'Putting Pupils First' policy. However, my Department continues to work collaboratively with the Department of Education (DE) through the Sport Matters Strategy.

DE is represented on the Sport Matters Monitoring Group which meets twice a year and which I chair. As a result of these meetings, it has been agreed that DE and Sport NI will work together to provide advice to schools and organisations with the aim of improving community use of school facilities. In taking this forward, separate, but complementary, guidance documents are currently being prepared by

Sport NI and DE and I hope, along with Minister O'Dowd, to make these publicly available before the end of the year.

Department of Education

Common Funding Formula: Input from Schools

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether he will extend the consultation period on the proposed changes to the common funding formula to allow for greater input from schools.
(AQW 26491/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Consultation on the proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme was launched on 26 June and was due to close on 18 October 2013.

I agreed to extend the consultation period for a further week until Friday, 25 October. I am delighted at the very high level of response to this consultation. It is important that voices are heard and that has clearly happened.

Common Funding Formula: Schools

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what formula has been used to calculate the financing of schools under the proposed changes to the Common Funding Formula.
(AQW 26711/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the proposals for changes to the Common Funding Scheme were detailed in the letters to schools and consultees and within the Reform of the Common Funding Scheme Consultation documentation – these documents are also available on the Department's website www.deni.gov.uk/june-2013-common-funding-scheme-consultation.

The existing Common Funding Formula, incorporating my proposed changes as outlined in the consultation document, was used as the basis for calculating indicative budgets for schools.

These indicative budgets - made available as part of the consultation documentation, used the same data (including pupil data from the October 2012 schools' census) that was used to calculate actual budgets for schools in the 2013/14 financial year. The indicative budgets include my proposals for change as detailed in the consultation documentation and which can be accessed via the website.

Education Other Than at School Facilities

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of referrals to Education Other Than At School facilities in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) Education and Library Board area; and (ii) referral type.
(AQW 26898/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) vary between each Education and Library Board and all Boards hold this information in different formats. The number of referrals by each Board over the last five years, broken down by the referral categories they utilise, is detailed below.

Referrals to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) within the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) by referral type.

Categories of referrals are:

- 1 children with **medical needs including mental health needs**; and
- 2 children with **social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties including those expelled from school**.

Category Number	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
1	596	881	745	848	932
2	269	245	201	194	186
Totals	865	1126	946	1042	1118

Referrals to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) within the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) by referral type.

Categories of referrals are:

- 1 Children with medical needs including mental health needs; and
- 2 Children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Category Number	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013 - date
1	61	204	163	178	74
2	0	49	69	59	0
Totals	61	253	232	237	74

Referrals to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) within the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) by referral type.

Categories of referrals are:

- 1 Year 11 pupils who are currently out of mainstream education and are not registered with a school:
 - Students who are expelled; and
 - Students who are on tuition due to an inability to secure an appropriate school placement.
- 2 Year 11 pupils who are at risk of, or in the process of being expelled;
 - Students for whom a pre-expulsion consultation meeting has taken place; and / or
 - Students who have received significant NEELB Behaviour Support Services at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice.
- 3 Year 11 pupils who are persistent absentees with an attendance below 60% in the preceding two terms. Priority will be given to students who are the subject of Education Supervision Orders.
- 4 Year 11 Pupils who have been referred by other statutory agencies.

Category Number	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
1	6	4	11	11	8
2	34	24	19	17	14
3	20	20	19	17	13
4	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	60	48	49	45	35

Referrals to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) within the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) by referral type.

Categories of referrals are:

- 1 children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties;
- 2 children who have been expelled from school and failed to access a new school place; and
- 3 children not registered with a school.

Category Number	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013 - date
1	131	128	104	105	63
2	3	2	5	5	2
3	4	0	1	1	0
Totals	138	130	110	111	65

Referrals to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) within the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) by referral type.

Categories of referrals are:

- 1 children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties; and
- 2 children who have been expelled from school and failed to access a new school place.

Category Number	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
1	186	204	165	136	122
2	10	8	13	16	21
Totals	196	212	178	152	143

Education Other Than at School Facilities

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to detail the categories of referrals to Education Other Than At School facilities; and how success is measured for each child and facility.

(AQW 26899/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) vary between each Education and Library Board. All Boards monitor and measure the progress of each EOTAS pupil against a range of criteria, using these to determine the success of the placement for the individual child and, when aggregated, to assess the overall effectiveness of each EOTAS centre. As the criteria, again, vary between the Boards, details of the information provided by each is included below.

Within the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) the categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) are:

- 1 Children with medical needs including mental health needs; and
- 2 Children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties including those expelled from school.

Measures of Success within BELB.

The success of the EOTAS facilities are subject to inspection by ETI. In addition, all BELB managed services and community providers with whom the board has a service level agreement, provide reports on individual pupil progress on a monthly basis to the Options Panel, BELB for their consideration.

Success is based on improved attendance, improved engagement with the education process, enhanced attainments, external accreditation and improved relationships with others. The Options Panel also monitors placement following yr 12 where success criteria is based on the young people gaining employment and/or continuing education. An annual report on EOTAS provision is prepared for board members.

Within the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) the categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) are:

- 1 Children with medical needs including mental health needs; and
- 2 Children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Measures of Success within SEELB.

- Provision for Learning.
- Leadership and Management.
- Engagement and achievements awarded in the curriculum appropriate to ability and time available.
- Participation in support services offered.
- Participation and achievement in extra curricular activities appropriate to their individual needs.
- Preparation for the future, engagement with the careers service, world of work etc.
- Improvement in self esteem, group participation and independent learning skills etc.

Within the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), the categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) are:

- 5 Year 11 pupils who are currently out of mainstream education and are not registered with a school:
 - Students who are expelled; and
 - Students who are on tuition due to an inability to secure an appropriate school placement.
- 6 Year 11 pupils who are at risk of, or in the process of being expelled;
 - Students for whom a pre-expulsion consultation meeting has taken place; and / or
 - Students who have received significant NEELB Behaviour Support Services at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice.
- 7 Year 11 pupils who are persistent absentees with an attendance below 60% in the preceding two terms. Priority will be given to students who are the subject of Education Supervision Orders.
- 8 Year 11 Pupils who have been referred by other statutory agencies.

Measures of success within NEELB.

The programme across the various types of EOTAS provision is developed and teaching differentiated to support the individual needs and abilities of each pupil.

Success measured for each pupil:

- Level of engagement/attendance;
- Participation in range of opportunities provided through the programme;
- Development of personal social vocational and lifeskills;
- Increase in self-esteem and self confidence;
- Progression in core skill areas;
- Clarification of career path/positive destinations after leaving;

- Qualifications obtained;
- Development and progress of targets identified in Individual Behaviour Plans, IEPs which are reviewed & monitored regularly through the statutory functions and processes of the SEN Code of Practice;
- Centre daily/weekly/term reporting systems;
- Liaising & review arrangements in place between schools and service; and
- The use of assessment tools e.g. Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS) 2

Success of Facility measured in terms of:

- Quality, range and breadth of physical resources available, both internal and external;
- Safety considerations - proximity to road, site location;
- Affordability/Value for money (Priority to Board owned premises);
- Accessibility;
- Neutrality;
- Potential for further development; and
- Review and monitoring systems in place through the Managers of Behaviour Support Service meetings.

Within the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) the categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) are:

1. Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
2. Children who have been expelled and failed to access a new school place.

Measures of Success within SELB.

Success is measured for each young person by the creation of an individual behaviour or education plan, which includes specific targets. The targets are regularly reviewed and scored. Areas of success which are measured include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Engagement in learning | ■ Self monitoring skills |
| ■ Adjustment to learning environment | ■ Emotional stability |
| ■ Age appropriate awareness and knowledge of self | ■ On task behaviour |
| ■ Skills to make and maintain relationships | ■ Compliance |
| ■ Appropriate relationships with peers | ■ Independent learning. |
| ■ Appropriate relationships with adults | ■ Connection with peers |
| ■ Engagement with family members | ■ Appropriate self-esteem, resilience and confidence enabling reintegration |
| ■ Engage in social situations | ■ Curricular attainments/progress |
| ■ Awareness of behavioural outcomes | ■ Achievement of external assessments |

Success for each facility is measured by young people attendance, engagement and progress on targets. Success is evidenced by:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Baseline assessment/retest results | ■ Examination results |
| ■ Pupil/parent/school comments | ■ Results of accredited achievements |
| ■ Survey results | ■ ETI inspection report |
| ■ Attendance figures | ■ Changes in behaviour and attitudes |

Within the Western Eastern Education and Library Board (WELB) the categories of referral to Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) are:

- 1 Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- 2 Children who have been expelled and failed to access a new school place.

Measures of Success within WELB.

Success is measured for each young person by the creation of an individual behavior or education plan, which includes specific targets. The targets are regularly reviewed and scored. Areas of success which are measured include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Engagement in learning | ■ Self-monitoring skills |
| ■ Adjustment to learning environment | ■ Emotional stability |
| ■ Age appropriate awareness and knowledge of self | ■ On task behaviour |
| ■ Skills to make and maintain relationships | ■ Compliance |
| ■ Appropriate relationships with peers | ■ Independent learning. |
| ■ Appropriate relationships with adults | ■ Connection with peers |
| ■ Engagement with family members | ■ Appropriate self-esteem, resilience and confidence enabling reintegration |
| ■ Engage in social situations | ■ Curricular attainments/progress |
| ■ Awareness of behavioural outcomes | ■ Achievement of external assessments |

Success for each facility is measured by young people attendance, engagement and progress on targets. Success is evidenced by:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Baseline assessment/retest results | ■ Examination results |
| ■ Pupil/parent/school comments | ■ Results of accredited achievements |
| ■ Survey results | ■ ETI inspection report |
| ■ Attendance figures | ■ Changes in behaviour and attitudes |

Preparations for Winter Conditions

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what preparations his Department has made for potentially difficult winter conditions.

(AQW 26914/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In preparation for winter 2013/14 the Department of Education's Estate Operations Team (EOT) has protocols in place and will be confirming emergency contact details with the five Education and Library Boards and obtaining a signed Severe Weather Impact Assurance Statement. During any periods of severe weather EOT liaise with the Department's Civil Contingencies Group (NI) representative to appraise them of all issues within the schools estate.

The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have produced guidance for schools, parents and school transport companies in relation to the safety of eligible pupils during periods of adverse weather conditions. The guidance includes ensuring that:

- the provider checks the latest weather forecast and prevailing conditions before setting out;
- drivers are equipped with a means to contact base/schools/Boards (e.g., mobile phones) and are aware of the numbers to call; and
- in the event of being unable to complete a journey, drivers/providers are advised to inform the school and the ELB. They are also advised to return children to their home if supervision is present or otherwise to remain with the children.

The ELBs will maintain effective communication links with all relevant agencies and with the media who provide the public with details of significant school closures as a result of bad weather conditions.

I understand that Translink which is contracted to provide school transport services has also reviewed and updated its extreme weather procedures and implemented a bus fleet engineering winterisation programme. Distribution of salt, de-icing and snow clearing products has also been reviewed and an early warning strategy has also been put in place to ensure that Translink is notified as soon as possible of school closures.

At school level, schools should have in place an action plan which details how their school will deal with any exceptional closures which may arise during the school year due to extreme weather conditions such as severe cold weather or flooding. Each year the Department of Education writes to schools during the first term of the school year to remind them of this requirement and to ask that they review their plan well in advance of the onset of adverse weather. This year this reminder was also issued via C2k's teacher exchange.

Schools have also been reminded about the availability on the Department's website of a Principal's Checklist. Produced by the Working Group on School Opening and Closures Arrangements which was established following the severe weather back in 2010, this checklist, developed in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officers from the Education and Library Boards, outlines the main factors that Principals need to consider when making decisions about a possible school closure.

From the 2013/14 school year, schools can avail of a texting service which could help with school communication with parents and teachers. This service is available through the C2k ICT managed service for all schools. Schools can purchase texts in advance from the text service provider.

Provision for Schools: Emergency Repairs

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what provision his Department has in place for schools that need emergency repairs, such as rotten floors or leaking roofs.

(AQW 26919/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Education and library Boards are responsible for the maintenance of schools in the controlled and maintained sectors. Each board has a documented procedure by which schools report emergency situations using a helpline.

As part of their total maintenance budget each board has a response maintenance budget to meet the cost of emergency repairs. In the June 2013 Monitoring Round I was successful in obtaining an additional earmarked £10m for maintenance bringing the total 2013/14 maintenance budget to £47.04m.

Maintenance of Voluntary Grammar (VGS) and Grant Maintained Integrated

(GMI) schools is primarily the responsibility of the schools themselves, with the cost being met from the schools' recurrent budget.

Cycling Proficiency in Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what provision is available in (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools for the teaching of cycling proficiency.

(AQW 26933/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) Area of Learning at primary level and the Learning for Life and Work (LLW) Area of Learning at post-primary level pupils are provided with the opportunity to learn about road safety. However, the specifics of what is taught under each Area of Learning is a matter for each teacher/school, this would include any decision to offer cycling proficiency.

The Cycling Proficiency Scheme is offered by the Department of Environment (DOE) to every primary school in the north of Ireland. In February each year DOE's Road Safety Education Officers write to

every primary and special school to promote the scheme. Approximately 62% (539) Primary Schools with an average of 8,365 children are trained through the Cycling Proficiency Scheme each year. It is delivered mostly to children in Primary 7, although some schools do offer the scheme to Primary 6 and occasionally Primary 5 children. The Department of Environment does not currently offer cycling safety training in post primary schools. The decision to take up the offer of the Cycling Proficiency Scheme lies with individual schools.

Phoenix Integrated Primary School, Cookstown

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed building work at Phoenix Integrated Primary School, Cookstown.

(AQW 27020/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since the initial work was approved the school has requested a number of additional modifications to the scheme including additional teaching space, alterations to the dining room and an extension to the multi-purpose hall.

As the school must comply with Public Procurement Policy and Guidance on increasing professional fees as directed by the Procurement Board and the Central Procurement Directorate within the Department of Finance and Personnel, the latest request for modification must be progressed as a Single tender action. A business case requesting approval to this course of action outlining value for money benefits and continuity of the works has been compiled and is under consideration.

Experienced Teachers Returning to Employment

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education what assistance is offered to experienced teachers returning to seek employment locally, who due to their age and higher pay scale, are having difficulties securing any temporary or permanent teaching positions.

(AQW 27077/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: While the Department of Education does not employ teachers in the north of Ireland and therefore does not manage the recruitment of teachers in schools, my Department has for many years encouraged schools to employ either newly qualified teachers or experienced non-retired teachers. The appointment of teaching staff should be based on merit and suitability for the post and adhere to equal opportunities and fair employment legislation. In addition to applying for temporary and permanent posts advertised in the local media and on recruitment websites, teachers returning to the north of Ireland should register with the General Teaching Council NI and the NI Substitute Teachers Register in order to avail of possible substitute teaching opportunities. The Department's funding of substitute teachers creates a financial incentive for schools to employ non-retired teachers when compared to prematurely retired teachers.

Educational Psychology Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail any Memoranda of Understanding, or other agreed guidelines or terms of reference, between the educational psychology service and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's educational psychology service.

(AQW 27096/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Whilst I am not aware of there being any educational psychologists employed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), there are no current Memoranda of Understanding, or other agreed guidelines or terms of reference in place between the education and library boards' educational psychology services and any psychologists employed by DHSSPS.

Education and Library Boards: Statementing

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education to detail the change in the average time taken for the statementing of children in each Education and Library Board area, over the last three years.

(AQW 27144/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that the average number of weeks taken for statementing children, excluding valid exceptions, in the last three academic years is as follows:-

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
BELB	22	22	21
NEELB	20	19	20
SEELB	21	23	24
SELB	21	20	22
WELB	22	23	22

Provision for A Level Irish

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Education whether he will take steps to make provision for A Level Irish to be available to students.

(AQW 27151/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) currently offers A level Irish which is targeted at students who have English as their first language. To date, CCEA has not received any representation regarding the provision of an A level qualification solely targeted at students whose first language is Irish, but would be happy to consider any approach.

Staff: Annual Increments

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when employers submitted the appropriate documentation to his Department to obtain the necessary approvals to pay staff's annual increments, due in April 2013.

(AQW 27165/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The 2013 pay award for the majority of non-teaching staff was agreed in July 2013. My Department is working with its Arms Length Bodies to gather the relevant information for the 2013/14 pay remits.

Education and Library Board: Staff Annual Increments

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when his Department submitted the appropriate documentation to the Department of Finance and Personnel for approval to pay Education and Library Board staff's annual increments, due in April 2013.

(AQW 27166/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The 2013 pay award for Education and Library Board non-teaching staff was agreed in July 2013. My Department is working with the Education and Library Boards to gather the relevant information for the 2013/14 pay remits. The appropriate documentation will be submitted to DFP for approval to pay Education and Library Board staff's annual increments, due in April 2013, as soon as possible.

Membership of the Strategic Funding Panels

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 25907/11-15, how the composition of the strategic funding panels was determined.

(AQW 27167/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Strategic Funding Panels are subgroups of the five area Childcare Partnerships (CCPs) which are co-ordinated through the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB). The CCPs are multi-agency forums comprising a range of relevant organisations working in childcare and family support with children aged 0-14 years and their families.

The Strategic Funding Panels comprise representation from key stakeholder sectors including health, social services, training and employment, education and the community and voluntary sector.

Applications for the DE Early Years Fund were previously considered by a single Regional Panel comprising representatives from the area CCP Strategic Funding Panels. For 2013/14 Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children (EYO) requested that all five area CCP Strategic Funding Panels should have a role in the assessment of applications. Due to the restructuring and establishment of the new Belfast and South Eastern CCPs (from the previous Eastern CCP), the new Strategic Funding Panels had not yet been established. A Panel was therefore convened from existing CCP members (for both areas) in order to consider the applications.

Staff vacancies in the Northern CCP area meant that an established Strategic Funding Panel was not available. Applications were considered by a group convened from existing CCP members.

Education and Library Boards: Classroom Assistants

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 25504/11-15, how many classroom assistants in each Education and Library Board have not yet signed up to have their posts evaluated. **(AQW 27168/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The number of classroom assistants currently employed by each Education and Library Board who have not yet opted to have their post evaluated is set out in the table below:

BELB	2
WELB	11
NEELB	0
SEELB	6
SELB	89
Total	108

Those who have left a classroom assistant post are also eligible to apply however employers are not legally obliged to seek them out. It is therefore not known how many leavers have not opted to have their old job is evaluated.

Strategic Funding Panels: Applications

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 26602/11-15, in instances where departmental officials do not directly advise the Strategic Funding Panels, who notifies the panels that projects must evidence financial need in their applications. **(AQW 27169/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The Early Years Fund is administered by Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children (EYO) on DE's behalf under Service Level Agreement.

EYO has advised that prior to assessment of the applications to the Fund in 2013-14, EYO communicated directly with the Chair of the area Childcare Partnerships to which the Strategic Funding Panels are accountable. The communication set out the focus of the assessment process which included the requirement for applicants to evidence financial need.

Back Pay for Nursery Assistants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education when the issue of back pay for nursery assistants will be resolved. **(AQW 27183/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the member to AQW 22152/11-15 published in the official report on 3 May 2013 which set out the delays in reaching an agreement with the trade unions on a composition of the job description for the post of Nursery Assistant.

Since this time, discussions between Management Side and Trade Union Side have continued and whilst a substantial level of agreement has been reached there are a small number of matters that still need to be resolved, most significantly in relation to claims that Nursery Assistants are required to provide a range of medical assistance to children.

Management Side have received support and advice from Early Years Specialists on all of these matters and are also currently undertaking an exercise to obtain practical examples of work undertaken by current Nursery Assistants from Nursery School Principals and Primary School Principals with Nursery Units that could accurately be reflected in a generic job description.

It is hoped that this exercise will assist in resolving the outstanding issues in relation to the job description. Once agreed, Trade Union Side will need to submit an associated job evaluation questionnaire and following evaluation of the post; any funding requirements will also need to be considered and relevant approvals sought. As previously advised, it is not possible to determine if back pay will arise until the evaluation is complete.

Federation and Confederation Model of Schooling

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to list the schools that operate, or plan to operate, under the (i) Federation; and (ii) Confederation model of schooling.

(AQW 27188/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The terms "Federation" and "Confederation" in the context of schools are not defined in law. However, the Policy for Sustainable Schools does contain descriptions as follows:-

Federation - involving small schools combining to form a single school with one principal and one Board of Governors but operating on two or more sites; &

Confederation – where schools of the same or different management types work in partnership, exchanging teachers, pupils or both, but with each retaining its own principal and Board of Governors. Schools may share specialist facilities and/or administrative staff.

Generally, a federation would represent significant changes to the schools concerned and as such would be governed by the statutory Development Proposal process. To date, there has been one Development Proposal for a federation. This was for St Joseph's Primary School, Glenullin and St Patrick's Primary School, Tirkeeran, Garvagh, and was approved in 2006.

There is currently a broad spectrum of levels of sharing and collaboration between schools and further, different models have been suggested as part of the area planning process. However, none of these are described as confederations.

There are specific collaborative arrangements currently in place for post-primary schools. All post-primary schools are members of an Area Learning Community (ALC), of which there are 30. These ALCs are not statutory bodies but enable local schools to work together, in conjunction with Further Education Colleges, to provide access to a wide range of engaging and economically relevant courses for pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16. This means that courses can be delivered collaboratively between schools and Colleges in a local area.

Catholic Maintained School: Transformation to Integrated Status

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education whether there are any legal obstacles that may prevent a Catholic Maintained School transforming to integrated status.

(AQW 27189/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No. Under Articles 68 and 90 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, any existing grant-aided school, except a special school, is eligible to transform to either grant-maintained or controlled integrated status.

Ministerial Advisory Group: Report on Shared Education

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education when he will respond to the recommendations contained within the Ministerial Advisory Group's report on shared education.

(AQW 27190/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I intend to make a Statement to the Assembly on 22 October on the recommendations made by the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education.

Area Based Plans: Closure of Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education how many of the post-primary schools identified for closure in the Area Based Plans have submitted development proposals for closure.

(AQW 27191/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The draft Post-primary area plans were published for public consultation in July 2012 and revised plans were released by the Education and Library Boards following my statement to the Assembly on 26 February 2013.

Development proposals for closure have been submitted for eight schools identified for closure in the plans. There have been four further development proposals submitted to the Department for amalgamations identified in the plans. These are listed in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 Development Proposals for Closure

DP No.	School Ref	School	ELB Area
215	1210266	Orangefield High School, Belfast	BELB
213	1230173	St Gemma's High School, Belfast	BELB
228	2230111	St Eugene's High School	WELB
229	2230181	St Peter's High School	WELB
263	3210013	Garvagh High School	NEELB
277	3210233	Ballee Community High School	NEELB
236	4210262	Dundonald HS	SEELB
296	5230160	St Brigid's High School, Armagh	SELB

Table 2 Development Proposals for Amalgamations

DP No.	School ref	Schools	ELB area
243	2210312 2210305 2210080	Enniskillen Controlled Post-primary School - Merger of Devenish College and Lisnaskea HS	WELB
278,279 280	3210200 3210279	Monkstown Community School & Newtownabbey Community HS	NEELB
237	4210086 4210183	Newtownbreda HS & Knockbreda HS	SEELB

DP No.	School ref	Schools	ELB area
291	5420056 5230070 5230088	St Michael's GS St Mary's Junior HS St Paul's Junior HS Lurgan	SELB

Beo School Based Project

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Education whether he is aware of the Beo school based project which originated in Donegal in 2009; and whether he intends to promote this project in local post-primary schools.

(AQW 27210/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware of the BEO music project and understand that projects such as this can enhance pupils music and Irish language learning.

The revised curriculum is designed to provide schools and teachers with greater flexibility over how they deliver the curriculum. My Department delegates as much funding and decision making as possible to schools, which are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils. It is very much a matter for schools themselves to reach a judgement on whether or not a resource or programme provided by an external body might enhance their teaching and learning. Accordingly, my Department does not endorse or recommend specific resources or programmes.

Organisations can contact schools directly to promote their programmes/projects via the schools data base which is available on the Department's website.

Schools Expenditure

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to detail the budget of (i) each Education and Library Board; (ii) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (iii) Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta; and (iv) the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, for (a) 2012; (b) 2013; (c) 2014; and (d) 2015; and to detail the expenditure, or estimated expenditure, of each of these organisations in these years.

(AQW 27256/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the Resource Budget and Expenditure for financial years 2011-12 to 2013-14 are provided in the table below:

Resource (£'000s)	Budget 2011/12	Expenditure 2011/12	Budget 2012/13	Expenditure 2012/13	Budget 2013/14
BELB	254,787	251,202	253,908	252,649	249,123
NEELB	317,680	313,067	310,267	307,970	308,524
SEELB	287,354	284,449	282,163	280,754	284,994
SELB	342,210	339,537	346,405	343,295	340,354
WELB	315,743	310,686	309,718	307,804	304,321
CCMS	4,170	4,128	3,163	3,141	3,262
CnaG	678	654	649	615	666
NICIE	652	643	643	638	646
Total	1,523,274	1,504,366	1,506,916	1,496,866	1,491,890

Details of the Capital Budget and Expenditure for financial years 2011-12 to 2013-14 are provided in the table below:

Capital	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure	Budget
(£'000s)	2011/12	2011/12	2012/13	2012/13	2013/14
BELB	19,029	18,381	17,072	15,928	22,240
NEELB	16,415	16,381	11,864	11,800	11,379
SEELB	10,704	9,565	9,340	9,089	14,162
SELB	12,362	12,244	11,032	10,497	8,434
WELB	5,361	5,026	8,723	8,538	11,299
CCMS	-	-	-	-	-
CnaG	-	-	-	1	-
NICIE	-	-	-	-	-
Total	63,871	61,597	58,031	55,853	67,514

Notes:

- 1 2013-14 figures are based on allocations made to date and further allocations are anticipated.
- 2 Budgets for both Resource and Capital have yet to be confirmed for 2014-15.

Common Funding Formula: Schools

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education to detail the amount that each school will gain or lose as a result of the Common Funding Formula, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 27267/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My proposals on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme are still out for consultation. I have not taken any final decisions on these proposals.

It is not possible therefore to provide figures on the budgets that will be made available to schools for next year, until these decisions are made. In addition, other factors, such as the increased Aggregated Schools' Budget (ASB) for next year, overall enrolment levels, the number of Free School Meal Entitled pupils, and the number of Newcomer and Traveller pupils etc will impact on funding levels at individual school level.

It is not possible therefore to project the levels of funding that will be available at individual school or pupil level in the incoming financial year.

It should be remembered that investment in schools is on the way up rather than on the way down. The ASB is set to increase by £15.8m next year and I have already announced my intention to inject an additional £30m into it over the next two years, targeted at social deprivation.

Actual allocations for the 2014-15 financial year will be notified to schools in the early part of 2014. They will reflect increases in the ASB in 2014-15, factors at individual school level as well as my final decisions on changes to the Common Funding Scheme.

Free School Meals: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 26066/11-15, to detail the number of Free School Meals in North Down compared to the total school enrolment.

(AQW 27313/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The most up-to-date figures for entitlement to free school meals relate to the 2012/13 school year, these are detailed in the tables overleaf. Updated 2013/14 figures will be available following the completion of the annual school census which will be carried out during October.

Pupils entitled to free school meals that are enrolled in schools in North Down 2012/13

School type	Total enrolment	Free school meal entitlement	% of pupils entitled to free school meals
Voluntary and private preschool centres	413	12	3%
Nursery schools	182	45	25%
Primary schools	7,109	1,523	21%
Post-primary schools	5,579	630	11%
Total	13,283	2,210	17%

Source: School census

Note:

- Figures include all pupils entitled to free school meals, including the nursery/preschool sector (whether free school meal or JSA). Special schools have not been included.

Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many Catholic Maintained schools have changed their status to Integrated in the last five years.

(AQW 27352/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No Catholic Maintained schools have transformed to Integrated status in the last five years.

Post-Primary Schools in the East Londonderry Constituency

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education which post-primary schools in the East Londonderry constituency will benefit from the appointment of additional teachers to help children with literacy and numeracy issues.

(AQW 27516/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The post-primary schools listed below have each been allocated one full-time equivalent teacher through the Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Project.

School

- Coleraine College
- Limavady High School
- North Coast Integrated College, Coleraine
- St Joseph's College, Coleraine
- St Mary's, Limavady
- St Patrick's College, Dungiven
- St Patrick's and St Brigid's High School, Claudy
- St Paul's College, Kilrea

Department for Employment and Learning

Community Groups: Educational Training

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail what grants are available for community groups to increase their capacity to deliver educational training.

(AQW 26853/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): My Department does not offer any grants to community groups to increase their capacity to deliver educational training. However, I understand that the Department for Social Development, through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, may consider funding where a priority need is identified within local Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans and where resources are available.

Youth Employment Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, to detail the results of the first year of the Youth Employment Scheme, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 26884/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information in relation to the Youth Employment Scheme is outlined in the attached table and reflects the position from the launch of the scheme until 4 October 2013. The information is collated on a local office rather than constituency basis.

Constituency	Served by Offices	Employer Agreements Signed	Opportunities Available	Young People taking up Placement	Young People Securing Employment
North Antrim	Ballymena Ballymoney	156	230	116	46
South Antrim	Antrim Newtownabbey	123	197	88	25
East Antrim	Larne Carrickfergus	112	146	79	20
East L'Derry	Coleraine Limavady	266	315	200	64
Foyle	Foyle Lisnagelvin	682	761	437	126
West Tyrone	Strabane Omagh	118	137	100	54
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Enniskillen Dungannon	158	209	106	75
Mid Ulster	Magherafelt Cookstown	99	128	71	37
Newry & Armagh	Newry Armagh	128	314	97	33
Upper Bann	Lurgan Portadown Banbridge	282	427	222	78

Constituency	Served by Offices	Employer Agreements Signed	Opportunities Available	Young People taking up Placement	Young People Securing Employment
South Down	Kilkeel Newcastle Downpatrick	144	190	75	15
Lagan Valley	Lisburn Ballynahinch	125	209	105	37
Strangford	Newtownards	56	102	50	23
North Down	Bangor	89	107	68	28
Belfast North	North Belfast	38	112	34	10
Belfast East	Hollywood Road	41	99	50	13
Belfast South	Knockbreda Shaftesbury Square	123	333	88	24
Belfast West	Falls Andersonstown Shankill	94	370	194	21
Total		2834	4386	2180	729

South West Regional College: Provision for Students with Mental Illness and Learning Disability

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 26194/11-15, to clarify why South West Regional College, in its response, included both categories of mental illness and learning disability when stating it had suitable provision, given the College has only provided for learning disabilities recently.

(AQW 26949/11-15)

Dr Farry: South West College provided details of provision across all campuses as requested by the Department. As part of the information provided, the college had included part-time provision at the Dungannon campus, which they later advised was outside the remit of the request, as it related to their work with Beacon Centres which is aimed at adults with mental health issues. The original request was in relation to post 19 young people with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. This was clarified in my response to AQW 25524/11-15.

Definition of the Term Learning Disability

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 26194/11-15, whether he will consider introducing stricter criteria as to the definition of the term learning disability, for use across all colleges.

(AQW 26987/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department and further education (FE) colleges are bound by the definitions stipulated within the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). All FE colleges comply with these obligations and operate on a pan disability approach, which ensures that support for students is based on need and not category of disability.

Therefore, it is not within the remit of my Department to redefine these definitions.

Apprenticeships NI Scheme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the travel and subsistence available for apprentices employed under the Apprenticeships NI scheme.

(AQW 26994/11-15)

Dr Farry: The ApprenticeshipsNI programme is an employer-led provision, with employers creating apprenticeship positions and recruiting suitable individuals as apprentices in line with future business needs. The programme aims to provide participants with the opportunity to take part in a Level 2/Level 3 Apprenticeship where the apprentice, in paid employment from day one, works towards achieving an industry-approved Level 2/Level 3 Apprenticeship Framework.

My Department, through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship and provides an Employer Incentive payment on the apprentice's achievement of the full framework qualifications. ApprenticeshipsNI offers no subsidy towards the cost of an apprentice's travel to and from their place of work, training or study.

Youth Employment Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 26192/11-15, does he have any plans to carry out an analysis comparing these figures with similar provision in other regions of the UK.

(AQW 27028/11-15)

Dr Farry: Department for Work and Pensions published data on performance of some elements of the Youth Contract in July 2013. Using the published figures it is possible to make a comparison with one key element of the Youth Contract in respect of performance in securing and filling subsidised employment opportunities.

At the end of May 2013, the Youth Contract, against a target of 53,000 subsidised jobs per year (160,000 over a 3 year period), had secured 21,460 opportunities (40% of target) and made payments to employers for 4,690 wage incentive jobs. This represents 22% of places secured and 8.8% against the target.

In comparison, in its first year the Youth Employment Scheme, against a target of 300 subsidised jobs (2,500 over a 3 year period) had secured 277 opportunities (92% of target) and started 201 young people in subsidised employment. This represents 72.6% of places secured and 67% against the target.

Access to Work Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the uptake of the Access to Work programme.

(AQW 27037/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department's Access to Work programme is available to all people with a disability who are aged 16 or over, and who require specialist support to move into employment or are experiencing problems in work due to the nature of their disability. This includes support at interview, financial assistance with travel to work, and in-work support such as special aids and equipment or a dedicated support worker. The support can be one-off financial support but is more often medium to longer term assistance for the individual and their employer.

The table overleaf provides information on the number of people who have availed of direct Access to Work support from April 2013 to date and also for the previous two financial years. The table includes figures for the number of new Access to Work registered participants during the same period. It is also worth noting that an additional 230 people received advice, guidance and/or employment assessments via the Department's Access to Work team, however their workplace solutions and adjustments were funded by the employer following discussions and negotiations with the respective Access to Work Adviser.

Period covered	New Applications approved	Total number on live caseload
April 2011 to March 2012	208	626
April 2012 to March 2013	215	623
April 2013 to September 2013	173	630

Dungannon Campus: Provision for Students with a Mental Illness

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 26194/11-15, for his assessment of existent provision for Dungannon Campus for students with a mental illness delivered through additional outside funding, and the absence of specific provision for students with a learning disability, and why this differed in scale from other campuses within South West College, such as Omagh Campus.

(AQW 27081/11-15)

Dr Farry: I refer the member to the correction to the response to AQW 26594/11-15. As I have mentioned previously, curriculum offer and course provision is a matter for each college.

I can advise that, in relation to provision for students with a learning difficulty and/or disability, which my Department helps fund through the Additional Support Fund, I am content that South West College (SWC) continues to provide courses, based on local demand and viability. The scale of provision available across campuses is the responsibility of the College and is reflective of the current level of demand within the catchment areas of the SWC campuses.

In addition, I can also advise that my Department and all further education colleges operate on a pan disability approach and offer support and provision based on need, not on specific categories of disability.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Stream Global Services Call Centre

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why Derry was not chosen as the location for the new Stream Global Services call centre.

(AQW 26696/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): In February 2013 it was announced that Stream Global Services (SGS) had acquired the entire share capital of LBM Holdings Limited (LBM). Invest NI had been working with LBM to secure the company's development plans for over 18 months.

At the point of acquisition LBM (operating inbound/outbound sales in the Financial Services Utilities and Telecom market) was in an advanced stage of negotiation regarding a potential property solution at the Airport Road West site in Belfast.

Post acquisition - there then followed a significant strategic review process by SGS of the LBM development plans and it was far from clear throughout that period if any of these development plans would be carried out by SGS.

On completion of its internal review SGS announced that it endorsed LBM's expansion plans and in order to satisfy customer requirements agreed to finalise LBM's Airport Road West property negotiations and implement the investment project.

Small Business Research Initiative Projects

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an overview of Small Business Research Initiative projects.

(AQW 26821/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) is an innovative form of public sector procurement. Research from the US and the UK has highlighted the benefits it can bring to both the public and private sector – companies get finance to develop their ideas while the public sector gets more innovative solutions to its needs.

SBRI was launched by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) in 2009. In 2010 my Department became the first in any of the Devolved Administrations to run an SBRI competition. That was a competition, organised in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, for Tourism Apps. A major joint DETI/DARD competition is currently underway to develop sustainable solutions for the utilisation of poultry litter.

In order to encourage more Northern Ireland based SBRI competitions and support more of our companies enter TSB competitions, a team of Innovative Procurement Executives has now been established. Work is also underway to introduce a number of new SBRI competitions across Northern Ireland Departments.

Review of Business Red Tape

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consultation her Department has had with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on the review of business red tape.

(AQW 27003/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Review of Business Regulation is a key commitment identified within the Northern Ireland Economic Pact. Officials in my Department have been in regular contact with their counterparts in BIS as we develop the terms of reference for this review. I have been given assurances of the continued support and input from UK Government officials to this important piece of work.

We have had detailed discussions with the Better Regulation Executive and with its chairman, Lord Curry, who has provided constructive and valuable advice on the possible direction of the Review drawing on his extensive knowledge and expertise in the area of better regulation.

Economic Strategy and Economy and Jobs Initiative: Commitments

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the commitments which are not on course to be achieved on time within the (i) Economic Strategy; and (ii) Economy and Jobs Initiative.

(AQW 27005/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The first Northern Ireland Economic Strategy (NIES) Annual Monitoring Report, outlining the extent to which NIES commitments are being delivered and providing an assessment of the wider health of the Northern Ireland Economy, was agreed by the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy in September 2013 and published on Friday 25 October.

The Monitoring Report outlines performance over the period to March 2013 and is supported by two more detailed papers providing detail of progress being made against all 172 NIES commitments and the 41 actions identified within the Economy and Jobs Initiative published in November 2012.

You can access these documents on the NI Economic Strategy website at www.northernireland.gov.uk/economic-strategy.

Grants Available for Business Start-Ups

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the grants available for business start-ups.

(AQW 27013/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides an extensive portfolio of support to start-up businesses in Northern Ireland including grant support in a number of specific areas including the Regional Start Initiative (RSI) which is designed to support locally focussed entrepreneurs into self employment. Business Start Grants are available through the Jobs Fund scheme for those people resident in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and for young people who are not in Employment, Education or Training who complete a business plan and then go on to start a business.

In addition the Jobs Fund provides employment grant support to investment projects which will create new sustainable jobs. Through this fund Invest NI supports businesses affected by the recession to provide employment opportunities, thus improving employment prospects for individuals.

New social enterprise start-ups are supported by Invest NI's Social Entrepreneurship Programme, with capability support for the business plan and initial start-up. Grants may be available to social enterprise starts should they have a level of export potential.

Propel is aimed at high calibre entrepreneurs who have the passion and energy to succeed on an international stage. Those businesses that have significant growth potential particularly in international markets will attract up to £20,000 of financial support.

Export Starts/Global Starts. These programmes are targeted at entrepreneurs who are starting an export focussed business or who have an established business and are seeking to enter export markets for the first time. These businesses are typically supported in areas of job creation, marketing, ICT, skills and strategy and R&D.

Grant for R&D is available to support the development and commercialisation of new products, processes and services to improve competitiveness benefitting the Northern Ireland economy. Grants are designed to provide support for R&D and technological innovation relevant at all stages of company development including start-ups.

Innovation Vouchers - this scheme provides a voucher of up to £4,000 to enable small and medium sized enterprises to engage with one of the 39 universities, colleges and other publicly funded research organisations throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The voucher allows businesses to access specialist skills and expertise to provide an innovative solution to a business issue that cannot be easily solved by the private sector or other support mechanisms.

The Technical Development Incentive can offer business start-ups up to 50% support of eligible technical supplier costs up to a maximum grant of £5,000. Areas that can be supported include Intellectual Property, product and process problem resolution, and improved product design and performance.

Invest NI also assists those High Potential Start-ups that have ambition to achieve £1million revenue in 3 to 4 years commercialising Intellectual Property that can compete in global markets. The Project Definition R&D grant and the Growth Acceleration Programme assist the company to discover and validate their customers. Selective Financial Assistance can be used to help accelerate growth. Invest NI also provides a wide range of other assistance appropriate for the High Potential Start-Up such as helping the companies train their staff, protect their IP, develop their management team and strengthen their board.

Separate from grants Invest NI also provides repayable support to start-ups through its Access to Finance funding initiative. This is delivered through commercially managed equity and debt funds and can help provide the money to start-up and grow businesses. Further details can be found at <http://www.boostingbusinessni.com/jobs/access-to-finance/>

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 27071/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In accordance with our Equality Scheme, my Department's annual Disability Action Plans to the Equality Commission set out actions we plan to take to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability. A copy of the 2013/2014 Disability Action Plan can be found within the Equality section of the Department's website (http://www.detini.gov.uk/2013_2014_disability_action_plan.pdf)

In addition, Annual Progress Reports on the measures identified are provided to the Equality Commission.

DETI is currently carrying out a review of its Disability Action Plans to assess compliance with its statutory requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Northern Ireland Events Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the target date for completing the investigation into the Northern Ireland Events Company, including costs incurred to date.

(AQW 27074/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A draft report was received by the Department on 1 July 2013. A consultation process with those individuals referred to in the report is now necessary. A final signed report is expected before 31 March 2014.

The costs incurred to 30 June 2013 are £1.168 million.

Increasing the Number of Scheduled Air Services

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the improving economic climate, what are the prospects of increasing the number of scheduled air services at (i) Belfast International; (ii) Belfast City; and (iii) Londonderry airports.

(AQW 27145/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Improvements in the economy will play an important role in encouraging airlines to consider Northern Ireland as a destination for new routes. In terms of future prospects, I am keen to see improved access to all markets which offer the business and inbound tourism links which are important to the Northern Ireland economy. I particularly believe there is real potential to reinstate a direct air service between Northern Ireland and Canada and raised this with potential carriers during my recent visit to Toronto.

My Department is undertaking an Air Connectivity Study which will consider all potential options to improve Northern Ireland's air access position. My Department is also in dialogue with all of Northern Ireland's airports on an ongoing basis to help bring new air services to Northern Ireland and to explore opportunities to promote, and drive demand for, existing services. However, while under development, these discussions are of a commercially sensitive and confidential nature.

Broadband Internet in the Craigantlet Area

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there are plans to make broadband internet available in the Craigantlet area.

(AQW 27228/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As a result of my Department's investments, broadband internet is currently available in Northern Ireland, including the Craigantlet area, through a range of technologies such as fixed line, fixed-wireless and satellite broadband. Recognising that consumers' and businesses' requirements are ever increasing, my Department has initiated the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project, part-funded by Broadband UK, DETI, DARD and the EU and totalling around £19.3million of public

investment. It aims to provide a 2 Megabits per second broadband service to virtually all premises in Northern Ireland, and 24Mbps superfast broadband to 90% of premises by 2015.

The proposed intervention areas for basic and superfast broadband have been established following public consultation and postcodes in the Craigantlet area are included. Details can be found on my Department's website at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-telecoms-index/deti-telecoms-whats-new.htm>.

The procurement phase of the project began on 2 October 2013 and responses to the tender are expected to be submitted by 6 November. The time at which the project will become operational will be dependent on the tender response from the market. The target for completion is March 2015.

Department of the Environment

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and Habitats Regulations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many Judicial Reviews have been taken against his Department for alleged failure to apply the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations or Habitats Regulations properly, in each of the last five years; (ii) how many of those Judicial Reviews his Department successfully defended; (iii) what were his Department's legal costs in each case; (iv) what costs his Department was liable to pay to successful applicants; and (v) what costs his Department was able to recover from unsuccessful applicants.

(AQW 20089/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I would like to apologise for the time taken to provide an answer to this question, however I wanted to ensure that the information provided is robust and accurate.

Officials have now collated information in relation to your query for the last 3 business years. Information extracted from this database records 12 judicial reviews taken in this 3 year period on the grounds of the Department's alleged failure to apply EIA or Habitat Legislation. Of the 12 judicial reviews taken on these grounds, 2 decisions have been upheld, 3 have been withdrawn, 4 are currently ongoing, 1 case has been settled and 2 decisions have been quashed.

As the costs for each case may be submitted after the judgement the total legal costs from each case are not available. However, I can advise that, to date, the Department has paid out over £353k in costs in relation to these cases.

I have instructed officials to ensure that going forward a central record of judicial review cases is held in a comprehensive manner.

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and Habitats Regulations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment why he has yet to answer AQW 20089/11-15; and when he will provide an answer.

(AQW 24473/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I would like to apologise for the time taken to provide an answer to this question, however I wanted to ensure that the information provided is robust and accurate.

Officials have now collated information in relation to your query for the last 3 business years. Information extracted from this database records 12 judicial reviews taken in this 3 year period on the grounds of the Department's alleged failure to apply EIA or Habitat Legislation. Of the 12 judicial reviews taken on these grounds, 2 decisions have been upheld, 3 have been withdrawn, 4 are currently ongoing, 1 case has been settled and 2 decisions have been quashed.

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I have instructed officials to ensure that going forward a central record of judicial review cases is held in a comprehensive manner.

Waste Incineration Plants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how much waste each local council is contractually obliged to deliver to waste incineration plants, in each of the next five years.

(AQW 26363/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department is not a party to any of the local council waste disposal contracts or procurements and therefore does not have the information you request. The waste tonnage each council determines it should commit to the new waste infrastructure facilities is a matter for each council, or, where appropriate, the waste management groups acting under the authority of their constituent councils. Their decisions will be made in the context of the obligation to comply with the waste hierarchy and with Landfill Diversion targets and recycling targets.

Turkington: Three Planning Applications

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment (i) why there are no minutes for the meeting on 30 March 2009 between the then Minister of the Environment Sammy Wilson, David Simpson MLA and representatives of Turkington to discuss three planning applications; (ii) whether any departmental or planning service officials were present at this meeting; and (iii) whether it is common practice for Ministerial meetings about planning applications not to be minuted.

(AQW 26374/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Arrangements for recording ministerial meetings are an internally agreed procedure and may vary on a case by case basis.

Turkington: Three Planning Applications

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether it is considered good practice within his Department to minute Ministerial meetings that concern planning applications.

(AQW 26375/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Arrangements for recording ministerial meetings are an internally agreed procedure and may vary on a case by case basis.

Appalachian Trail of Ulster

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment what areas are included in the Appalachian Trail of Ulster; and to outline the benefits the Trail will bring to these areas.

(AQW 26442/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The International Appalachian Trail (IAT), which I jointly launched on 31 August 2013, has created a continuous cross border, long distance walking route that starts at Slieve League in Donegal and ends at Larne. I am delighted that partnership with the councils has enabled this project to be realised.

The Northern Ireland section follows the route of the Ulster Way with new sections in Strabane and Larne to link to Donegal and the Ferry Port respectively. Its route will pass through seven council areas; Coleraine, Larne, Limavady, Magherafelt, Moyle, Omagh and Strabane.

The IAT will continue to be developed by a Steering Group which is led by Magne Haugseng and includes representatives from the Department, the relevant councils and the Tourism Boards.

Although at the early stages, it is anticipated that this largely rural route will boost trade and prosperity in the local area it covers. Being linked to the international IAT brand will put us firmly on the map for local and international tourists such as long distance walkers, who are interested in this type of culture

and who will very much welcome the opportunity to experience Northern Ireland's stunning and diverse landscape.

Grant of Discharge Consent to Mineral Extraction Sites

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 25630/11-15, under which circumstances would it be appropriate for his Department to grant a discharge consent to mineral extraction sites which do not have planning permission; and whether granting consent represents an endorsement for the continuation of unauthorised mineral extraction.

(AQW 26494/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department of the Environment's (DOE) Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS 11) states that the planning and pollution control systems are separate but complementary systems of control and regulation designed to protect the environment from harm as a result of development and related operations.

Planning control focuses primarily on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land, rather than on the control of the processes or substances involved, and regulating the location of the development in order to avoid or minimise adverse effects on people, the use of land and the environment.

The pollution control regime is concerned with the control and regulation of proposed operations and processes and with their day to day operation.

As a consultee to DOE Planning NIEA recommends in its advice to DOE Planning that applicants should apply for and obtain any required environmental authorisations prior to beginning construction or operations on site.

However, in circumstances where NIEA is made aware, by DOE Planning, of an operational mineral extraction site without the necessary planning permissions NIEA's priority will be to use its legislative powers to protect the environment, where possible given the retrospective nature of the development.

NIEA will visit the site to determine if there are any potentially polluting discharges and where necessary require the site owner to apply for a consent to discharge under the Water (NI) Order 1999. NIEA will decide if a consent may be issued or not, and once a consent is issued NIEA will sample the discharge to ensure the consent holder complies with its conditions to ensure protection of the water environment.

By adopting this position in relation to such developments NIEA can bring potentially polluting discharges under its regulatory regime and therefore ensure that the water environment is being protected while the legality of the site is being resolved through the planning system.

The continuation of extraction during this time is primarily an issue for the planning system. Discharges from such sites are generally rainfall dependent therefore a discharge is likely to occur whether extraction is allowed to proceed during this time or not. It is therefore important that these discharges are regulated.

The issue of a consent to discharge is not an endorsement of the development, it is rather an acknowledgement by NIEA that the site is in existence and that there is an existing discharge that needs regulated.

Operation Sycamore: Waste

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the recent success of Operation Sycamore in identifying the illegal dumping of waste in the North West, what tonnage of waste has to be dealt with; and what will be the cost to remediate and repatriate this waste.

(AQW 26509/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The criminal investigation into this operation is ongoing and is focussing initially on two companies and their directors. The investigation has involved intensive survey work and analysis of

material removed from the site. It is premature at this stage to speculate on what may need to be done in order to deal with the site.

As the illegally infilled waste is of such a large volume and in an environmentally sensitive location the decisions made and any works carried out will need to be done with extreme care and planning in order to avoid the accidental release of pollutant material into the environment. As soon as decisions can be made and costs estimated I will make this information public.

The term 'repatriation' is generally used to describe the process where illegal shipments of waste from outside the UK are removed from Northern Ireland. The term has been used to also describe the removal of illegally deposited waste from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland following its illegal deposit. The term is not relevant to Operation Sycamore as no waste originating from outside of the UK has been detected in the site to date.

Retrospective Planning Applications at Mobouy Road, Derry

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW/25727/11-15, whether any of the seven unapproved, retrospective planning applications at Mobouy Road, Derry benefited from discharge consents; and if so, why it was deemed appropriate to grant such consents in the absence of any planning permissions.

(AQW 26582/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am advised there are currently 6 retrospective planning applications for sites on the Mobouy Road. The Department's records show that a consent to discharge has previously been granted for these sites.

Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS 11) states that the planning and pollution control systems are separate but complementary systems of control and regulation designed to protect the environment from harm as a result of development and related operations.

Planning control focuses primarily on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land, rather than on the control of the processes or substances involved, and regulating the location of the development in order to avoid or minimise adverse effects on people, the use of land and the environment.

The pollution control regime is concerned with the control and regulation of proposed operations and processes and with their day to day operation.

Applicants should apply for and obtain any required environmental authorisations prior to beginning construction or operations on site.

However, in circumstances where the Department becomes aware of an operational mineral extraction site without the necessary planning permissions, the Department's priority will be to use its legislative powers to protect the environment where possible, given the retrospective nature of the development.

Departmental officials will visit the site to determine if there are any potentially polluting discharges and where necessary require the site owner to apply for a consent to discharge under the Water (NI) Order 1999. The Department will decide if a consent may be issued or not, and once a consent is issued the discharge will be sampled to ensure the consent holder complies with its conditions to ensure protection of the water environment.

By adopting this position in relation to such developments the Department can bring potentially polluting discharges under its regulatory regime and therefore ensure that the water environment is being protected while the legality of the site is being resolved through the planning system.

Discharges from such sites are generally rainfall dependent therefore a discharge is likely to occur whether extraction is allowed to proceed during this time or not.

The issue of a consent to discharge is not an endorsement of the development, it is rather an acknowledgement by the Department that the site is in existence and that there is an existing discharge that needs regulated.

Reform of Local Government

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how much it will cost to complete the reform of Local Government.

(AQW 26631/11-15)

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

The Regional Transition Committee commissioned the Finance Working Group in 2012 to develop an up-to-date and accurate analysis of the full costs (transition and transformation) and benefits (including savings) of the reform implementation programme. Since then, local government has worked on this issue, and a response is expected within the coming weeks.

Funding Awarded to and Projects Supported in Moyle; Ballymena; Ballymoney

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 25911/11-15, of the original £1.5 million allocated in the June monitoring round to detail the (i) amount of funding awarded to; and (ii) projects supported in the (a) Moyle; (b) Ballymena; and (c) Ballymoney council areas.

(AQW 26660/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In February 2013 Moyle District Council received £104k in dereliction funding (Table 1). Although Ballymena and Ballymoney submitted bids neither received funding at this stage.

In July 2013 Ballymoney Borough Council was awarded £100k (Table 2) and Ballymena Borough Council was awarded £160k (Table 3). Moyle Council did not receive funding. As Councils have until 31 March 2014 to complete these projects there is no comprehensive list of completed projects available.

In preparation of the outcome of the October monitoring round when £2m was requested for the dereliction fund, Councils were asked to submit bids by 23 August 2013. Moyle District Council submitted a bid of £125,344 (Table 4). Ballymena Borough Council also submitted a bid; however, the department did not receive the bid until after the closing date, therefore the bid was not accepted. On this occasion Ballymoney Borough Council did not submit a bid.

For details of projects supported by each of the named Councils please see tables below.

- Table 1 - details of projects supported by Moyle District Council (February 2013).
- Table 2 - details of projects included in the bid submitted by Ballymoney Borough Council (July 2013).
- Table 3 - details projects included in the bid submitted by Ballymena Borough Council (July 2013).
- Table 4 - details projects included in Moyle District Council bid for monies that may become available in the October monitoring round.

Table 1 Projects Supported By Moyle District Council

Corner of Quay Road and North Street, Ballycastle	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme, plaster repairs, remove redundant signage, clear out gutters.
Corner of Mary Street and Quay Road, Ballycastle	Apply graphics to hoarding guarding the building site and add graphics to all windows and doors of the two buildings. Apply new paint colour scheme to buildings.

Site of demolished dwellings nos. 54-60 Quay Road and adjacent 3 storey terraced dwelling	Paint existing hoardings and apply graphics.
No 16 North Street Ballycastle	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows. Clear debris from adjacent vacant site, erect fencing and finish with stone.
No. 49 Castle Street	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows.
Orange Hall (corner of Coleraine Road)	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows.
No 121 Main Street Bushmills	Create an urban garden by clearing site, erecting hoarding, applying paint and graphics, installing bitmac footpath and grass turf, planting and two park benches.
No 31 Main Street Bushmills (beside co-op shops)	Erect hoarding to frontage of site and apply paint.
Waterfoot Village (at corner of Coast Road and entrance to car park)	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows.
No 37 Main Street Waterfoot	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows. Remove existing roof and construct new temporary measure.
No 3 Main Street Waterfoot	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows.
No 49 Main Street Waterfoot	Redecorate by painting white and redecorate garage doors including localised repairs to doors and plasterwork.
Nos 16-20 Main Street Mosside	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows. Remove existing roof and construct new temporary measure.
Nos. 244/246 Moyarget Road, Mosside	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme to redundant garage and adjacent bungalow, clear site of all debris, strim grass, place rock as site segregation and new entrance chains/post.
Nos. 25-31 Main Street Mosside	Minor repairs to dormer roof. Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows.
Nos. 2-4 Main Street Mosside	Erect timber post and vertical rail fence to frontage to site including vehicular gate.
Site opposite entrance to Carrick-a-Rede site	Remove existing fence and construct ranch timber fence around site, repairs to outbuilding roof and clear site of debris.
Glenshesk Road Armoy	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows, clear out gutters.
Nos. 11 & 11a Glenshesk Road Armoy	Redecorate by painting new colour scheme and add graphics to doors and windows, clear out gutters.

Table 2 Projects Included in Ballymoney Borough Council Bid

7-9 Market Street, BT53 6EA (formerly McClarty Insurance premises)	Minor repairs to derelict building. Removal of vegetation, plaster repairs and re-painting. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated Composite Aluminium Panels (CAPs) to all existing window and door openings. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
9-11 Market Street BT53 6EA Gap Site – former public house / off licence	Erection of perimeter hoarding to corner site. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to new wall. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
20 Victoria Street BT53 6DW Gap Site – former retail unit	Erection of hoarding to front of site. Removal of tall vegetation. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to new wall. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
13 Linenhall Street BT53 6DP Gap Site – former drapers	Erection of perimeter hoarding to front of site. Removal of tall vegetation. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to new wall. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
15 Linenhall Street BT53 6DP	Minor repairs to derelict building. Removal of vegetation, plaster repairs and re-painting. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to all existing window and door openings. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
11-13, 11A Linenhall Street BT53 6RQ	Supply and fix protective marine plywood hoarding to unhoarded windows (2no) at first floor level, in readiness to support laminated CAPs to be supplied and fixed by others. Repair and make good as required, existing window hoardings at first and second floors (18no), in readiness to support laminated CAPs to be supplied and fixed by others. Design, supply and fix 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to all existing first and second window openings (20no). CAPs designed by artist, to the approval of Ballymoney Borough Council.
1-3 Queen Street BT53 6HY Gap Site – Former Church Hall	Erection of perimeter hoarding to corner site. Removal of vegetation. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over laminated CAPs to new wall. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use. This site would also lend itself to the development of community gardens with the backdrop of the tower and St Patrick's Parish Church opposite.
39 Church Street BT53 6JD Former traditional sweet shop	Minor repairs to derelict building. Removal of vegetation, plaster repairs and re-painting. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to all existing window and door openings. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.

37-39 High Street BT53 6AJ Former Cinema	Minor repairs to derelict building. Removal of vegetation, plaster repairs and re-painting. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to all existing window and door openings. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
33 High Street BT53 6AJ Gateway adjacent to derelict builders yard, beside	Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to the existing gateway. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
23 High Street Former Sweet Shop / Wool Shop	Minor repairs to derelict building. Removal of vegetation, plaster repairs and re-painting. Provision and erection of new 3mm thick printed and over-laminated CAPs to all existing window and door openings. CAPs designed by artist and themed to reflect former use.
16-20 High Street BT53 6AA	Remove existing defective decals from 4no. Ground floor windows. Clean existing ground floor windows in readiness for the application of decals, by others. Design, supply and apply decals to the face of 4no. Existing ground floor windows. Decals designed by artist to the approval of Ballymoney Borough Council.
9 High Street	Clean existing ground floor windows in readiness for the application of decals, by others. Provide access for the application of decals. Arrange for existing external shutters to be raised during normal opening hours, Monday to Saturday. Design, supply and apply decals to the inside face of existing ground floor windows. Decal designed by artist to the approval of Ballymoney Borough Council.
1 Market Street BT53 6EA	Clean existing ground floor windows in readiness for the application of decals, by others. Design, supply and apply decals to the inside face of 8no. Existing ground floor windows. Decals designed by artist to the approval of Ballymoney Borough Council.
63 Main Street BT53 6AN	Clean existing ground floor windows and door in readiness for the application of decals, by others. Provide access for the application of decals. Arrange for existing external shutters to be raised during normal opening hours, Monday to Saturday. Design, supply and apply decals to the inside face of existing ground floor windows and door. Decals designed by artist to the approval of Ballymoney Borough Council.

Table 3 Projects Included in Ballymena Borough Council Bid

<p>Bridge Street</p> <p>Strategic Development Site</p> <p>Gap site opposite The Braid Town Hall, Museum & Arts Centre which houses the Tourist Information Centre also.</p> <p>Vacant site in prominent position opposite landmark Braid building.</p>	<p>Environment Improvements</p> <p>Demolitions</p> <p>Turfing and topsoil</p> <p>Paths</p> <p>Vertical elements</p> <p>Street Lighting</p> <p>New hoarding</p> <p>Seating and bins</p> <p>Planting</p> <p>Render and paint</p> <p>Bollards and kerbs</p>
<p>92 Church Street (McKillens)</p> <p>Derelict Gap Site</p> <p>Gap site currently screened by hoarding in high footfall location.</p>	<p>Provision of false front comprising shoring, hoarding and vinyl screening</p> <p>Demolitions</p> <p>Timber shoring</p> <p>Hoarding</p> <p>Vinyl screening</p>
<p>Bryan Street</p> <p>Derelict Gap Site</p> <p>Gap site in gateway link between Wellington Street and Church Street in town centre.</p>	<p>Take down steel stanchions</p> <p>New brick paved surfacing</p> <p>Render and paint to old walls</p> <p>Power to site</p>
<p>10 Pats Brae</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Gateway route linking Galgorm/ Waveney area of town.</p>	<p>Remove defective finish, clean down walls and paint</p> <p>Repair render to walls</p> <p>Provide vinyl screening</p> <p>Provide vinyl finish to roller shutters</p>
<p>46 – 50 Ballymoney Street</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Junction of Ballymoney Street/ Alexander Street. Three derelict adjoining properties.</p>	<p>Wash down and repaint walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p>
<p>Church Street/Meeting House Lane</p> <p>Gateway Site</p> <p>Church Street junction with Meeting House Lane. Derelict building at gateway site at above location which is a major link from DRD car park to town centre.</p>	<p>Provide hoarding to shop front and shop windows</p> <p>Painting to front and gables</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shop front</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p>
<p>44 Mill Street</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Double shop frontage in Mill Street.</p> <p>Derelict building in otherwise well maintained area creating negative impact.</p>	<p>Repair render to walls</p> <p>Paint walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shop front and windows</p> <p>New signage</p>

<p>2 Wellington Street</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Corner site at junction of Wellington Street and Lower Mill Street in core of town centre.</p>	<p>Painting walls and providing render at gable</p> <p>Vinyl screening to roller shutters</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p>
<p>44 William Street</p> <p>Vacant Property in gateway link between Broughshane Street and Ballymoney Street.</p> <p>Single building frontage.</p> <p>Negative impact on adjoining properties that had been refurbished.</p>	<p>Painting walls and repairs to plaster</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p>
<p>63 – 73 Lower Mill Street</p> <p>Derelict block of properties in disrepair.</p> <p>Vacant/derelict block of properties in prominent position to gateway area.</p>	<p>Repairs to Parapet</p> <p>Paint to walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shop front</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p> <p>New signage</p> <p>Vinyl screening to roller shutters</p>
<p>26 Ballymoney Street</p> <p>Vacant Property prominently situated in high footfall gateway link between two core shopping centres.</p>	<p>Painting walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shopfront</p>
<p>William Street</p> <p>Vacant Property in gateway link between Broughshane Street and Ballymoney Street.</p> <p>Single shop frontage.</p> <p>Negative impact on other refurbished properties in area.</p>	<p>Painting walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shopfront</p> <p>Replace signage</p>
<p>Alexander Street</p> <p>Strategic Development Site</p> <p>Gateway Link</p> <p>Centrally located between two of the core streets in the town centre.</p> <p>The surround has no shop frontage and is bordered by the rear of considerable properties. However car park is well used by visitors and locals alike.</p>	<p>Pergolas and planting at Williams St. (1)</p> <p>Pergolas and planting at Williams St. (2)</p> <p>Pergolas and planting at Broughshane St.</p> <p>Paint and Signage at Ballymoney St.</p>
<p>Old Cinema Site Ballymoney Road</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Opposite Court House and Adair Arms Hotel.</p> <p>Long term vacant site of old cinema with a hoarding front.</p>	<p>Remove shrubbery</p> <p>Paint hoarding</p>
<p>Iceland (back of)</p> <p>Derelict Gap Site rear of Iceland building on High Street.</p> <p>Loading/unloading bays at rear of Iceland that requires visual enhancements.</p>	<p>Provide painted hoarding</p>

<p>Bus/Rail Station (Gateway Site)</p> <p>Located on main gateway on Galgorm Road and provides the link for visitors to town centre.</p>	<p>Demolition and Site Clearance</p> <p>Work to existing wall</p> <p>Earthworks</p> <p>Steel Edgings</p> <p>Mild Steel Railings</p> <p>Resin Bound Gravel</p> <p>Unit Paving</p> <p>Seats and Litter Bins</p> <p>Feature Sign</p> <p>Tree Planting (Semi-mature)</p> <p>Shrub Planting</p>
<p>Car Park at Tower Centre</p> <p>Gateway Site located at the junction of a number of streets e.g. Springwell Street, John Street, Albert Place with high levels of footfall accessing town centre.</p> <p>Visually is a concrete mass.</p>	<p>Additional Signage</p>
<p>Bridge Street</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>This building is located beside a gap site and opposite The Braid Town Hall, Museum & Arts Centre that is a landmark building for the town.</p>	<p>Painting walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to roller shutters</p> <p>Signage</p>
<p>Wellington Street</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>This property is situated in a core street of the town centre.</p>	<p>Painting walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shopfront</p>
<p>William Street Entrance to Fairhill Centre</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Derelict building situated at main entrance to Fairhill Shopping Centre with high footfall and gateway status to Broughshane Street and Ballymoney Street.</p>	<p>Painting walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p> <p>Vinyl screening to shopfront</p>
<p>Springwell Street</p> <p>Derelict Gap and Site and Vacant Property</p> <p>This immediate area requires visual upgrade for visitors using the car park.</p>	<p>Provide painted hoarding</p>
<p>70 & 72 High Street</p> <p>Vacant Property</p> <p>Corner site at junction of High Street and John Street.</p> <p>Vacant properties in gateway site from Springwell Street car park to Tower Centre with high footfall.</p>	<p>Painting walls</p> <p>Vinyl screening to windows</p> <p>Repairs to render</p>

Cullybackey Road at Pentagon Vacant Property and UNITE Union office frontage located directly opposite Adair Arms Hotel.	Vinyl screening to windows Removal of planting and shrubs Wall and Railing paint Paint fascia etc Repair render
Waveney Road Vacant Property Unit is located beside Fire Station and is a major link road to town centre.	Vinyl screening to windows Removal of planting and shrubs Wall and Railing paint Paint fascia etc Clean down brickwork and paint sills
Waveney Road – Railway Embankment Tree Removal Main arterial gateway route to and from town centre. Railed embankment area having negative impact on area.	Replace timber fencing Provide planting and shrubs
Pedestrian Entrance to Tower Centre Car Park off Ballymoney Street Gateway to and from multi-storey car park onto Ballymoney Street and is a main pedestrian link to town centre with high footfall.	Painting render
Pedestrian Entrance to Tower Centre Car Park off Greenvale Street Gateway to and from multi-storey car park onto Greenvale Street and is a main pedestrian link to town centre with high footfall.	Painting render
24 William Street Vacant Property. Gateway link between Ballymoney Street and Broughshane Street (former Public House)	Replace defective render Paint walls Vinyl screening to roller shutter doors Vinyl screening to windows Signage

Table 4 Projects Included in Moyle District Council – August 2013

Main Street, Armoy	Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows
Clare Street, Ballycastle Various properties	Plaster repairs Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows Repairs to doors and windows
Property beside Chinese Carryout Clare Street, Ballycastle	Vegetation removal Demolish building and provide hardcore surface Erect hoarding to perimeter with graphics

Back of Boyd Arms, Market Street, Ballycastle	Remove vegetation Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows Repairs to doors and windows Plaster repairs
Old Boyles Paint Shop Market Street, Ballycastle	Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows Plaster repairs
Beside Youthlinks Market Street, Ballycastle	Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows
Old Cinema Market Street, Ballycastle	Powerwash walls Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows and doors
Vacant, Beside Shoe box Station Road, Ballycastle	Remove vegetation Re-pointing to masonry work Repair door and re-paint Repairs to roof
Open Space, Back Carpark Main Street, Bushmills	Remove vegetation Provide coloured gravel surface Install planted beds Provide post and chain perimeter fencing Provide two park benches
Back Carpark (Garden and House) Main Street, Bushmills	Remove vegetation Powerwash walls Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows and doors New gates to yard entrance Hardcore surface to yard Graphic panels to boundary wall
Beside Credit Union Main Street, Bushmills	Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows Plaster repairs
Beside Hairdressers Bridge Street, Bushmills	Remove vegetation Apply new paint colour scheme to doors Graphics to windows Repairs to doors Plaster and masonry repairs
The Old Bank House Bridge Street, Bushmills	Remove vegetation Graphics to windows and doors Plaster and masonry repairs Repair downpipe

Escape, Vacant Main Street, Bushmills	Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows Plaster repairs
Vacant House Back Car Park off Main Street, Bushmills	Remove vegetation Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to window Plaster repairs
Mace Main Street, Bushmills	Apply new paint colour scheme Paint to windows and shutter Plaster repairs
Sportsman Bar Main Street, Bushmills	Apply new paint colour scheme Graphics to windows Plaster repairs
Boarded up side of Church of the Redeemer, Main Street, Bushmills	Remove vegetation Graphics to windows and door Plaster and masonry repairs
Vacant Properties (past Council bus stop) Liscolman	Power wash walls Apply new paint colour scheme Plaster repairs Graphics to windows and door Repairs to roof
Glenariff Inn Main Street, Waterfoot	Power wash walls Apply new paint colour scheme Plaster repairs Graphics to windows and door
Church Bay Rathlin Island	Vegetation removal Hoarding to building complete with graphics Grade and level rough ground Provide hardcore surface Provision of park bench Provide area of planting Clear debris and vegetation from area of slipway Cosmetic repairs to abandoned boats Reinstate surfaces Provide post and chain fence around boats Provide information signs relating to history of boats and slipway

Closure of Exploris: Conservation Issues

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact of the proposed closure of Exploris will have on conservation issues.

(AQW 26743/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is responsible for nature conservation and delivers this through an extensive range of programmes of site designation, monitoring and strict protection through various pieces of International and National legislation. The closure of Exploris will not impact on the Department's ability to deliver these programmes.

Exploris is not involved in delivering statutory conservation work but I appreciate the work done there in raising awareness of the rich biological diversity in our seas and in providing a sanctuary and rehabilitation centre for abandoned seal pups.

I continue to raise these issues with my Executive Colleagues.

Driver Licence Applicants: Medical Assessments

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how access to doctors and consultants who care for driver licence applicants is managed; and (ii) whether decisions to grant licences are based on their conclusive medical assessments or do non-medical Driver and Vehicle Agency staff adjudicate on the doctor's or consultant's submissions

(AQW 26752/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Where an application for a driving licence requires professional medical assessment, the application is referred to the Department's medical advisors, the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) Occupational Health Service (OHS).

Where necessary, OHS will seek further medical evidence from the applicant's doctor or consultant, or refer the applicant to an independent specialist consultant for examination.

Following consideration of the relevant medical evidence, including that provided by the doctor, consultant or independent specialist consultant, OHS will make a recommendation to DVA as to the applicant's fitness to drive.

While the decision to grant, refuse, restrict or revoke a licence lies solely with the Department, in practice DVA does not act outside the OHS recommendation.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan: Publication

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what statutory processes are delaying the publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQW 26761/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As advised in my answer to your previous oral question AQO 4791/11-15, after extensive assessment of the recommendations made by the Planning Appeals Commission, my Department recently submitted BMAP to the Department for Regional Development (DRD) for assessment of the Plan against the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). I expect DRD's consideration to be completed by 16 October and subject to the Plan being awarded a Certificate of General Conformity, preparations for publication will commence and are expected, due to procurement requirements, to take 3 – 4 months. Once completed, I plan to adopt BMAP at the earliest opportunity.

Market Traders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment which councils have active strategies in place to protect and promote market traders; and of these, how many have staff working with, and for, such traders to ensure that they are operating in a safe environment and included fully in the local and commercial community.

(AQW 26779/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The information requested is not held by the Department, and was obtained from individual councils.

Council	Is an Active Strategy in Place?	No. of Staff working with and for Market Traders
Antrim	No	None
Ards	No	2
Armagh	No	1
Ballymena	No	7
Ballymoney	No	None
Banbridge	No	1
Belfast	*Signed up to Real Deal Charter	21
Carrickfergus	No	None
Castlereagh	No	None
Coleraine	Yes	1
Cookstown	No	1.5
Craigavon	*Signed up to Real Deal Charter	1
Derry	Yes	3
Down	No	1
Dungannon and South Tyrone	No	3
Fermanagh	No	None
Larne	No	4
Limavady	No	None
Lisburn	No	1
Magherafelt	No	None
Moyle	No	1
Newry & Mourne	No	3
Newtownabbey	No	None
North Down	No	None
Omagh	No	1
Strabane	No	1

* The Real Deal Charter is a scheme which was introduced across the United Kingdom to help regulate and protect the reputation of markets as safe shopping environments.

Legally Classing Super Pedelec Bicycles

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has undertaken any assessment of legally classing super pedelec bicycles, such as those permitted by the government in Germany.

(AQW 26786/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is working closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) in Britain on the issue of super pedelec electric bicycles, referred to in legislation as Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs).

EAPCs are legal and are permitted in Northern Ireland. Legislative provisions for them are contained in the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The Road Traffic Order allows for EAPCs to be driven on a road by a person who is 14 years old or older. Any child under the age of 14 who drives these EAPCs or anyone who allows children under 14 to drive one is guilty of an offence.

In 2010, DfT undertook a consultation to ascertain whether to amend the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC) Regulations 1983 to simplify the legislation and provide closer alignment with the Directive 2002/24/EC which sets a limit on EAPCs up to 25 km/h and a motor output limit of 0.25 kW. DfT issued the consultation responses in January 2012.

More recently, DfT considered the EAPC Regulations to be undertaken as part of the Red Tape Challenge (the Westminster Government's review of all legislation) and research was commissioned to understand the regulatory options available. DfT is currently considering these options and intends to propose a way forward shortly.

My Department will continue to work with DfT to ascertain the outcome of their research and determine if any changes are required to Northern Ireland legislation.

Super Pedelec Bicycles

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has undertaken any assessment of permitting super pedelec electric bicycles such as those permitted in Germany.
(AQW 26816/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is working closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) in Britain on the issue of super pedelec electric bicycles, referred to in legislation as Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs).

EAPCs are legal and are permitted in Northern Ireland. Legislative provisions for them are contained in the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The Road Traffic Order allows for EAPCs to be driven on a road by a person who is 14 years old or older. Any child under the age of 14 who drives these EAPCs or anyone who allows children under 14 to drive one is guilty of an offence.

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My Department will continue to work with DfT to ascertain the outcome of their research and determine if any changes are required to Northern Ireland legislation.

Market Traders: Councils

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will commission an audit to assess the level of confidence market traders have in their respective councils, including aspects around support, health and safety, inclusion, facilities, accessibility, security and customer satisfaction.
(AQW 26825/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is not responsible for policy regarding markets and market traders. Policy responsibility for the issues mentioned is shared across a number of organisations and departments. Under the circumstances, I have no plans to commission an audit of the type suggested.

Driver and Vehicle Agency: Driving Licences

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment why the Driver and Vehicle Agency compels holders of a driving licence issued by the National Driver Licence Service to surrender this licence when they have been required by a local court to re-sit their driving test.

(AQW 26840/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A licence issued by any Member state of the EU, including the National Driver Licence Service in Ireland, is described as a Community or EU licence (that is, one issued by a Member State of the EU). Any person who holds such a licence must surrender it to a court when prosecuted for an offence involving disqualification.

Where a court in Northern Ireland orders that the holder of a Community licence is to be disqualified, the court must send the licence to the Department. In addition, where the disqualified driver is not resident in Northern Ireland, and the licence was issued by the National Driver Licence Service, the Department must, in accordance with the provisions of the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003 relating to the Mutual Recognition of Driving Disqualifications, return the licence to the issuing authority.

Failure to produce a licence to court, if required to do so, is an offence under Article 29(2) of the 1996 Offenders Order.

Absenteeism Levels in Local Councils

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the absenteeism levels in each of the 26 local councils.

(AQW 26861/11-15)

Mr Durkan: This information requested is not held by the Department.

The Chief Local Government Auditor published a series of annual reports on absenteeism in Northern Ireland Councils. The last report in this series was for the 2009-10 year.

These reports compared absenteeism across councils and considered the level of absenteeism for the sector as a whole when compared with other employment sectors.

For the year 2010/2011 the Chief Local Government Auditor summarised the main findings and recommendations in a report entitled "The exercise by local Government Auditors of their functions in the year to 31 March 2012".

All reports are available on the NIAO website at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk.

Emails Sent to MLAs' Constituency Offices

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 25751/11-15, whether the emails were sent to each MLAs constituency office on the evening of 10 September 2013.

(AQW 26873/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In line with Assembly guidance, notifications of Ministerial visits to constituency areas are sent to designated party contacts and not to each MLAs constituency office. On 10 September 2013, an email was sent by my Private Office to the designated contacts for each party represented in the East Londonderry area. The email contained a list of MLAs in the area and requested that my visit be brought to their attention.

Debt and Financial Liabilities of Local Councils

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail of the debt and financial liabilities of each local council; and the total working age population in each council area.

(AQW 26906/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The most up-to-date information for council debt and financial liabilities, as at 31 March 2012, and the population aged 16-64 as at mid-2012 is set out in the table below. It should be noted that the total liabilities column is inclusive of all short and long term debt of each council.

Council	Total Debt £	Total Liabilities £	Population aged 16 to 64
Antrim	19,817,656	30,798,393	34,300
Ards	13,752,224	40,746,691	49,400
Armagh	26,929,965	40,831,573	37,900
Ballymena	26,239,361	43,452,192	40,600
Ballymoney	9,533,362	18,569,027	20,100
Banbridge	20,704,940	29,371,493	31,000
Belfast	28,465,855	200,133,039	186,200
Carrickfergus	21,429,208	29,422,729	25,000
Castlereagh	17,856,096	31,092,693	42,800
Coleraine	35,838,783	55,631,883	37,400
Cookstown	1,450,468	8,523,104	24,100
Craigavon*	7,964,823	26,943,558	60,500
Derry	25,476,154	69,170,093	70,800
Down	23,365,257	39,941,387	44,600
Dungannon & S Tyrone	5,227,982	14,437,403	37,700
Fermanagh	3,331,959	20,693,851	39,400
Larne	15,722,967	23,076,045	20,400
Limavady	12,660,161	25,363,977	22,100
Lisburn	19,997,814	38,533,485	77,600
Magherafelt	0	8,209,278	29,000
Moyle	8,659,895	13,447,402	10,700
Newry & Mourne	18,772,166	37,930,111	64,400
Newtownabbey	46,836,936	62,788,302	54,500
North Down	36,888,706	59,985,908	49,700
Omagh	10,327,495	21,240,576	33,100
Strabane	2,275,116	8,558,477	25,400
Total	459,525,349	998,892,670	1,168,700

* Uncertified

Review of Public Administration

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what the total debt and financial liabilities of each local council will be following implementation of the Review of Public Administration (RPA), based on current figures; and what the total working age population will be in each local council area following RPA. **(AQW 26907/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The levels of debt and financial liabilities of each local council post 2015 will depend on key financial decisions that each council takes between now and 2015, including decisions on what costs will be required to complete the reform programme and how these costs will be met in each council cluster.

The Finance Working Group has been tasked with re-examining the costs and benefits of the local government reform programme, and the results are expected to be available in the next few weeks.

The population aged 16-64 as at mid-2012 for each new Local Government District is set out in the table below:

Local Government District	Mid-2012 population aged 16 to 64 years
Antrim & Newtownabbey	88,800
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	128,800
Belfast	220,000
Causeway Coast & Glens	90,200
Derry & Strabane	96,200
Fermanagh & Omagh	72,600
Lisburn & Castlereagh	86,800
Mid & East Antrim	86,100
Mid Ulster	89,900
Newry, Mourne & Down	110,400
North Down & Ards	98,800
Northern Ireland	1,168,600

Preparations for Winter Conditions

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment what preparations his Department has made for potentially difficult winter conditions. **(AQW 26913/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: My Department continues to work with the Local Government Emergency Management Group to ensure that local government is operationally prepared to contribute to the Executive's response to adverse weather events.

The Local Government Emergency Management Group leads the council response to emergencies, working through a network of experienced officers. Where necessary, these officers coordinate a multi-agency response, initiate an emergency control room, and/or contact individual councils to provide staff and resources to support other agencies.

Additionally, the Department's Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance helps with council expenditure on emergency-related work and, in approved circumstances, provides for emergency payments of £1000 to households which have experienced severe inconvenience.

There is a strong and tested local government machinery to assist other key agencies in responding to winter, and other, emergencies.

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 26952/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is committed to promoting inclusion and provision for people with a disability and achieves this in a number of ways. In order to meet its commitments under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, all new or revised policies are subject to equality screening to assess impacts on all nine equality categories set out under S75, including people with disabilities. The Department's Equality Scheme sets out how it intends to meet these commitments and contains an action plan setting out action measures it proposes to take during the period 2011-2016 to address key inequalities which have been identified relating to its functions, including a few aimed specifically at reducing inequalities for people with disabilities.

My Department also has in place a Disability Action Plan which contains an action plan setting out how we propose to meet the two disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. We have also recently published a five-year review of our Disability Action Plans which sets out the progress made in meeting these duties over the years since the introduction of our first Disability Action Plan on 1 July 2007.

My Department has also recently submitted its annual progress report to the Equality Commission which contains a number of good practice examples of how it has met the S75 duties during the 2012/13 year. The report contains a number of examples of how we have promoted inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

All of these documents are available on our internet site at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/equality_unit.htm

Breaches of European Directives

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether there is an obligation on the UK member state, or his Department, to inform the European Commission when his Department breaches a European Directive.

(AQW 26974/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There is an obligation on each Member State, and each emanation of the State, to take appropriate action to ensure compliance with EU legislation. EU legislation is transposed into national legislation which should set out the actions required and the sanctions and penalties which may be imposed should an actual or potential breach be identified. It is worth noting that some potential non-compliance issues are subject to interpretation of the legislation and can only really be confirmed by a European Court of Justice ruling. Some EU Directives and Regulations may require formal returns to the Commission in respect of progress against certain targets and objectives (for example Air Quality Directive or Waste Framework Directive targets) which may highlight potential breaches, however there is no specific obligation requiring the UK Member State or the Department to notify the European Commission of all potential or actual breaches by a Department, should they occur.

Campaign Encouraging People to Wear Their Seatbelts

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department has invested in the new campaign encouraging people to wear their seatbelts.

(AQW 26988/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I launched the Department's new seatbelt campaign, entitled 'Once', on 10th October. The Department has invested £400,000 in developing the campaign. We anticipate that the campaign will run for approximately 10 years.

One of my Department's key responsibilities is to work towards further reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads each year. My Department has a statutory duty to promote road safety and, within the context of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy, does this through a wide range of road safety education activities, including road safety public information campaigns and education programmes.

My Department has estimated that some 2 lives, 22 serious injuries and 120 slight injuries would have been saved each year (2010-2012) if a 100% seatbelt wearing rate had been observed. Last year, 7 of those people who died on our roads and 36 of those seriously injured were not wearing a seatbelt. The Department for Transport estimates that each death on the roads costs £1.67M, each serious injury £187K and each slight injury over £14K.

A recent study by Oxford Economics isolates the importance of the role of DOE advertising and concludes that it has from 1995-2011 saved 21,977 men, women and children in Northern Ireland from death and serious injury on our roads. The study concludes that the economic payback of the advertising was £10 per £1 invested by DOE excluding human costs, and £42 per £1 invested including human costs.

The new seatbelt campaign will play a vital part in our ambition of working towards zero road deaths in Northern Ireland. It therefore fits within our shared ambition under my Department's 'Share the Road to Zero' campaign. This aspiration means that we do not accept that anyone should ever die on our roads; the new campaign will support this by encouraging people to adopt safer behaviours on the roads by always wearing a seatbelt. All road users can sign up to a pledge supporting this at www.sharetheroadtozero.com

The seatbelt campaign is part of a suite of campaigns which cover all major causes of collisions. The main causes of road casualties continue to be speeding, drink driving, inattention on our roads and failure to wear a seatbelt. Therefore, through the public information campaigns, the Department works towards encouraging all road users to be aware of their vulnerability, their responsibilities towards themselves and other road users, to influence their attitudes and behaviours when using, or thinking of using, the roads anywhere in Northern Ireland.

Emerging road safety issues and associated research will continue to be reviewed. For example, the Department is currently analysing available data and has commissioned qualitative research to help inform consideration of potential new educational activity around anti-speeding and cyclist safety.

I recognise the continuing challenges of reducing casualties on our roads, and will take forward further actions as appropriate from analysis and research.

People Killed Due to Not Wearing a Seatbelt

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been killed due to not wearing a seatbelt, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26989/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Available information is provided in Table 1 below. It is not possible to say from this data that the death was due to a seatbelt or suitable restraint not being worn.

Table 1 – The number of people killed in cars, light goods vehicles and taxis where it was known that a seatbelt was not worn.

Year	Fatalities (No Seatbelt)
2010	5

Year	Fatalities (No Seatbelt)
2011	3
2012	7

Source: PSNI Road Traffic Casualty Statistics.

Road Traffic Accidents Involving Bicycles

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been killed as a result of road traffic accidents involving bicycles, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26990/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Available information is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – The number of people killed in road traffic collisions where a pedal cycle was involved in the collision.

Year	Fatalities
2010	0
2011	2
2012	2

Source: PSNI Road Traffic Casualty Statistics.

People Killed as a Result of Road Traffic Accidents Caused by Fatigue

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been killed as a result of road traffic accidents caused by fatigue or sleeplessness, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26991/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The precise number of cases cannot be released due to PSNI data disclosure policy being applied. Fatigue is a principal causation factor which can be recorded by an Investigating Officer at the time of a collision and is recorded for statistical purposes only. Due to there being 3 or fewer fatalities in any single year where this factor has been recorded, the actual number per year cannot be disclosed.

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether taxi drivers will have to complete a test before being granted a taxi operator licence.

(AQW 26996/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department recently consulted on proposals concerning a taxi driver test and periodic training for taxi drivers. These proposals relate to the arrangements for being granted a taxi driver's licence, and cover the necessary skills to drive a passenger-carrying vehicle safely. The consultation has now closed and my Department's proposed way forward will be provided to the Assembly's Environment Committee in the coming weeks.

The requirements for being issued with a Taxi Operator's Licence are set down in the Taxis (Northern Ireland) Act 2008 and The Taxi Operators Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012. They concern whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold an operator's licence and require the provision of various information to the Driver and Vehicle Agency.

New Taxi Regulations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact of the proposed new Taxi Regulations on the public hire sector of the industry.

(AQW 26997/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is responsible for implementing the Taxis Act (NI) 2008, which is the expressed will of the NI Assembly and is supported by the Environment Committee, consumer groups, disability groups and the majority of the taxi industry.

The constituent parts of the Taxi Reform Programme are:

- the introduction of Taxi Operator Licensing, which came into effect in September 2012;
- the introduction of single tier licensing;
- the requirement to have a taximeter & printer;
- the requirement to have specified roof sign; and
- reforming the arrangements for taxi driver testing and training.

The changes to the industry have been consulted on extensively and all interested parties have had the opportunity to engage and provide their comments. Each consultation has included draft impact assessments of the proposals for comment.

My Department has delayed the implementation timetable on more than one occasion, recognising the change that is needed for all in the taxi industry and the time it may take to address these changes. It is my view that sufficient time has been given for operators to adapt to the reforms, a view that members of the Environment Committee have also expressed.

Whilst there are extra costs involved in the implementation of the reform programme (between £640 and £740), I do not believe that the reforms will have a detrimental effect on overall consumer demand for taxis. Rather, I expect the implementation of the Taxi Reform Programme, and associated enforcement activities, to drive the evident demand for illegal taxis into the compliant sector, meaning that all taxi operators can take advantage from this increased demand for the services for legal taxis. I am currently considering if the costs can be phased, alongside the implementation of the remaining elements of the reform programme in September 2014.

Specifically in relation to Belfast Public Hire, my view is that the demand for their services within the wider taxi market will be determined by the service they provide and the price at which they provide it. Consumers will, and should, be able to exercise choice and this is a matter for each consumer. It is for my Department, as regulator, to set floor standards which all operators, vehicles and drivers must meet – so that taxi users can receive the service they expect – and then ensure compliance with those standards.

I do not believe that sectors of the industry should be segregated, particularly when consumer groups and public consultation has spoken strongly in favour of change. I acknowledge, however, my Department's role in supporting the industry through the changes being implemented. To this end, officials have engaged extensively with Belfast Public Hire representatives in recent months and have expended considerable efforts and energies in supporting them to arrange meetings with other parts of government.

New Taxi Regulations: Passengers with a Disability

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what provision is being made for passengers with a disability in the proposed new taxi regulations.

(AQW 26999/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As part of the development of the proposed new taxi Regulations, my Department has carried out an extensive engagement process with representatives of consumers with mobility impairment, and a key strand of the process has focussed on ensuring an adequate supply of

wheelchair accessible taxis across Northern Ireland. To this end, an independent review has been commissioned to assess the level of supply of such taxis and to recommend a technical specification for what will form the basis of a new class of wheelchair accessible taxis (Class B taxi).

The new recommended specification includes dimensions for door apertures, ramps, grab handles and steps, as well as anchors and fastening for wheelchairs. Full details will be published when a formal consultation issues later this year.

Once the new regulations are implemented, only Class B taxis will be permitted to stand at taxi ranks in Belfast. Consideration will be given to whether it is appropriate to roll this out to other areas of Northern Ireland, or if the disabled community is better served by promoting a more mixed fleet throughout Northern Ireland.

In addition, my Department recently consulted on proposals concerning a taxi driver test and periodic training for taxi drivers, the latter element of which may include an element of periodic training for drivers. These proposals relate to the arrangements for being granted a taxi driver's licence, and cover the necessary skills to drive a passenger-carrying vehicle safely. The consultation has now closed and my Department's proposed way forward will be provided to the Assembly's Environment Committee in the coming weeks. Depending on the outcome of the consultation, the prescribed training package may include elements around interaction with customers with reduced mobility, which in time may lead to an increased awareness throughout the taxi industry of the needs of people with impaired mobility issues.

My Department will continue to monitor and review the levels of provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles across Northern Ireland, to ensure that the new provisions do not have unforeseen impacts on availability.

Taxi Enforcement

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many staff in his Department work in taxi enforcement; and, on average, how many of these staff work each evening.

(AQW 27047/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Driver & Vehicle Agency currently has two dedicated PSV teams responsible for both taxi and bus enforcement. One team is based in Belfast and the other in Newbuildings and they have a combined staffing complement of 20 enforcement officers.

On average DVA has between 2 to 3 enforcement officers on duty each evening. Please note this is not part of official statistics and has not been subject to data validation.

Board of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he is taking to ensure there is a suitable replacement for the independent member of the Board of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

(AQW 27058/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have no plans to replace the present independent member of the NIEA Board when his term of appointment comes to an end.

Serious Driving Offences

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment whether there are any plans to introduce tougher penalties and fines for serious driving offences.

(AQW 27101/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department co-ordinates a strategic approach to road safety, primarily through the delivery of the Road Safety Strategy to 2020. The Strategy contains over 200 action measures aimed at reducing further all deaths and serious injuries on our roads - ultimately I want to challenge everyone to work together towards zero road deaths by taking personal responsibility for how they behave on our roads.

Given that most casualties are caused by poor driver behaviour I believe that improving and enforcing best driving practice must be our first priority. Over the coming months, I plan to introduce a Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill into the Assembly to toughen our drink driving regime, reform the way learner and novice drivers are trained, tested and licensed and require the wearing of crash helmets when driving a quad bike on the public road.

These measures will bring about a number of new offences and penalties which I believe will be perceived as fair and proportionate in effectively tackling the harm caused by some of the most serious driving offences.

The problems caused by drink drivers are well known and there is an increasing awareness of the dangers of driving while unfit through drugs. Drug driving is a complex issue with a wide variety of drugs possibly being consumed, including prescription and illicit drugs, and with varying intoxicating and impairing effects. Legislation is currently in place here that prohibits driving while impaired through drink or drugs; however, police currently have to demonstrate impairment before a driver can be prosecuted. As you might be aware, powers were taken in Westminster before the summer to make drug driving a specific offence, without the need to prove impairment. The drugs to be included and the levels at which offences will be committed are to be set in future regulations. I am, therefore, considering how we can bring drug driving into line with drink driving to enable more effective law enforcement.

While I support a zero tolerance approach to driving with illicit drugs, this is a complex issue. We are liaising closely with Britain and Ireland to allow us to consider carefully the direction we wish to take and policy and legislative direction will be worked out over the next few years.

As well as concentrating on areas where new legislation is required it is also important to review existing offences and penalties.

Those which apply to the most serious offences have been subject to change in recent years. The maximum penalty for causing death or grievous bodily injury by driving dangerously was increased from 10 to 14 years in 2004; and in 2008 we were the first part of these islands to introduce an offence of causing death or grievous bodily injury by careless driving, which carries a maximum sentence of 5 years. You will be also be interested to note that my Department plans to carry out a review of all current penalties for road traffic offences, including penalty points, which will begin in 2015. This review is a medium term action measure in the Road Safety Strategy. It will also assess the scope for conditions and circumstances around the commission of an offence to be reflected in the applicable penalties.

It is worth pointing out that individual sentencing decisions are a matter for the courts based on the evidence and established facts in each individual case. It is important, however, that the maximum penalty whether imprisonment, fine, disqualification or penalty points is at a level that adequately reflects the gravity of the offence and provides the courts with viable sentencing options.

I hope you are reassured by the plans that are in place to introduce new legislation to address key road safety issues. When in place these measures will deliver a range of new offences and penalties which I believe will act as a deterrent, reflect the gravity of the offence and attract public confidence. I also think they will send out a very clear message to irresponsible drivers that they can no longer afford to ignore the law and put lives at risk.

Otter Population

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the distribution of the otter population; and (ii) the measures her Department has in place to protect the otter.
(AQW 27122/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The otter is widely distributed in Northern Ireland. The most recent survey took place in 2010, with otters successfully detected at 334 of the 377 sites examined. This is a percentage occurrence of 88.6%, representing a significant overall increase of 26.9% since the last survey in 2001/02.

The otter is listed on Annex II and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive. The Annex II listing requires Member States to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for the protection of the species. There are 6 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) declared for the species in Northern Ireland. In addition, as a European Protected Species, otters are protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations), which transposes the Habitats Directive. They are also listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 which prohibits them from being killed or taken by certain methods. It is therefore an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill an otter. It is also an offence to deliberately disturb an otter in any way, or to disturb, damage, or destroy an otter's breeding site or resting place unless a licence has been obtained. The species is also covered by a UK Biodiversity Action Plan and a Northern Ireland Species Action Plan.

Private Hire Taxi Drivers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment how many private hire taxi drivers have been detected as being in breach of regulation by taking non-booked passengers, in each of the last five years, broken down by council area; and to detail the penalty imposed in each case.

(AQW 27141/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The information requested cannot be provided as records are not held in this format. Illegal activity of this nature is primarily a breach of condition of a PSV licence which can be dealt with by way of 'Advice and Warn', Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution. Records are only available in respect of those offences detected within the city limits of Belfast that resulted in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice, which were introduced in February 2011.

During the period 1st March 2011 to 30th June 2013 there were 25 private hire taxi drivers issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for picking up non-booked passengers within the city limits of Belfast. Please note this is not part of official statistics and has not been subject to data validation.

Council Headquarters

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment how many current council headquarters will be left redundant following the amalgamation of councils.

(AQO 4784/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As part of local government reform, the rationalisation of the current configuration of 26 councils to create 11 new councils will result in a number of issues that local government will need to address in terms of its estate. The draft Local Government Bill, which passed its second stage in the Assembly on 1 October 2013, makes provision for the transfer of ownership of all assets and liabilities, including buildings, from the current councils to the new ones on 1 April 2015.

Any decision regarding the future use of current council headquarters will be a matter for the new councils to determine. In reaching decisions, councils will need to ensure that the best use is made of their existing estate. This will be influenced by both the geographical spread of the new council areas and the need to ensure that the both the quality of services and their accessibility to ratepayers are not unduly impacted.

This will be one of the many issues that will need to be addressed by the new councils during the period in which they will operate in shadow mode from May 2014 to March 2015. Meanwhile, Statutory Transition Committees should be commissioning work to ensure that each council's asset register is up to date and accurate and that all other information is available early in the shadow period to allow decisions to be made swiftly on the best use of the combined estate of the new council area.

North Coast

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment what measures are in place to maintain and protect the natural environment of the North Coast.

(AQO 4785/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are numerous measures in place to maintain and protect the natural environment of the North Coast.

The distinctive and special landscapes of the North Coast have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty including Binevenagh and the Causeway Coast, whilst the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast has also been inscribed as a World Heritage Site.

Areas that have been identified by scientific survey as being of high conservation value have been designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Areas of Special Scientific Interest and Nature Reserves, including: Magilligan SAC/Nature Reserve; Bann Estuary SAC; North Antrim Coast SAC; Rathlin Island SAC/SPA; Sheep Island SPA and the marine Skerries and Causeway Coast candidate SAC.

These sites are provided with a degree of protection and management requirements by associated statutory provisions, as are many species, including nesting birds and marine species such as basking sharks, and grey and common seals. Designated sites and species are also provided with a degree of protection via our Planning system in the form of policies within Planning Policy Statements and Development Plans.

There are a wide range of proactive management measures which are undertaken to help maintain designated and protected natural assets and also natural assets that are found in the wider countryside and coastal areas.

These include the development and initiation of action plans, management plans or management agreements by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, partner bodies and landowners to maintain natural assets or to restore them to a more favourable status. For example, my predecessor, Alex Attwood, launched the Rathlin Island European Marine Site Management Scheme during June of this year.

In some instances NIEA can provide financial assistance, such as via the Natural Heritage Grant Programme, to enable partners to develop such plans or to help deliver the actions and recommendations within them.

All of these measures and actions combine and complement each other to maintain and protect the natural environment of the North Coast.

Windfarms

Mr Milne asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will work within the North South Ministerial Council to develop a single island approach on the part of planning authorities in respect of windfarm applications.

(AQO 4786/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I believe that co-operation on strategic environmental and planning matters is an issue of great importance that can provide mutual benefit to all parts of this Island. Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland share similar strategic development issues, opportunities and challenges and it makes sense to work together on these matters.

High level cooperation already exists between both jurisdictions in relation to strategic planning for infrastructure. In addition, there are transboundary consultation arrangements in relation to planning applications and plans being considered under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations.

Present arrangements do not provide opportunity to discuss this particular area in the NSMC meetings. However, my planning officials already communicate, co-operate and share practices on a regular basis with officials from the south on such issues and I will ensure that they continue to do so.

Dual Mandates

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has held any discussions with Her Majesty's Government on the provision of legislation at Westminster to ensure an end to dual mandates before the proposed local government elections on 22nd May 2014.

(AQO 4787/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The legislation at Westminster, the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill seeks to prevent a member of this House from holding office simultaneously as an MLA and a member of the House of Commons or the Dáil Éireann.

The Local Government Bill, which was introduced into the Assembly on 23 September 2013 and is currently at Committee stage, contains provisions to prevent an MP, MLA or MEP from being a councillor. This is quite separate from the provision on dual mandate being taken forward at Westminster.

There have been no discussions with the Secretary of State on this issue.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact on the environment of the non-conventional extraction of oil and gas by hydraulic fracturing.

(AQO 4788/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The hydraulic fracturing (Fracking) process has generated much debate in Northern Ireland and around the world because of the potential detrimental impact on the environment, particularly in relation to water quality, air emission issues, seismic impacts, as well as general personal health concerns raised by local communities.

In an attempt to allay these concerns specific divisions within my Department, primarily Planning NI and NIEA, are actively working to enhance their knowledge of the Fracking process by assessing emerging research which includes case studies from other parts of the world and liaising with colleagues in other Environment Agencies in Britain and Ireland, and other countries where Fracking is currently proposed or taking place.

Specifically:

- My Department represents Northern Ireland at the European level on the EU Technical Working Group on Unconventional Fossil Fuels;
- At UK level my Department represents Northern Ireland on the Unconventional Gas Regulators Group which includes relevant regulators from throughout the UK;
- On a cross border level my Departmental officials meet regularly with the Republic of Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency and are co-funding and co-leading a major research programme. Consultation on the proposed Terms of Reference has now concluded attracting a significant response from across the industry and interested parties.
- My Department also participates on a NI Shale Gas Regulators Forum consisting of representatives from government departments and agencies with a potential regulatory role in relation to fracking activities. This forum, formally established following a meeting between the DETI Minister, Arlene Foster MLA and the former DOE Minister, Alex Atwood MLA, will drive cross cutting issues, such as the impact of potential seismic activity on well integrity, to be discussed and assessed by the relevant regulators i.e. Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, NIEA and the Health and Safety Executive.
- I wish to make it clear that the purpose of the Forum is to consider the multiple issues around Fracking and does not in any way either indicate my support or my Department's support for the process or compromise the authority of its agencies when it comes to planning, habitats and the relevant assessments.

The former Minister and a Senior DoE Official also visited the United States in 2012, where they received presentations and briefings from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Research and Development, and Office of Air and Radiation on the issue of hydraulic fracturing.

These presentations and briefings highlighted the work that the US EPA is doing, and its planned work in relation to the environmental impact of Fracking. In particular briefing was received on the US EPA's ongoing research programme on the potential impact of shale gas extraction on drinking water supplies, and also their work on potential technological and regulatory controls on gas emissions.

As studies, reports and assessments are completed, a broader evidence base will emerge which will aid decision making on the issue. Decisions on granting permissions will only be made when the full scientific and research picture is complete. I recognise that to do otherwise given the scale of ongoing research, would not reflect good governance.

Cyclists: Road Safety

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to help promote the road safety of cyclists, including those participating in the Cycle to Work initiative.
(AQO 4789/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Drivers are responsible for the majority of collisions on our roads. The main causes of the collisions are speeding, drink driving and inattention. Changing the attitudes and behaviours of drivers is therefore the most effective way of protecting all road users and the Department's campaigns concentrate on changing such behaviours. The Road Safety Strategy recognises cyclists as a vulnerable road user group and includes a range of actions that relate to cyclists' safety.

Since the publication of the Road Safety Strategy in April 2011 the Department has launched a number of road safety campaigns.

In October 2011, the 'Be Cycle Aware' campaign was launched to remind drivers and cyclists to pay attention when sharing the road.

In May 2012, a campaign was launched to encourage road users to 'respect everyone's journey'. The important safety messages to drivers will benefit all vulnerable road user groups, including cyclists.

In September 2012, a campaign was launched, focusing on wider road user responsibility, urging all road users to take responsibility for their actions on the road. The television, press and online campaign includes an injured cyclist saying "I was cycling in the bike lane. The driver said the sun was in his eyes."

A further campaign, launched on 24 April 2013, invites everyone to 'Share the Road to Zero'. This is aimed at all road user groups – cyclists, pedestrians, motorcyclists, drivers and passengers and, indeed, focuses heavily on cyclists in the opening scenes. The aim is to get every road user to take personal responsibility for helping to prevent deaths on Northern Ireland's roads. The social media aspect of this campaign invites the whole community to do what they can to work towards zero deaths on our roads; it also provides appropriately targeted road safety messages to subscribers. This can be found at www.sharetheroadtozero.com

A 'Cycling Skills & Cycling Safety' guide, developed by DOE and DRD, is available in hard copy and online and provides information on basic safety requirements and on the rules of the road.

The Cycling Proficiency Scheme is offered by the DOE Road Safety Education Officer Service to every primary school in Northern Ireland. Over 530 primary schools participate in the scheme each year, with approximately 8,365 children benefiting from the scheme annually.

The Highway Code gives advice on how drivers should treat vulnerable road users, including cyclists, with extra care and also provides advice specifically for cyclists in Rules 59 to 82.

The Cycle to Work Scheme was introduced in the NICS in June 2012 and enables staff to hire a bicycle for use in the journey to and from work. The scheme was established to encourage staff to use bicycles as their preferred means of transport to and from work.

The scheme covers not only the purchase of the cycle but also safety equipment such as compliant cycle helmet, lights, reflective and protective clothing, pump, repair kit, mirror, mudguards and cycle shoes. To date 192 staff in DOE have availed of the Scheme.

The campaigns and initiatives launched by the Department in recent years will contribute to a change in the road safety behaviours and attitudes of all road users and make the road safer for everyone including those cyclists who have availed of the Cycle to Work initiative.

Between 2008 and 2012, six cyclists died on our roads. So far this year three cyclists have died. Given a rise in cyclist casualties, the Department is currently analysing available data and has commissioned qualitative research to help inform consideration of potential new educational activity around cyclist safety. I recognise the continuing challenges of reducing all casualties on our roads, including cyclists and will take forward further actions as appropriate.

Carrier Bag Levy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment whether groups will be able to apply for funding for environmental projects from the single use bag levy.

(AQO 4790/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Yes. I am keen that a wide variety of groups across Northern Ireland have access to the carrier bag levy funds. I will be announcing in the next few weeks how community and other groups can apply for funding for environmental projects.

Details of the application process and the amount of funding available for environmental projects will form part of the announcement.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQO 4791/11-15)

Mr Durkan: After extensive assessment of the recommendations made by the Planning Appeals Commission, my Department recently submitted BMAP to the Department for Regional Development (DRD) for assessment of the Plan against the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). I expect DRD's consideration to be completed by 16 October and subject to the Plan being awarded a Certificate of General Conformity, preparations for publication will commence and are expected to take 3 – 4 months. Once completed, I plan to adopt BMAP at the earliest opportunity.

RPA: Costs

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of the Environment for the updated figures on the cost of the implementation of local government reform.

(AQO 4792/11-15)

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

The Regional Transition Committee has commissioned the Finance Working Group with the key task of developing an up to date and accurate analysis of the full costs and benefits of the reform implementation programme. Local government has been leading this work, and a response is expected within the coming weeks.

Transport

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment what issues he intends to raise with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport when he meets him in London in November.
(AQO 4793/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The purpose of my meeting with Stephen Hammond, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, on 6 November is to follow-up on a comprehensive response I made to him on the public consultation carried out by DVLA on the future of vehicle licensing in Northern Ireland.

As you know, since I came to office, I have continued my predecessor's robust opposition to the threatened centralisation of vehicle licensing services in Swansea and the closure of all motor tax offices here, which would result in the loss of over 300 jobs and the withdrawal of local services for motorists.

I will be again emphasising to Mr Hammond the wider social, economic and political context of the decision facing him about the delivery of vehicle licensing. I will point out the disproportionate impact that the loss of over 300 jobs would have on the Northern Ireland economy, particularly on Coleraine but also on the other seven locations that have local offices.

I will remind Mr Hammond of the exceptionally high and independently validated standards of service and quality of performance achieved by DVA and I will point out the unanimous, cross-party support in the Assembly against the centralisation proposal and assure him that this reflects the depth and range of opposition right across the community. I will explain to him that many customers in Northern Ireland clearly want to have the choice of dealing with DVA staff in relation to vehicle licensing and that it is unrealistic, especially given lower rates of uptake of online services here, to expect customers to be able to switch instantly to new delivery channels or to accept the remote delivery of services from Swansea.

I will also challenge Mr Hammond to justify any cuts to jobs in Northern Ireland in the context of his Government's commitments to the Northern Ireland Executive to help in the stimulation and development of the economy here as we seek to move out of a recession that has been more acute and sustained than in other parts of the UK.

Finally, I will point out to Mr Hammond the alternatives to cutting local jobs and services. I will demonstrate how the very able and committed staff in DVA could, with up-to-date technology that they have been denied through under investment by DVLA, continue to deliver high quality services to local customers and to customers across the UK.

Wind Turbines in the Binevenagh Area of County Londonderry

Mr Cree asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the concerns raised by the local community and gliding club over the construction of wind turbines in the Binevenagh area of County Londonderry.
(AQW 27261/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is currently dealing with an application for a wind farm within Binevenagh AONB (C/2013/0248/F). The Environmental Statement to accompany the application has just recently been received and therefore formal processing of the application has just begun. The application will be determined under Planning Policy 18 – Renewable Energy and associated supplementary planning guidance 'Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes'. All representations made to the Department will be fully considered in the determination of the application, including those from any local organisations such as the gliding club.

Wind Turbines in the Binevenagh Area of County Londonderry

Mr Cree asked the Minister of the Environment whether any planning applications for the erection of wind turbines in the Binevenagh area of Co. Londonderry have been approved.
(AQW 27303/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department refused 2 windfarm applications within the Binevenagh AONB primarily on the grounds of an unacceptable adverse impact on the visual amenity and landscape character of the AONB designation.

The decision on these 2 windfarms totalling 21 turbines at 125m in height were overturned by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). The PAC in approving these 2 windfarms considered the economic benefits to be derived to be sufficiently significant to override the landscape concerns.

Due to technical constraints I am unable to provide you with the detail on the number of single wind turbines that have received planning permission within the AONB. I will forward you this information as soon as it has been extracted from our database.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Special Advisers: Termination of Appointment

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Act 2013, has the appointment of any Special Advisers been terminated and, if so, when.
(AQW 25898/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The impact of the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 on the appointment of any Special Advisers is a matter for each employing department. With regard to the Department of Finance and Personnel, no appointment of a Special Adviser has been terminated.

Departmental Projects: Project Bank Accounts

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to departmental projects, to estimate how many project bank accounts will be introduced in both this and the next financial year, to detail the location and value of these contracts.

(AQW 26196/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Departments estimate that Project Bank Accounts will be included in twenty projects in this and the next financial year as listed in Table 1 at Annex A. The figures provided are subject to the explanatory notes below the table.

Table 1 Annex A

Department of/for	Project Name	Project Location	Project Value	Year
Finance & Personnel	Adelaide House Refurbishment	Belfast	>£1m	14/15
	Castle Court Refurbishment	Belfast	>£1m	14/15
Regional Development	Magherafelt Bypass	Magherafelt	£25m	14/15
Social Development	Oldpark Road, PREI Scheme	Belfast	£3.50m	14/15
	Shankill Gateway PREI Scheme	Belfast	£3.25m	14/15
	Albert Bridge / Templemore Junction PREI Scheme	Belfast	£2.90m	14/15
	The Bullring, Greater Shankill	Belfast	£1.60m	14/15
	Central Station PREI Scheme	Belfast	£1.02m	14/15
	Albert Street PREI Scheme	Belfast	£1.00m	14/15

Department of/for	Project Name	Project Location	Project Value	Year
	Lagan Footbridge	Belfast	£3.30m	14/15
	Fort George Consultancy Services for remediation	Londonderry	£2.50m	13/14
Health, Social Services & Public Safety	Belfast City Hospital Mental Health Inpatient Unit	Belfast	£32.2m	14/15
	Royal Victoria Maternity Hospital	Belfast	£46.2m	14/15
	Altnagelvin Phase 5.1 - Treatment Wing refurbishment	Londonderry	£73.5m	14/15
	RVH Energy Centre	Belfast	£19m	14/15
	Regional Children's Hospital	Belfast	£219m	14/15
	Craigavon Area Hospital Mechanical Infrastructure Upgrade	Craigavon	£6.50m	13/14
Justice	New Prison Accommodation Block	Maghaberry	£32m	14/15
Agriculture & Rural Development	Rivers Agency Regional Office	Omagh	£1.12m	13/14
the Environment	Roller shutter doors in DVA Testing centres	Across NI	£1.01m	14/15
Culture, Arts & Leisure	None	—	—	—
Employment & Learning	None	—	—	—
Education	None	—	—	—
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	None	—	—	—
Office of the First and Deputy First Minister	None	—	—	—
Public Prosecution Service	None	—	—	—

Explanatory notes.

- 1 Central Procurement Directorate, when letting construction works contracts on behalf of DFP or other departments, will incorporate use of a Project Bank Account in appropriate contracts with a value in excess of £1million and which contain a significant subcontract element.
- 2 The figures provided are each department's estimate of the projects which will incorporate Project Bank Accounts.

Average Salary of Graduates

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the average salary of graduates.
(AQW 26678/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel does not hold information on the average salary of graduates.

NI Advisory Committee: National Asset Management Agency Board

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the membership and the dates of meetings for the NI Advisory Committee that advise the National Asset Management Agency Board.
(AQW 26882/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The NAMA Northern Ireland Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of the NAMA Board. I cannot therefore account for its membership or report details of its meetings.

NI Advisory Committee: National Asset Management Agency Board

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the work of the NI Advisory Committee to the National Asset Management Agency board.
(AQW 26883/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The NAMA Northern Ireland Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of the NAMA Board. I cannot therefore account for its membership or report details of its meetings.

Funding for the A26 Upgrade

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he expects to inform the Minister of Regional Development on the availability of funding for the A26 upgrade.
(AQW 26888/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: In my statement to the Assembly on Monday 21st October 2013, I announced allocations agreed by the Executive following the October 2013 In-Year Monitoring Round and the 2014-15 Capital Reallocation Exercise. This included an allocation of £8.1 million in 2014-15 for the A26 Glarryford to Drones Road Dual Carriageway.

Northern Ireland Water's Scheme of Charges 2013/14

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, to detail; (i) the amount domestic water charges as detailed in Northern Ireland Water's Scheme of Charges 2013/14, would have raised in the current financial year had they been levied in full on domestic consumers; (ii) the basis on which the charging structure was formulated; and (iii) if he would expect the domestic element in the Regional Rate to be reduced if water charges were imposed, and if so, by how much.
(AQW 26977/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: During 2013/14 the Department for Regional Development will pay £275m to Northern Ireland Water in lieu of customer charges.

The Executive has decided to defer the introduction of separate domestic water charges during this Programme for Government period. There are no plans to impose specific water charges on households and therefore I cannot comment on Regional Rate reductions.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail his Department's performance against the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.
(AQW 26983/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: On 17 July 2013, the United Nations Committee that oversees the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) formally examined the UK's performance in terms of its CEDAW obligations. Northern Ireland Departments took part in this Examination and my Department provided relevant information as part of the associated briefing material.

Devolving Additional Fiscal Powers and Designating Enterprise Zones

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the on-going work regarding (i) devolving additional fiscal powers; and (ii) designating Enterprise Zones
(AQW 26985/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The devolution of responsibility for corporation tax remains a key objective for the Executive. Work on the design of a devolved corporation tax regime is continuing to ensure that if a decision to proceed with devolution is forthcoming, the Government can meet the aim of making necessary legislative changes prior to the prorogation of the current Parliament.

Furthermore, and in line with the commitment in the Building a Prosperous and United Community document, we are also examining the potential for devolving specific additional fiscal powers. As a first stage of this work, DFP is currently undertaking a scoping exercise to examine the Calman and Silk Commission reports, the positions taken in respect of each individual tax and the wider financial context in that regard. Following this a work programme will be developed to progress this exercise with the aim of putting recommendations for further devolution to Executive and Government Ministers by autumn 2014.

With regards to Enterprise Zones, we are also considering the merits of establishing zones that would have the ability to offer Enhanced Capital Allowances in Northern Ireland.

Economic Advisory Group Report: Access to Finance

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline how he is working with the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to implement the recommendations within the Economic Advisory Group Report on access to finance.
(AQW 27006/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Economic Advisory Group (EAG) report contained a number of recommendations for Government, the banks and businesses. Both the Enterprise Minister and I have taken the necessary steps to implement those actions for which we are responsible and to put arrangements in place to encourage and oversee the delivery of those actions that fall to others.

Local Business: Exports

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the countries that local business export to, broken down by percentage.
(AQW 27014/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Trade in Goods information is available from the Regional Trade Statistics (RTS), which are produced by HMRC. The RTS are published quarterly and show trade at summary product and country group level, split by UK regions and devolved administrations. Table 1 attached shows the value and percentage of exports from Northern Ireland split by Country for calendar year 2012.

In addition, latest results (2011) from the Exporting Northern Ireland Services Study (ENIS) show that trade in services from the manufacturing, construction and other high export potential groups was estimated at £495 million. Broad destination data is available for the high export potential group only and is provided in Table 2 (attached).

Table 1. Value of exports from Northern Ireland to all countries (2012)

Country	Exports / £ 000's	% of Total Exports
Irish Republic	2,064,375	36.1
United States	520,475	9.1
Canada	345,472	6.0

Country	Exports / £ 000's	% of Total Exports
France	275,321	4.8
Germany	226,918	4.0
Australia	146,008	2.6
Netherlands	136,140	2.4
Other Asia and Oceania	128,301	2.2
Saudi Arabia	111,703	2.0
Thailand	105,092	1.8
Belgium	100,355	1.8
Uae	83,561	1.5
China	80,377	1.4
Spain	75,185	1.3
Russia	63,196	1.1
Italy	59,866	1.0
South Africa	56,096	1.0
Nigeria	51,346	0.9
Other Sub-Saharan Africa	47,410	0.8
Singapore	46,706	0.8
Poland	45,875	0.8
Portugal	43,623	0.8
Hong Kong	41,746	0.7
Switzerland	39,521	0.7
Denmark	37,909	0.7
Kuwait	37,835	0.7
Turkey	35,336	0.6
Sweden	35,177	0.6
Mexico	35,065	0.6
Brazil	28,965	0.5
Japan	27,919	0.5
India	27,434	0.5
Israel	25,065	0.4
Other Middle East and North Africa	25,003	0.4
Finland	24,451	0.4
Ivory Coast	24,217	0.4
Norway	23,489	0.4

Country	Exports / £ 000's	% of Total Exports
Czech Republic	21,409	0.4
Oman	21,365	0.4
Pakistan	21,315	0.4
Chile	20,937	0.4
Kenya	20,929	0.4
Angola	20,714	0.4
Ukraine	17,909	0.3
Austria	17,722	0.3
Qatar	16,831	0.3
Colombia	16,634	0.3
Lebanon	14,642	0.3
Other Latin America and the Caribbean	13,471	0.2
South Korea	11,683	0.2
Other Eastern Europe	11,477	0.2
Hungary	11,440	0.2
Egypt	11,061	0.2
New Zealand	10,763	0.2
Taiwan	10,647	0.2
Lithuania	9,599	0.2
Greece	9,521	0.2
Ghana	9,502	0.2
Venezuela	9,331	0.2
Romania	8,954	0.2
Bahrain	6,974	0.1
Algeria	6,913	0.1
Philippines	6,233	0.1
Jordan	6,229	0.1
Argentina	5,708	0.1
Latvia	5,654	0.1
Morocco	5,524	0.1
Cyprus	5,139	0.1
Bulgaria	4,203	0.1
Tunisia	4,074	0.1
Malta	3,797	0.1

Country	Exports / £ 000's	% of Total Exports
Ecuador	3,606	0.1
Indonesia	3,538	0.1
Libya	2,970	0.1
Ethiopia	2,627	0.0
Slovakia	2,444	0.0
Tanzania	2,420	0.0
Croatia	2,376	0.0
Mauritius	2,279	0.0
Iceland	2,263	0.0
Estonia	2,252	0.0
Slovenia	2,199	0.0
Panama	2,036	0.0
Costa Rica	1,970	0.0
Dominican Rep	1,777	0.0
Cameroon	1,756	0.0
Jamaica	1,186	0.0
Trinidad:Tobago	1,085	0.0
Zimbabwe	991	0.0
Uruguay	947	0.0
Guyana	847	0.0
Syria	676	0.0
Other Western Europe	606	0.0
Luxembourg	598	0.0
Iran	589	0.0
Barbados	151	0.0
Namibia	80	0.0
Botswana	37	0.0
All Exports	5,725,143	100.0

Source: Regional Trade Statistics, HMRC

Table 2. Trade in Service Exports by High Potential Companies (HEP) by Broad Destination (2011)

Destination	Exports (£m)	% of Total HEP Exports
Ireland	75.7	30.7%
Rest of Europe	19.8	8.0%
Rest of World	151.4	61.3%
Total¹	247.0	100%

1 Manufacturing and Construction Service Exports account for an additional £248 million; however this figure cannot be disaggregated by destination.

Local Business: Imports

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the countries that local business import from, broken down by percentage.

(AQW 27015/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Imports data is available from the Regional Trade Statistics (RTS), which are produced by HMRC. The RTS are published quarterly and show trade at summary product and country group level, split by UK regions and devolved administrations.

Table 1 attached shows the value and percentage of imports, split by Country for 2012.

Table 1. Value of imports to Northern Ireland from all countries (2012)

Country	Imports / £ 000's	% of Total Imports
Irish Republic	1,545,043	27.1
China	938,412	16.4
United States	436,209	7.6
Germany	318,704	5.6
Netherlands	309,971	5.4
France	249,517	4.4
Other Asia and Oceania	220,598	3.9
Italy	219,932	3.9
Spain	159,740	2.8
Turkey	157,898	2.8
India	151,820	2.7
Belgium	110,264	1.9
Sweden	90,368	1.6
Poland	67,134	1.2
Canada	61,964	1.1
Argentina	60,712	1.1
Pakistan	44,876	0.8

Country	Imports / £ 000's	% of Total Imports
Indonesia	43,410	0.8
Japan	42,721	0.7
Taiwan	39,117	0.7
Hong Kong	36,553	0.6
Brazil	34,507	0.6
Switzerland	32,001	0.6
Denmark	31,383	0.5
Colombia	30,244	0.5
Thailand	24,482	0.4
Russia	22,984	0.4
Uae	21,676	0.4
Austria	18,148	0.3
Ukraine	15,165	0.3
Czech Republic	13,887	0.2
Portugal	13,378	0.2
Finland	13,285	0.2
South Africa	11,117	0.2
South Korea	8,415	0.1
Chile	8,397	0.1
New Zealand	8,179	0.1
Luxembourg	7,271	0.1
Iran	7,049	0.1
Israel	7,014	0.1
Australia	6,915	0.1
Estonia	6,221	0.1
Norway	6,041	0.1
Lithuania	5,940	0.1
Mexico	4,864	0.1
Latvia	4,689	0.1
Singapore	4,112	0.1
Kenya	3,527	0.1
Slovakia	3,398	0.1
Hungary	3,203	0.1
Philippines	3,174	0.1

Country	Imports / £ 000's	% of Total Imports
Romania	2,992	0.1
Morocco	2,792	0.0
Algeria	2,007	0.0
Oman	1,894	0.0
Egypt	1,759	0.0
Other Latin America and the Caribbean	1,414	0.0
Malta	1,383	0.0
Other Eastern Europe	1,328	0.0
Greece	1,324	0.0
Slovenia	1,087	0.0
Bulgaria	1,036	0.0
Ghana	963	0.0
Cyprus	839	0.0
Saudi Arabia	650	0.0
Uruguay	569	0.0
Cameroon	302	0.0
Other Sub-Saharan Africa	218	0.0
Jordan	209	0.0
Croatia	180	0.0
Ivory Coast	168	0.0
Lebanon	114	0.0
Tanzania	102	0.0
Iceland	99	0.0
Trinidad:Tobago	91	0.0
Tunisia	76	0.0
Ecuador	47	0.0
Bahrain	47	0.0
Other Middle East and North Africa	47	0.0
Panama	46	0.0
Kuwait	26	0.0
Jamaica	17	0.0
Mauritius	13	0.0
Qatar	11	0.0
Costa Rica	9	0.0

Country	Imports / £ 000's	% of Total Imports
Dominican Rep	5	0.0
Namibia	5	0.0
Other Western Europe	5	0.0
Angola	1	0.0
All Imports	5,709,504	100.0

Source: Regional Trade Statistics, HMRC

Full Employment: Gross Value Added and the Fiscal Deficit

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of how full employment would effect (i) Gross Value Added; and (ii) the fiscal deficit.

(AQW 27089/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My department has not carried out any assessment of how full employment would effect gross value added or the fiscal deficit. Clearly though, full employment if that were achievable would most likely result in greater output, an increase in direct tax revenue and less expenditure on areas such as social security, thereby having a positive impact on the fiscal deficit.

Monies Allocated to the Public Prosecution Service

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the measures in place to monitor the use of monies allocated to the Public Prosecution Service.

(AQW 27091/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is a non-ministerial department. Like all departments it is subject to the formal processes in place to monitor the use of monies allocated to it. Funding for the department is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly and, as Accounting Officer for the Service, the Director of Public Prosecutions is responsible for ensuring that the public monies provided are used effectively and efficiently

The fundamental principle in respect of the public expenditure control framework is that Northern Ireland departments must not incur expenditure in excess of the amounts approved by the Executive.

As departmental priorities change, the in-year monitoring process provides a formal system for reviewing spending plans and priorities for each financial year in light of the most up to date information. This process therefore aides good financial management and ensures that resources are directed towards the highest priority areas.

The Department of Finance and Personnel is responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring process and providing advice to the Minister of Finance and Personnel on the proposal for each round. The Finance Minister then brings his proposals to the Executive for approval.

Departmental Anti-Fraud Unit

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether his Department has an anti-fraud unit; and if so, to detail its (i) annual budget; (ii) staff compliment; and (iii) successes to date.

(AQW 27178/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel does not have an anti-fraud unit.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

European Working Time Directive: Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 26086/11-15, how many consultants have opted out of the European Working Time Directive; and whether he has any plans to introduce mechanisms to record external hours worked by consultants contracted to do Health and Social Care work.

(AQW 26748/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): One HSC Trust (Southern) advised that twelve consultants had opted out of the European Working Time Directive. The other four HSC Trusts reported that they did not hold any information on numbers of consultants who had opted out.

The Department has no plans to introduce mechanisms to record external hours worked by consultants contracted to do health and social care work. Consultants are required to inform their clinical manager, as part of the job planning process, of all their activities, including any private commitments.

People with a Visual Impairment who Cannot Access Internet Services

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number and percentage of people with a visual impairment who cannot access internet services.

(AQW 26802/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

Temporary Removal of Electronic Medical Equipment from Hospitals

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what guidance is provided to in-patients on the temporary removal of electronic medical equipment from hospitals.

(AQW 26857/11-15)

Mr Poots: Trusts are required to follow the guidance of the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in relation to Medical Device and to have policies and procedures in place for their management.

On the prescription and loan of medical devices (including electronic devices) to Patients the amount and type of guidance and information provided to the patient, carer or relatives depends on the specific piece of equipment, the length of time that the equipment is likely to be required by the patient and the level of patient interaction required for the safe use of the equipment.

For short term use of a medical device within a hospital setting guidance is provided to patients that is limited to its immediate use including seeking clinical assistance in the event of an alarm.

For long term use, where the patient is discharged from the hospital with the equipment, additional guidance and instruction are provided covering the safe use, care and return of the equipment.

Medical Cards: Fraud

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the scale of fraud in securing Medical Cards; and what is the resulting cost to the public purse.

(AQW 26864/11-15)

Mr Poots: Whilst there is a variance in the number of medical cards and the NI population figures this is not a NI specific issue and applies equally across the UK. There are many reasons for this:

- Patients who have died outside the jurisdiction or who have emigrated out of the UK but who did not notify their GP practice or the relevant authority when they left; and
- Patients who are registered in more than one practice simultaneously.

NI specific reasons include:

- Cross border workers – these are people who work and pay taxes in Northern Ireland and are therefore entitled to access health services in NI; and
- Non entitled cross border users – people who are resident in the Republic of Ireland but who inappropriately or fraudulently access health services in Northern Ireland by providing a Northern Ireland address to the GP practice.

To obtain a Medical Card, applicants must complete a registration form at a GP practice, which is signed and dated by the applicant and the GP, and then forwarded to the BSO with the required documentation for validation. If the documentation is in order and the ordinarily resident test is satisfied then the registration is authorised and the patient is issued with a medical card. If the registration cannot be authorised because the documentation is incomplete or insufficient, and the ordinarily resident is not satisfied, then the BSO informs the Practice and the applicant and the registration is declined.

As I outlined in my statement to the Assembly on 15 October 2013 the true extent of fraud in HSC and indeed across the whole of the UK is not known, however, there is already a significant amount of counter fraud work being undertaken by the HSC's Counter Fraud Unit which employs a team of trained specialised staff. Fraud is wrong, unethical, immoral and unlawful. We all pay the price and front line services suffer. I am committed to developing a real anti-fraud culture, where everyone regards fraud as unacceptable and understands their role in eliminating it. I would therefore encourage everyone to report fraud or suspected fraud through the HSC Hotline or the HSC's website and ensure that our scarce health resources are directed to delivering services to those who need them most and who are genuinely entitled.

Medical Cards: Fraud

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what procedures are in place to prevent Medical Cards being fraudulently obtained.

(AQW 26865/11-15)

Mr Poots: Whilst there is a variance in the number of medical cards and the NI population figures this is not a NI specific issue and applies equally across the UK. There are many reasons for this:

- Patients who have died outside the jurisdiction or who have emigrated out of the UK but who did not notify their GP practice or the relevant authority when they left; and
- Patients who are registered in more than one practice simultaneously.

NI specific reasons include:

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Medical Services Provided to Citizens of the Republic

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much has been recovered in each of the last five years from the Republic of Ireland in respect of medical services provided in Northern Ireland to citizens of the Republic.

(AQW 26866/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available because the HSC Trusts gather information on non-UK patients in different ways. It is not possible for them to identify Republic of Ireland from other EEA visitors or via which route they accessed treatment.

Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what current work is being done to assist in the treatment of people diagnosed with dry age-related macular degeneration.

(AQW 26874/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently, there is no treatment for dry age-related macular degeneration but research is ongoing to find a treatment. In Northern Ireland, if patients with dry age-related macular degeneration experience change in vision they can be assessed by an ophthalmologist at the Hospital Eye Department. Low Vision Rehabilitation and Low Vision Services are available here to provide patients with practical and emotional support to allow them to understand their diagnosis, deal with sight loss and help maintain independence. In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the Macular Disease Society and the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).

Slieve Roe Residential Care Home Kilkeel

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the urgent funding arrangements for Residential Care, Respite and Rehabilitation at Slieve Roe Residential Care Home, Kilkeel.

(AQW 26876/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Trust has advised that there are no urgent funding arrangements in place for Slieve Roe Residential Care Home as it is core funded. The 2013/14 Budget for Slieve Roe is £515,644.

Definitions: Mental Illness and Learning Disability

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the definition of (i) mental illness; and (ii) learning disability, as endorsed or adopted by Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 26916/11-15)

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland the legal definitions of mental illness and mental handicap (learning disability) are set out in section 3 of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, as follows:

- (i) "mental illness" - means a state of mind which effects a person's thinking, perceiving, emotion or judgement to the extent that he requires care or medical treatment in his own interests or the interests of other persons;

and

- (ii) "mental handicap" (now known as learning disability) - means a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning.

People with Learning Disabilities who Attend Special Schools

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to young people with learning disabilities who attend special schools and are in preparation for Post-19, which Health and Social Care Trusts have (i) a Strategic Transitions Officer; or (ii) a similar person or team liaising with schools and the children's parents or carers; and to list the relevant job titles in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 26917/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Health and Social Care Trusts that:

(i) there are no posts with the title Strategic Transitions Officer;

and

(ii) the relevant job titles/teams are as follows:

Health & Social Care Trust	Title
Belfast HSC Trust	Transition Officers
Northern HSC Trust	Children's Services Team
Southern HSC Trust	Transition Co-ordinators
South Eastern HSC Trust	Children's Disability Team
Western HSC Trust	Transition Social Workers

The above persons/teams work in close association with schools, young people and their parents/carers and also interface with adult services.

Provision of Appropriate Incontinence Pads for Children

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the guidelines, in each Health and Social Care Trust, relating to the provision of appropriate incontinence pads for children where medical conditions exist that show extreme need.

(AQW 26929/11-15)

Mr Poots: Trusts in Northern Ireland follow regionally agreed guidance in relation to the management of continence in children and the provision of suitable products.

Children are assessed by a health care practitioner by the age of 4 years and based on that, an appropriate product will be selected. Children receive 5 products per 24 hours but can be issued with more if their condition requires this. The child will be reviewed on a 6-12 monthly basis or more frequently if needed.

Cost of Translation Services

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of translation services incurred by each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last three years, broken down by language.

(AQW 26936/11-15)

Mr Poots: Translation service costs include written, face to face interpreting and spoken word. The cost of translation services incurred by each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

	2012/13 £	2011/12 £	2010/11 £	Total by HSC Trust £
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	717,799	536,462	448,576	1,702,837
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	364,641	309,832	295,496	969,969
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	119,151	115,391	93,600	328,142
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	1,358,177	924,136	919,977	3,202,290
Western Health & Social Care Trust	216,809	220,052	166,239	603,100
NI Ambulance Service Health & Social Care Trust	995	1,268	2,357	4,620
Total	£2,777,572	£2,107,141	£1,926,245	£6,810,958

Due to disproportionate costs it is not possible to provide a breakdown of these costs by language.

Number of Instances Translation Services Were Provided

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of instances where translation services were provided to patients in each Health and Social Care Trusts in each of the last three years, broken down by service provider.

(AQW 26937/11-15)

Mr Poots: Translation services include instances of written, face to face interpreting and spoken word. The number of instances where translation services were provided to patients in each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years is set out in the table below. The service was provided by the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS).

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	Total by HSC Trust
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	22,358	17,812	15,072	55,242
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	11,959	8,270	7,198	27,427
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	3,582	3,214	2,430	9,226
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	40,925	34,708	29,221	104,854
Western Health & Social Care Trust	6,311	5,301	4,474	16,086
Total	85,135	69,305	58,395	212,835

It is not possible to provide information on the number of instances of translations regarding the NI Ambulance Service Health & Social Care Trust.

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 26954/11-15)

Mr Poots: As required by the Disability Discrimination Act, the DHSSPS has a Disability Action Plan (DAP) setting out how it will meet the statutory duties to: promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and encourage participation by disabled people in public life. The Department prepares an

annual report to the Equality Commission which includes a section on the progress made in delivering on the actions in the DAP. The DAP and Annual Progress Reports are available on the Department's website.

Through various policies, strategies and standards my Department aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland, including those living with disabilities, their families and carers. Recent examples include:-

- the development of a new public health strategic framework;
- service frameworks for mental health, learning disability and older people;
- Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy (2012);
- Delivering the Bamford Vision Action Plans (2009/11 and 2012/15);
- the forthcoming cross-Departmental Autism Strategy and Action Plan.

I fully support a greater focus on health promotion, prevention, protection and early intervention to improve health and wellbeing. . Person centred care is essential for those who need it and I endorse "home as the hub of care". These are some of the principles underpinning the reform of health and social care services as set out in Transforming Your Care - Vision to Action (2012).

G551D Cystic Fibrosis Mutation

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been diagnosed with the G551D cystic fibrosis mutation.

(AQW 26956/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently there are 37 patients in Northern Ireland identified as having the G551D gene (21 adults and 16 children).

Of these a total of 21 patients have commenced ivacaftor treatment (13 adults and 8 children). Numbers are expected to rise as children become clinically suitable for ivacaftor treatment.

G551D Cystic Fibrosis Mutation

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have been prescribed ivacaftor for treatment of the G551D cystic fibrosis mutation; and whether this treatment is funded by the Health Service.

(AQW 26959/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently there are 37 patients in Northern Ireland identified as having the G551D gene (21 adults and 16 children).

Of these a total of 21 patients have commenced ivacaftor treatment (13 adults and 8 children). Numbers are expected to rise as children become clinically suitable for ivacaftor treatment.

G551D Cystic Fibrosis Mutation

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he plans to seek a discount deal with drug suppliers, similar to that which has made it possible for the drug ivacaftor to be prescribed under the National Health Service for patients diagnosed with the G551D cystic fibrosis mutation in England, or whether the deal agreed in England can be extended here.

(AQW 26964/11-15)

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland medicines are commissioned in line with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) commissioning priorities and in accordance with: the medicine's marketing authorisation; NICE Technology Appraisals; and other evidence based sources, where applicable. Arrangements for agreeing the cost of commissioned treatments are therefore a matter for the HSCB.

Patients Suffering from Rare Diseases: Individual Funding Request Process

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 26205/11-15 and AQW 26206/11-15, how many patients, suffering from rare diseases, have been refused treatment through the Individual Funding Request process, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 26972/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) does not hold the information requested in the form requested. Whilst the HSCB maintains a database of all Individual Funding Requests, this does not include information about whether a patient has a rare disease.

Abortion Guidelines: Review

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he plans to review the draft abortion guidelines following the case of Sarah Ewart.
(AQW 27000/11-15)

Mr Poots: Officials are considering the implications of emerging issues and consultation responses on the draft guidance document. However, any guidance produced by the Department can only represent the law as it has been interpreted by the Northern Ireland courts, guidance does not supersede the law.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 25949/11-15, to detail (i) why he was unable to provide the information for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust as at 1 September 2013; (ii) whether he has since sought the information; and (iii) whether he will now provide it.
(AQW 27011/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information for the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust as at 1 September 2013 was not included because the returns required for this information were not available to the Northern HSC Trust when the initial request was received.

This information has now been supplied and can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Beds and Residents¹ in Statutory Residential Care Homes.

Northern HSC Trust	1 September 2013	
Roddens	Beds	29
	Residents	22
Rathmoyle	Beds	39
	Residents	17
Pinewood	Beds	36
	Residents	22
Rosedale	Beds	30
	Residents	23
Greenisland ²	Beds	-
	Residents	-
Clonmore	Beds	40
	Residents	20

Northern HSC Trust	1 September 2013	
Lisgarell	Beds	40
	Residents	32
Westlands	Beds	29
	Residents	18
Joymount	Beds	40
	Residents	35

- 1 Residents refers to all occupants at 1/9/13, this is not limited to permanent residents and could include others, for example those on short breaks.
- 2 Greenisland House was closed as at 1/9/13.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Zero-Hour Contracts

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many providers of domiciliary care, commissioned by Health and Social Care Trusts, use zero hour contracts.

(AQW 27021/11-15)

Mr Poots: Providers of domiciliary care are not contractually compelled to disclose to Health and Social Care Trusts the detail of the terms and conditions of employment for the staff they employ. Consequently, these figures are not available.

Providers of Domiciliary Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when commissioning providers for domiciliary care from the independent sector, what weight is given to (i) quality of care; and (ii) cost

(AQW 27023/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care (HSC) Board and HSC Trusts have a duty to ensure that quality services are procured and delivered in response to assessed need at a cost that represents best value for money. In fulfilling this duty, it is recognised that both quality and price are key components of social care procurement. The HSC Board is currently developing best practice guidance for the procurement of social care services.

Individual contracts remain the responsibility of Health and Social Care Trusts which commission domiciliary care across a wide range of programmes of care. In this context specific decisions about quality and cost rest with Trusts and may vary as Trusts seek to achieve a balance between cost and quality.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Procuring New Software

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether guidelines are provided to Health and Social Care Trusts when procuring new software to prioritise providers that offer programmes compatible with existing infrastructure.

(AQW 27024/11-15)

Mr Poots: As part of public procurement processes, the requirement for compatibility with existing IT systems (whether essential or desirable) is typically specified within the statement of requirements documentation alongside any other service/operational requirements. Prospective bidders must demonstrate compliance with these requirements in order to be deemed suitable for appointment. The extent to which prospective bidders meet the specification of requirements is considered as part of the overall tender evaluation process.

Regulation of the 'Injectables' Industry

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps his Department is taking to regulate the 'injectables' industry, such as botox and dermal fillers.
(AQW 27043/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department of Health (DoH) published a report "Review of the Regulation of Cosmetic Interventions" in April 2013. The report is available to view or download from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192028/Review_of_the_Regulation_of_Cosmetic_Interventions.pdf

My Department is considering the report.

Patients in the Mater Hospital Emergency Department

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many patients the Mater Hospital Emergency Department has treated in each of the last three years; and (ii) how many transfers had to be made to other hospitals due to the appropriate staff not being in place in the Mater.
(AQW 27051/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Information on the number of patients attending emergency care departments each year is available to view or download from:

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

- (ii) During the last three years, the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust has indicated that no patients were transferred from the Mater Emergency Care Department due to the appropriate staff not being in place. However the Belfast HSC Trust reported that 2,953 patients were transferred to other hospitals from the Mater emergency care department based on clinical decisions during the last three years.

Patients in the Mater Hospital Emergency Department

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients (i) were treated; and (ii) were not treated, by the Mater Hospital's Emergency Department within his Department's 4 hour target time, in each month of the last three years.
(AQW 27052/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on emergency care waiting times is published quarterly and is available to view or download from:

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

Quotas for Admitting Ambulance Patients

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Ulster Hospital plans to introduce quotas for admitting ambulance patients.
(AQW 27066/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust does not have any plans to introduce quotas for admitting ambulance patients to the Ulster Hospital. The Health and Social Care Board is working with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to ensure that the transportation of emergency patients brought by ambulance to all acute hospital sites is managed in a way that ensures patients have timely access to appropriate clinical care in emergency departments. Effective management of ambulance

arrivals will help to manage demand and equalise pressures for unscheduled care across the region and minimise ambulance turnaround times at emergency departments.

Individual Funding Request Process

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to ensure that the Individual Funding Request (IFR) process which patients can use to get drugs not yet approved for general use, does not become an inequitable process favouring young, middle-class and articulate applicants over more suitable vulnerable people who cannot speak up for themselves, which was the finding of the Scottish Parliament on a similar process.

(AQW 27073/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health matters in each of the UK's regions are devolved and it is appropriate that I comment only on the issues within Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland patients do not apply for access to drugs therefore there is no possibility of the Individual Funding Request (IFR) process affording advantage to one social class over another. The Northern Ireland IFR process provides a mechanism to consider requests from consultant physicians for treatments that fall outside the range of services normally commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board. Each request must be supported by the relevant Trust manager and clinical director. Decisions are based on clinical evidence and suitability, and personal circumstances are not taken into consideration.

Carer Assessments

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what proportion of carer assessments offered over the last three years were accepted, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 27114/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on accepted carers' assessments is not available centrally. However the Department holds figures on completed carers' assessments. Table 1 below sets out the completed assessments as a proportion of all carers' assessments offered. This information is available quarterly since June 2011 only.

Table 1. Proportion of Offered Carers' Assessments Completed.

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending									Average
	Jun-11	Sep-11	Dec-11	Mar-12	Jun-12	Sep-12	Dec-12	Mar-13	Jun-13	
Belfast	69%	55%	54%	45%	56%	50%	25%	60%	61%	56%
Northern	55%	50%	47%	46%	50%	53%	56%	39%	50%	54%
South Eastern	31%	64%	27%	79%	32%	65%	21%	75%	31%	28%
Southern	39%	66%	38%	63%	39%	52%	47%	51%	46%	46%
Western	51%	52%	60%	48%	49%	36%	55%	56%	49%	46%
Northern Ireland	50%	58%	40%	61%	44%	53%	36%	59%	45%	45%

Source: Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland (Community Information Branch)

Waiting List for Admission to Hospital

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on a waiting list for admission to hospital.

(AQW 27163/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department collects information on the number of patients waiting, and length of time waiting, for Ordinary and Day Case admission, at Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland. This is published quarterly by the Department and is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/waiting_times_main/stats-waiting-times.htm

Mater Hospital Maternity Unit: Admissions

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many admissions the Mater Hospital Maternity unit has had in each month of the last three years; and how many live births there were at the Mater Hospital in each month of the last three years.

(AQW 27184/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i) Information on the number of admissions the Mater Hospital Maternity unit has had in each month of the last three years is not collected by the Department. However information is collected on the number of admissions under the Maternity and Child Health Programme of Care at the Mater Hospital for each of the last three years by quarter and is detailed in the below table.

Quarter Ending	Year		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
June	694	607	555
September	618	756	690
December	689	725	668
March	638	692	518
Total	2,639	2,780	2,431

Source: Departmental Return KH03a

- ii) Information on the number of live births at the Mater Hospital in each month for each of the last three years is not collected by the Department. However information is collected by quarter and detailed in the below table.

Quarter Ending	Year		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
June	305	268	286
September	283	335	304
December	318	323	297
March	293	313	232
Total	1,199	1,239	1,119

Source: Departmental Return KP19

STORM Assessment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the STORM assessment, devised by the University of Manchester, has been adopted by Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 27207/11-15)

Mr Poots: The PHA funded STORM and Self-Harm training for the five local Health and Social Care Trusts from January 2013 – May 2013. Forty one staff across the five Health and Social Care Trusts participated in the 3 day training programme during this period.

Through its 2013-14 Mental Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention Training Action Plan, the Public Health Agency will fund further training for emergency department and mental health staff which will include elements of the STORM programme.

Haemochromatosis

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are diagnosed with Haemochromatosis.

(AQW 27268/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people diagnosed with Haemochromatosis is not available.

However, information is available on the number of patients admitted to hospital with a primary diagnosis of Haemochromatosis. During 2012/13 there were 725 individuals admitted to HSC hospitals in Northern Ireland with a primary diagnosis of Haemochromatosis.

Draft Guidance Document for Health and Social Care Professionals

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he received direct legal advice from the Attorney General in relation to his Department's draft Guidance document for Health and Social Care Professionals on the limited circumstances for a lawful termination of pregnancy.

(AQW 27319/11-15)

Mr Poots: As the member will be aware there is a strong convention that whether the Attorney General has been consulted is not disclosed and I do not intend to breach that convention.

Draft Guidance Document for Health and Social Care Professionals

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will publish the full legal advice he received when drafting his Department's draft guidance document, of April 2013, for Health and Social Care professionals on the limited circumstances for a lawful termination of pregnancy.

(AQW 27351/11-15)

Mr Poots: Legal advice received by my Department is subject to legal professional privilege. It is not my intention to release this advice.

Department of Justice

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail whether the additional funding from unspent money from the Police Gratuity Reserve Scheme will be allocated solely to new schemes; or as a general support fund for relevant police charities and organisations.

(AQW 26765/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The new Part-Time Reserve (PTR) Support Programme, totalling £383,000, is in addition to the individual gratuities made available to former PTR officers by the Government on the devolution of justice. It will provide specific support to help those who served in the PTR, both for those in financial hardship and for others engaged in training and education to enhance their employment opportunities. The programme will be administered through a number of policing charities and will be available to all former members of the police PTR, both RUC GC and PSNI, to members' dependants and the surviving partner of any past member now deceased.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme: Charities

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail which charities will be allocated funds from the £383,000 remaining in the Police Reserve Fund; and to provide a breakdown of the allocation.
(AQW 26769/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is proposed to disburse the monies among a number of policing charities in line with defined criteria. Officials from my Department are currently developing the Part-Time Reserve (PTR) Support Programme and arrangements for the distribution of the funding.

The proportion of the total funding to be allocated to each of the identified charities within the policing family will vary from charity to charity, based on their engagement with and support for former PTR officers and their capacity and capability to manage the programme.

I hope to be in a position to announce the breakdown of the allocation of the funding to the various charities soon.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice, with regard to the new £383,000 fund set up to support former part-time reservists and their dependents, to detail (i) the criteria that will determine those entitled to support; (ii) when funds will be distributed; and (iii) the organisations that will manage and distribute the funds.
(AQW 26775/11-15)

Mr Ford: My officials are currently developing the Part-Time Reserve support programme and arrangements for the distribution of the funding. It is envisaged that approximately £43,000 will be made available in the first year, with an additional £85,000 made available for each of the four following years. It will provide specific support to help those who served in the PTR, both for those in financial hardship and for others engaged in training and education to enhance their employment opportunities.

The programme will be administered through a number of policing charities and will be available to all former members of the police PTR, both RUC GC and PSNI, to members' dependants and the surviving partner of any past member now deceased.

Young Offenders in Prison: Educational Programmes

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of young offenders in prison who are (i) studying for GCSE or equivalent qualifications; and (ii) not enrolled in educational programmes.
(AQW 26878/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) had a total of 177 Young Offenders detained at Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre on 10 October 2013.

There was a total of five young offenders engaged in studying for GCSE or equivalent qualifications at this time.

On the same date 62 (35%) young offenders were not enrolled in educational programmes.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the revised Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline is operational and if so, when it became operational; and if he will place a copy in the Assembly Library.

(AQW 26894/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer to the responses provided to the Member on 14 October 2013 to AQW/26396/11-15 and on 10 October 2013 to AQW/26228/11-15.

Women's Prison: Belvoir Park Hospital Site

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the continuing call for a women's prison to be established on a separate site, whether he has given consideration to use the former Belvoir Park Hospital site.

(AQW 26895/11-15)

Mr Ford: As I informed the Assembly on 19 March, my intention is to develop a new, separate facility for women offenders combining both custodial provision for those women requiring secure custody and facilities for those women for whom a community based approach is more appropriate. NIPS Officials are currently investigating the feasibility of developing such a facility on lands already owned by NIPS. In the event these lands prove to be unsuitable for the development of a women's prison, then alternative sites including those such as Belvoir Park Hospital, will be considered.

Seizure of Illegal Cigarettes

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the seizure of illegal cigarettes in each of the last five years, how many were counterfeit and how many were legally produced but had been smuggled.

(AQW 26955/11-15)

Mr Ford: HMRC, who have responsibility for excise evasion offences, have confirmed that it is not possible to provide this breakdown from the statistics they hold, which are on cigarettes generally.

Seizure of Illegal Hand Rolling Tobacco

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice how much illegal hand rolling tobacco has been seized in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26957/11-15)

Mr Ford: HMRC, who have responsibility for excise evasion offences, have provided the following figures for hand rolling tobacco:

		2013/14 (Apr-Sep)	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
HMRC	No of Seizures	229	1,044	1,567	1,596	1,854
	Quantity (kilos)	15,619	67,872	56,295	46,741	29,965
Border Force	No of Seizures	5,576	12,552	11,533	10,814	18,130
	Quantity (kilos)	155,641	359,635	508,112	314,775	360,988

People Involved in the Illegal Cigarette Trade

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice whether there is evidence to suggest that people involved in the illegal cigarette trade are also involved in other criminal activities such as the production/sale of counterfeit goods, drugs smuggling, human trafficking.

(AQW 26958/11-15)

Mr Ford: While some organised crime groups focus on one area of activity many are involved in a range of illicit activities.

Experience shows that once an importation route has been opened up by a group for one purpose it can then be used to import a variety of illicit goods.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Justice to detail his Department's performance against the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.

(AQW 26982/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 17 July 2013, the United Nations Committee that oversees the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) formally examined the UK's performance in terms of its CEDAW obligations. Officials from my Department (along with officials from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Social Development took part in the Examination in Geneva and via a live video link in London. I understand that all Northern Ireland Departments contributed to the briefing material for the Examination.

The CEDAW Committee has now published its Concluding Observations based on the Examination. Most of the recommendations contained in the Concluding Observations are general and apply to all parts of the UK. The CEDAW Committee also made six recommendations that specifically relate to Northern Ireland and refer to:

- Equality legislation;
- The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry;
- Payment for sexual services from a child;
- The role of women in peacebuilding;
- Abortion law; and
- Equal access to reproductive treatment.

OFMDFM has overarching responsibility for ensuring that CEDAW is implemented here. CEDAW is implemented via the Gender Equality Strategy (GES), which includes Departmental Gender Equality Actions (GEAs). GES is currently under review by OFMDFM. My Department does not have gender equality actions linked to GES because justice was not devolved when the Strategy was being developed.

However, as part of the review of GES, OFMDFM officials are working with my officials to develop GEAs and consider how, if appropriate, these might reflect CEDAW recommendations.

Judicial Reviews Currently in the Court System

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many judicial reviews are currently in the court system at any stage of application or hearing, and of these, how many are under anonymity orders.

(AQW 27008/11-15)

Mr Ford: At 11 October 2013 there were 230 judicial reviews in the court system, 29 of which are subject to anonymity orders.

Strip-Searching in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice when strip-searching, or any other term used, of female prisoners in Hydebank Wood Prison was reduced or halted as per the remarks of the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service; and on whose instructions.

(AQW 27009/11-15)

Mr Ford: In common with arrangements for all types of prisoner, female prisoners at Hydebank Wood may still be subject to full searches. This measure only takes place in response to specific intelligence. This has been the case since the Inspection and was determined locally with the approval of Prison Service Headquarters. Such action has only taken place on a limited number of occasions over the course of the present year.

Following the publication of the Criminal Justice Inspection Report on 1 October 2013, a review has also begun of the establishment's overall searching arrangements for female prisoners, including those relating to Visits. This review is expected to recommend the introduction by the end of the present year of further revised procedures which will be fully in line with the Report's related recommendations.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland Reports of Hydebank Wood Women's Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the remarks made by Professor Phil Scruton following the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland reports of Hydebank Wood Women's Prison in which he describes the Northern Ireland Prison Service as in "a downward spiral" evidenced by "a catalogue of failures which is deeply institutionalised and systemic".

(AQW 27010/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Governor and his team at Hydebank Wood are addressing the major issues of concern found in the recent inspection reports.

Reforming our prisons is a key priority and implementing the necessary change will take time. The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently half way through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the organisations that will deal with any surplus funds following the payment of gratuity to part time members of the RUC and PSNI; (ii) the audit arrangements that will be in place; and (iii) whether any charge will be made for the management/distribution of the funds.

(AQW 27031/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is proposed to disburse the monies among a number of policing charities in line with defined criteria. Officials from my Department are currently finalising the administrative, funding and audit arrangements for the Part-Time Reserve (PTR) Support Programme and I hope to be in a position to confirm these shortly.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice whether any discussions had were with the part time Reserve representatives of the RUC George Cross prior to the decision being taken on surplus funds available following the payment of the gratuity to part time members of the RUC and the PSNI.

(AQW 27032/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prior to my decision to approve the setting up of a new Part Time Reserve Support Programme, I held discussions with a number of representatives of former part-time Reserve officers and I will continue to engage with representatives in setting up the programme.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice when he will make the first payments of the surplus funds available following the payment of the gratuity to part time members of the RUC and the PSNI and on what basis will payments be made.

(AQW 27033/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is envisaged that approximately £43,000 will be made available in this financial year, with an additional £85,000 made available for each of the four following years.

Officials from my Department are currently finalising the administrative, funding and audit arrangements for the Part-Time Reserve Support Programme and I hope to be in a position to confirm these shortly.

Legal Aid Payments

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to consider alternative proposals, regarding the proposed changes to Legal Aid payments, at a meeting scheduled to be held by the Law Society on 19 October 2013.

(AQW 27053/11-15)

Mr Ford: I attended the Law Society's conference on legal aid on 19 October. Although no specific proposals to address the current financial situation were made, I will listen carefully to any representations made by the Society in respect of my proposals on legal aid.

Unpaid Fines

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how he plans to reduce to amount of unpaid fines.

(AQW 27067/11-15)

Mr Ford: My officials in the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service continue to operate a Fine Collection Service to engage with defendants to secure payment of fines without the need to resort to enforcement action.

Following the recent judicial review challenges to the enforcement procedures my officials have been working with the Judiciary to implement revised arrangements which are consistent with the Divisional Court's judgment.

In relation to the Crown Court, new procedures have been agreed and officials are in the process of relisting Belfast cases where a fine remains outstanding. Those cases which are not based in Belfast will be relisted later this term.

In relation to the Magistrates' Courts, my officials are seeking further clarification from the Divisional Court but, if this does not address the concerns, it may be necessary to bring forward legislation.

The execution of warrants issued for unpaid fines remains an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

It is my intention to bring forward legislation during the current Assembly mandate to establish a new fine collection and enforcement service which will be able to avail of a wider range of collection options.

Court Defendants: Proceedings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 26486/11-15, whether this applies to appellants appearing in benefit tribunals and their advocates, and if so, to detail (i) which agency is responsible for addressing customer complaints; and (ii) how the agency is accountable.

(AQW 27079/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), is responsible for the administration of The Appeals Service (TAS) under a Service Level Agreement with the Department for Social Development. As such the corporate values and customer service standards of the NICTS also apply to tribunal appellants and their advocates. Complaints regarding the administration of TAS

tribunals are the responsibility of NICTS. Complaints regarding the personal conduct of tribunal panel members are a matter for the President of Appeal Tribunals and the Lord Chief Justice.

The NICTS has comprehensive customer complaints procedures which include escalation mechanisms and referral of complaints to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman through an MLA if required.

Benefit Appeals Tribunals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Benefit Appeals Tribunals and potential disputes, to detail (i) what accountability or regulation exists for the Chair/legally qualified member of the panel; and (ii) what plans he has to allow a written version of events from appellants/advocates to be considered in the event of dispute, as opposed to only that recorded by the Chair/legally qualified member.

(AQW 27083/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Article 8(3)(a) of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 provides that where there is more than one member of the tribunal panel the President nominates one of the members as the chairman. In practice this is the legal member of the tribunal. The procedure of the tribunal is the responsibility of the legally qualified member of the tribunal.

Article 15 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 provides a right of appeal to the Social Security and Child Support Commissioner from the decision of a tribunal on a point of law. This extends to procedural determinations of the chairman under Regulation 49 of the Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. Procedural rulings can also be challenged through Judicial Review proceedings.

Tribunals are Judicial bodies and as such are bound by Article 6 of the Human Rights Act and must provide a fair hearing. All members of the tribunal are Judicial office holders.

The Lord Chief Justice has sole statutory responsibility for determining complaints about the conduct of judicial office holders. He has delegated the responsibility for complaints about tribunal members to the President of Tribunals, with a review carried out by The Lord Chief Justice if requested. The issues that fall for investigation and how complaints are to be investigated is set out in his Code of Practice on Complaints about the Conduct of Judicial Office Holders.

The President is the judicial head of appeal tribunals. His functions are set out in Schedule (1) paragraphs 7 to 10 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. The President is responsible for his conduct to the Lord Chief Justice.

- (ii) An appellant or advocate can make a note of proceedings at an appeal tribunal hearing. This note can be provided to the legal member of the tribunal in connection with an application for leave to appeal to the Commissioner. It may also be forwarded with any complaint about conduct for consideration by the Complaints Officer and the President of tribunals under the Lord Chief Justice's Code of Practice.

Research in Local Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given the high importance of independent rigorous research, whether he plans to allow and/or invite Professor Phil Scraton and Dr Linda Moore to carry out research in local prisons, without the necessity of pre-conditions as suggested by the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, and whether they will be excluded as a result of their previous objective findings.

(AQW 27086/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is working closely with Queens University Belfast (QUB) to develop a programme of research to support the Prison Reform Programme.

A QUB Research Impact Manager is helping NIPS to make sure that the research done in prisons adds value and supports NIPS in improving outcomes for prisoners and building safer communities. The current focus is on how best to harness research findings to effect organisational change, and NIPS has been able to speak to QUB colleagues who are best suited to inform and guide this programme of work.

Access to prisons to conduct research needs to be properly considered and carefully managed so that there is a balance between opening up our prisons and managing any disruption to the routines and regimes. NIPS is very keen to work with researchers and academic institutions and will continue to discuss how best to do this alongside the demands of the reform programme and running the prisons.

NIPS' next meeting with QUB colleagues is in early November.

Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to take action to have the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service withdraw her remarks which called the credibility of Professor Phil Scraton's forty year prison research experience into question and for his assessment of whether an apology should be provided to the Professor.

(AQW 27135/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am satisfied that the Director General did not challenge the credibility of Professor Scraton's prison work and at the time clarified any inference that he might have drawn from her comments.

I support the Director General's commitment to work with a wide range of stakeholders during this challenging period of reform. I am also encouraged that so many stakeholders are willing to engage in full and frank discussions about how this can be successfully achieved.

Offender Levy Fund

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 26780/11-15, how charities or support groups can apply for finance from the Offender Levy Fund; and to outline the criteria required to apply.

(AQW 27138/11-15)

Mr Ford: Funding for local initiatives taken forward by groups working with victims in the community is channelled through the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. This is directed specifically towards the start-up funding of new projects or for providing one-off funding to new time-limited projects that will help support victims and witnesses in the criminal justice process. Therefore, interested charities or support groups should make representation to their local Policing and Community Safety Partnership who can advise them of the Victims of Crime Fund and other possible funding opportunities. The Victims of Crime Fund is not an open competition grant scheme.

Access NI for Those Working with Young People

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why (i) it is necessary to complete separate Access NI forms per role at an individual cost of £30 per assessment for people seeking clearance to work with children and vulnerable adults; (ii) one form should not be completed and updated annually, and the result(s) made available to those agencies, clubs, charities etc. requiring the person in question to be cleared.

(AQW 27140/11-15)

Mr Ford: The current legislation would not permit the introduction of a scheme as suggested in the question. Specifically, the legislation requires applications for enhanced checks to be made on the basis of a "prescribed purpose", in other words a specific position or job. This can impact on the information that is provided, thus limiting the ability of the check to be used for other positions. In addition, the legislation would have to be changed to enable checks to be updated annually; this would need to attract a fee as AccessNI operates a cost recovery model.

I have, however, accepted a recommendation made by Sunita Mason, the Independent Advisor for Criminality Information in England and Wales, that a system of portable disclosures should be

introduced in Northern Ireland. Under this employers or the appointing body could undertake a free online check of the information in the disclosure. This would flag if there were changes. This new system requires legislative provision and the introduction of significant changes to the current computer system. I am planning to introduce the former in the next Justice Bill. The work on the changes to the computer system has begun.

Once the change is implemented, citizens may not need to re-apply for an AccessNI check as they move between employers.

National Crime Agency: Northern Ireland

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice what recent discussions he has held with the Chief Constable on the implications of an increase in organised crime as a result of the National Crime Agency not operating fully in Northern Ireland or on the same basis as the rest of the UK.

(AQW 27143/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have had a number of discussions with the Chief Constable and other senior officers about the implications of the National Crime Agency not operating fully in Northern Ireland. The most recent discussion with the Chief Constable was on 9 October 2013.

Access NI for Those Working with Young People

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Justice how many checks have been carried out by Access NI for those working with young people, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27154/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not held in the format requested. The table below, however, sets out the number of applications made for enhanced criminal record checks in each of the last three years where the registered body asked for the applicant's details to be checked against the lists of those persons who are prevented from working with children (column A) or the lists of those prevented from working with both children and adults (column B):

Year	Applications received –check of children's list (A)	Applications received –check of children and adults lists (B)	Total
April 2012 – March 2013	9,044	71,683	80,727
April 2011 March 2012	7,674	78,529	86,203
April 2010 – March 2011	10,678	79,542	90,220

These figures do not include those individuals working with children, for example supervised volunteers, where employers are entitled to an enhanced criminal record check, but not to request a check of the lists.

Police Dogs Put Down

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice how many police dogs have been put down in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27200/11-15)

Mr Ford: This matter is the responsibility of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. I am committed to respecting the independence of the Police Service therefore you may wish to direct your question to the Chief Constable.

Professional Standards: Misconduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 26396/11-15, to clarify (i) whether on suspicion of the commission of criminal or misconduct offences that the facts will be, as opposed to should be, referred to Professional Standards; (ii) the meaning of the terms Functional Head or Senior Manager in relation to operational prison staff; (iii) the number of Northern Ireland Prison Service operational/administrative staff by grade that have received training including Prison Officers' Association representatives, when it was delivered, its duration and by which agency; (iv) the grades of Investigating Officers; and (v) whether he will leave a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Professional Standards Unit and Guidance to Managers on Disciplinary Investigations and Hearings in the Assembly Library.

(AQW 27208/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The wording in the answer to AQW/26396/11-15 is correct. The Professional Code of Conduct, which was agreed by all key stakeholders, clearly states that where there is suspicion that one or more persons may be involved in misconduct a Functional Head or the Senior Manager should refer the case to the Professional Standards Unit for investigation.
- (ii) Functional Head is an operational Prison Service grade in the new Prison Service management structure. It is broadly equivalent to the old Governor 2 – 4 grades. The Unit Manager grade is broadly equivalent to the old Governor 5 and Principal Officer grades. In the context of the new Code of Conduct a Senior Manager can be anyone from Unit Manager grade upwards or a grade 7 administrative grade upwards.
- (iii) In August and September 2013 a total of 83 staff, including 18 POA representatives, received a one day training course on the new Code of Conduct at the Prison Service College. This is broken down by grade as follows:

Grade	Number
Director General	1
Governing Governor	3
Functional Head	6
Unit Manager	26
Training Officer	13
POA Representative	18
Grade 7	4
Deputy Principal	1
Staff Officer	1
Executive Officer 1	1
Executive Officer 2	3
Administrative Officer	4
Administrative Assistant	2

- (iv) There are 3 full time Investigating Officers at Headquarters and they are graded as follows:
 - 1 Grade 7
 - 1 Unit manager
 - 1 administrative Staff Officer

There are also a further 3 Unit Managers at Headquarters who can be called upon to do investigations as and when necessary.

- (v) The Terms of Reference for the Professional Standards Unit and guidance for managers on disciplinary investigations and hearings are set out in the Professional Code of Conduct.

Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Justice, given the recent report by Criminal Justice Inspection into conditions for young offenders at Hydebank Wood, what plans he has to ensure that increased opportunities to develop essential literacy and numeracy skills are available to all.

(AQO 4830/11-15)

Mr Ford: A recent review of the learning and Skills provision for prisoners has recommended the introduction of a new curriculum that concentrates on the provision of essential skills in English, Maths and ICT. It also recommends that the service delivery of Learning and Skills services should be outsourced. Work is underway to deliver these recommendations.

Work is also ongoing to develop plans for the creation of a secure college at Hydebank Wood, focussed upon developing prisoners' essential skills and enhancing their prospects for employment post release.

Faster, Fairer Justice Bill

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Justice when he will introduce the Faster, Fairer Justice Bill to the Assembly.

(AQO 4831/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department has a final print of the draft Justice Bill and is currently working through the pre-introduction procedures. Subject to securing the required agreements, and progression on the Department's wider legislative programme, I plan to introduce the Bill to the Assembly in January 2014. As the member will know, this Bill proposes to deliver a range of critical and fundamental reforms to our justice system and I am keen to begin the Assembly stages as soon as is possible.

Hydebank Wood: CJI Report

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Justice when he expects to receive a positive report into the prisons at Hydebank Wood.

(AQO 4832/11-15)

Mr Ford: Reforming our prisons is a key priority, as with any change of this scale it is challenging and implementing the necessary reforms will take time. The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently halfway through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015.

I acknowledge that the recent Criminal Justice Inspection reports highlight a number of issues where improvement is required. I am encouraged that since this inspection there have been major changes.

A new management team is in place at Hydebank Wood, supported by a new Director of Offender Policy and Operations and a Director of Rehabilitation. An action plan has been developed to address the major issues of concern found by the Inspectorate.

I have consistently acknowledged that the co-location of female prisoners and young offenders on the same site is far from ideal, and I am committed to providing a new separate facility for women offenders. I will continue to work to ensure that such a facility is established as soon as is practicable.

Policing: Young People

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Justice what work is being undertaken to address the perceptions of policing young people, especially in areas deemed to be disadvantaged.

(AQO 4833/11-15)

Mr Ford: At just under 80%, the latest figures show that overall confidence in the PSNI and in policing remains at a level comparable to its high point in 2011/12. However, the PSNI have acknowledged that the flags protest and disorder on our streets have impacted on perceptions of policing, not least among young people, within some communities.

Following publication, in 2011, of the Northern Ireland Policing Board's thematic review of policing with children and young people, the Board's Youth Advisory Panel has been facilitating engagement with young people aimed at developing an understanding of their needs and concerns.

A number of work-streams are currently being progressed by the Youth Advisory Panel, including a research initiative looking at the styles of policing used by Neighbourhood, Response and TSG officers when policing young people. A report on the research, which gathered the views of police officers in North Belfast, was recently approved by the Board's Partnership Committee and will be brought before the Board next month.

The Youth Advisory Panel is also developing an Emergency Services Youth Apprenticeship/engagement Scheme in partnership with the PSNI; other emergency services; academic institutions and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The purpose of this scheme, which is focused on 16-25 year olds who are not in employment, education or training, is to build confidence in the emergency services and other public sector bodies.

My Department is also taking forward recommendations made in the Review of Youth Justice report, published in 2011, including an initiative aimed at enabling young people to raise concerns about local policing without the need to invoke the full weight of the current system via the Police Ombudsman's Office.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) also continue to work with young people, including creating opportunities for them to actively participate in events designed to discuss policing and community safety issues with a wide range of key stakeholders, including PSNI members.

PSNI: Agency Workers

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Justice to outline any communication and meetings between his Department and the PSNI regarding the expiry of the contract with Grafton Recruitment for PSNI agency workers.

(AQO 4834/11-15)

Mr Ford: The expiry of the contract with Grafton Recruitment for PSNI agency workers was discussed at the Police Resource Group (PRG) meeting held in May 2013. This group is chaired by the Department's Director of Safer Communities and is held every two to three months. The group consists of senior staff of the Policing Board, PSNI and the DOJ.

It was agreed at the PRG meeting that PSNI would not proceed with a new business case until after the issue of the PAC report so that any recommendations made in the report are considered and, if appropriate, included within a new contract.

The PSNI's existing contract expires in December 2013. The PAC report on this issue is expected to be published at the end of November 2013, at the earliest. It is therefore highly likely that a further Direct Award Contract will be required before the end of this calendar year.

Hydebank Wood: Ash House

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Justice, given the recent report by Criminal Justice Inspection into conditions for women prisoners at Ash House, Hydebank Wood, what plans he has to expedite the closure of this prison and the movement of female prisoners into a new facility.

(AQO 4835/11-15)

Mr Ford: Reforming our prisons is a key priority, as with any change of this scale it is challenging and implementing the necessary reforms will take time. The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently halfway through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015.

I acknowledge that the recent Criminal Justice Inspection reports highlight a number of issues where improvement is required. I am encouraged that since this inspection there have been major changes.

A new management team is in place at Hydebank Wood, supported by a new Director of Offender Policy and Operations and a Director of Rehabilitation. An action plan has been developed to address the major issues of concern found by the Inspectorate.

I have consistently acknowledged that the co-location of female prisoners and young offenders on the same site is far from ideal, and I am committed to providing a new separate facility for women offenders. I will continue to work to ensure that such a facility is established as soon as is practicable.

Hydebank Wood: CJI Report

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Justice for an assurance that the findings in the recent Criminal Justice Inspection report on Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre will be acted upon without delay.

(AQO 4836/11-15)

Mr Ford: Reforming our prisons is a key priority, as with any change of this scale it is challenging and implementing the necessary reforms will take time. The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently halfway through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015.

I acknowledge that the recent Criminal Justice Inspection reports highlight a number of issues where improvement is required. I am encouraged that since this inspection there have been major changes.

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Hydebank Wood: Victimisation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Justice, given the recent report by Criminal Justice Inspection into the Young Offenders Centre at Hydebank Wood, which highlighted the issue of victimization of inmates by staff and other prisoners, what plans he has to address this problem.

(AQO 4829/11-15)

Mr Ford: Reforming our prisons is a key priority, as with any change of this scale it is challenging and implementing the necessary reforms will take time. The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently halfway through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015.

I acknowledge that the recent Criminal Justice Inspection reports highlight a number of issues where improvement is required. I am encouraged that since this inspection there have been major changes.

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Department for Regional Development

Cycling Infrastructure

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has invested in cycling infrastructure in (i) Moyle; (ii) Ballymena; and (iii) Ballymoney in each of the last five years.
(AQW 25261/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I would advise the Member that I have recently instructed my officials to give increased and focused priority to the needs of cyclists, to encourage greater participation in this healthy and sustainable form of transport. To that end, I am establishing a new cycling unit to ensure cycling issues and initiatives are progressed in a more coherent and coordinated manner across my Department, in partnership with local government, voluntary bodies, public transport operators and the health and education sectors.

With regard to my Department's investment in infrastructure, details of the amounts spent in each of the last five financial years in the Moyle, Ballymoney and Ballymena Council areas are set out in the table below:

Year	Moyle	Ballymoney	Ballymena
2008/09	-	£90,000	£57,000 *
2009/10	£800	£163,000	£45,000
2010/11	-	-	-
2011/12	-	-	-
2012/13	-	£39,000	-

This expenditure included a range of schemes including National Cycle Network (NCN) Route signage, Safe Routes to Schools, developing NCN routes and providing local cycling routes.

* includes DRD contribution towards a £217,000 scheme jointly funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (75%) and Roads Service (25%).

Departmental Arrangements for Severe Winter Weather

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the arrangements his Department is making to deal with severe winter weather.
(AQW 26033/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is well prepared for the coming winter. Staffing arrangements are being finalised, pre-season checks on winter service equipment are complete and salt stocks have been replenished. From the end of October, Roads Service will have over 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads. Contracts are also in place to enable contractors and farmers to help to clear roads during periods of prolonged snow.

Following the two snow events last winter, I commissioned an independent review of the performance of Roads Service over the period. The National Winter Service Research Group carried out a comprehensive review, examining every aspect of the winter service programme. The outcome of the review was positive and concluded our winter service policies were well-considered and consistent. I have placed a copy of the review in the Assembly Library.

One of the key recommendations from the review was that the winter service fleet replacement programme continues to be prioritised in order to reduce the unreliability of gritters and other equipment. I am committed to investing in the winter service fleet and to that end, will continue to seek funding to ensure the fleet we have is fit for purpose and capable of dealing with the long winter period. I hope Members will support bids for this additional funding.

A further recommendation highlighted the need for consistency of service in relation to the salting of footways. My Department has arrangements with 24 of the 26 District Councils to salt city and town centre footways during times of prolonged ice and snow. I have written to the Chief Executives of the remaining two councils to encourage them to come on board.

Northern Ireland Water will continue with the range of measures within the Winter Contingency Plan, in order that it can be well placed to respond to anticipated increases in burst mains, corresponding loss of supply and increased demand in the weeks ahead and the remainder of the winter.

Car Parking Provision in Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will review the supply and demand of car parking provision in Coleraine over the next eighteen months.

(AQW 26232/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Supply and demand for parking is regularly reviewed and this process will continue over the next eighteen months. Should you have any specific concerns regarding parking issues in Coleraine, please contact local Roads Service officials who will be happy to discuss your concerns in more detail.

Metro Passengers on Saturdays

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average number of passengers using the Metro Service on a Saturday and for his assessment of passenger number trends.

(AQW 26290/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised that the average number of Saturday passenger journeys for the past two years is as follows:

Year	Passenger Journeys
2012/13	54,720
2011/12	51,974

Translink Directors

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how many accountability meetings he has chaired with Translink directors; and to detail the dates the meetings took place.

(AQW 26392/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have chaired 3 formal accountability meetings with some of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company directors since taking up my Ministerial post in 2011. The meetings took place on the following dates:-

- 7 December 2011;
- 20 June 2012; and
- 20 June 2013.

In addition to these formal meetings I have of course had regular meetings with Translink's Group Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer to discuss a wide range of issues including the Translink Corporate Plan; funding pressures; Belfast Transport Hub; NITHC Assets to name but a few. My officials also brief me on a regular basis regarding Translink matters.

Cycling Greenway Between Holywood and Belfast City Centre

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration his Department is giving to developing and funding a cycling greenway between Holywood and Belfast city centre.

(AQW 26419/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I understand Sustrans is developing a proposal for a cycling and walking path along this route. Sustrans has indicated it will be bringing forward details of this proposal to the next meeting of the Active Travel Forum. My Department and other relevant bodies represented on the Forum can advise on the appropriate mechanisms to review and take forward the proposal.

Illegal Parking in Cycle Lanes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of fines which have been issued to people illegally parked in cycle lanes, in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 26420/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued to vehicles parked on mandatory cycle lanes, in each of the last twelve months, are provided in the table below:

Month	PCNs
September 2013	2
August 2013	0
July 2013	1
June 2013	0
May 2013	0
April 2013	1
March 2013	1
February 2013	2
January 2013	0
December 2012	1
November 2012	0
October 2012	2

During the same period, 4,621 PCNs were issued for contraventions on clearways and 626 on bus lanes.

Cycling and Walking Greenway: Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the proposal for a cycling and walking greenway from Victoria Park via Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, the railway line to George Best City Airport and Belfast Harbour Estate to link with the North Down Coastal Path at Holywood.

(AQW 26463/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my response to his recent related question AQW 25539/11-15, when I advised that cycling facilities already exist along the A2 between Victoria Park and Holywood.

I understand Sustrans is developing a proposal for a cycling and walking path along this route. Sustrans has indicated it will be bringing forward details of this proposal to the next meeting of the Active Travel Forum. This will provide an opportunity for my Department and other relevant bodies represented on the Forum to consider the proposal.

Revenue from Pay and Display Car Parks in Antrim

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development how much revenue has been collected from each pay and display car park in Antrim, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26499/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are currently two pay and display car parks in Antrim. The income generated from these car parks in the past five years is as follows:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Central	£145,090	£142,846	£128,539	£133,515	£133,576
Railway Street	£40,694	£39,275	£40,435	£41,819	£46,996

Bicycles on Trains

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to increase the capacity of railways to enable cyclists to bring their bicycles onto trains before 9.30am.

(AQW 26579/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NI Railways advise that virtually all trains operating into Belfast each morning are carrying large numbers of standing passengers in addition to all seats being occupied and passenger numbers are continuing to grow.

NI Railways are now assessing future additional rolling stock requirements however it is expected that any future capacity provision will continue to have to be reserved for passengers rather than passengers and cycles prior to 09:30. Any economic appraisal for new rolling stock has to meet a rigorous set of economic and financial/cost criteria before funding is considered for new train capacity.

Where space exists on more lightly loaded trains leaving Belfast in the morning, cycles are permitted and NI Railways expect to continue this practice going forward.

Parking Tickets: Issued and Subsequently Overturned on Appeal

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many parking tickets have been (i) issued; and (ii) subsequently overturned on appeal, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26592/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The numbers of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued and subsequently cancelled are set out in the table below.

Year	PCNs Issued	PCNs Cancelled
2010/11	118,478	10,608
2011/12	124,864	11,424
2012/13	108,354	11,040

The cancellation of a PCN does not necessarily mean it was incorrectly issued. The most common reasons for cancellation are when a copy of a valid blue badge is subsequently provided or when a valid Pay and Display ticket is subsequently provided.

Road Projects: County Londonderry and County Tyrone

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much money has been spent on road projects in (i) County Londonderry; and (ii) County Tyrone, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 26616/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not record details of its spend on a county basis.

Preparations for Winter Conditions

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what preparations have been made for potential difficult winter conditions in relation to keeping roads open.

(AQW 26634/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is prepared for the coming winter. Staffing arrangements are being finalised, pre-season checks on winter service equipment are complete and salt stocks have been replenished.

From the end of October, my Department will have over 300 people on standby, ready to salt main roads. Contracts are also in place to enable contractors and farmers to help to clear roads during periods of prolonged snow.

Following the two snow events last winter, I commissioned an independent review of the performance of the Department over the period. The National Winter Service Research Group carried out a comprehensive review, examining every aspect of the winter service programme. The outcome of the review was positive and concluded that our winter service policies were well-considered and consistent.

One of the key recommendations from the review was that the winter service fleet replacement programme continues to be prioritised in order to reduce the unreliability of gritters and other equipment. I am committed to investing in the winter service fleet and to that end, will continue to seek funding to ensure the fleet we have is capable of dealing with the long winter period. I hope Members will support bids for this additional funding.

A further recommendation highlighted the need for consistency of service in relation to the salting of footways. My Department has agreements with 24 of the 26 District Councils to salt city and town centre footways during times of prolonged ice and snow. I propose to write to the Chief Executives of the remaining two councils to encourage them to come on board.

Northern Ireland Water will continue with the range of measures within the Winter Contingency Plan, in order that it can be well placed to respond to any burst mains, loss of supply or increased demand in the weeks ahead and the remainder of the winter.

Acoustic Tests in Rural Areas Following Road Resurfacing

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Regional Development whether acoustic tests are completed in rural areas following road resurfacing, and if so, to detail the number of completed tests in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 26639/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not complete acoustic tests in rural areas following road resurfacing as there is currently no requirement, to undertake any form of acoustic test, as re-surfacing does not in itself cause a change in noise levels.

E-Charging Points

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to e-charging points, to detail (i) the location of each point in South Antrim; and (ii) the number of times each point has been used since they were installed.

(AQW 26723/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department has provided electric vehicle charging points in various locations across South Antrim. All installations were completed by the 31st of June 2013. The table below details the locations of these charge points.

Data is provided to the Department on a quarterly basis and the table below represents charge point usage from the date of commissioning up until the 22nd of August (approx 7 weeks).

Charge Point Location	Charge Point ID	Charger Ref	Approx. Date of Installation	Total Charging Events to 22nd August 2013
Antrim	Antrim Forum Leisure Complex	SC94	June 2013	1
Antrim	Antrim NIR Park and Ride	SC107	June 2013	0
Antrim	DRD Car Park, Castle St, Antrim	SC46	June 2013	0
Antrim	DRD Car Park, Dublin Road	SC61	June 2013	2
Antrim	Dunsilly Park and Ride	SC99	June 2013	1
Templepatrick	Templepatrick Park and Ride	SC144	June 2013	0
Antrim	Junction 1 Shopping Centre	SC56	June 2013	Data not available
Randalstown	Portglenone Road	SC120	June 2013	0
Antrim	Texaco Garage Junction 1 International Outlet	RC07	June 2013	Data not available
Templepatrick	Hilton Hotel	SC114	June 2013	1
Crumlin	Community Centre	SC115	June 2013	0
Antrim	Junction 1 Shopping Centre	SC56	June 2013	16
Ballyclare	DRD Car Park Harrier Way	SC98	June 2013	2
Ballyclare	Sixmile Leisure Centre	SC43	June 2013	2
Carnmoney	DRD Car Park Beverley Road	SC48	June 2013	1
Glengormley	DRD Car Park Farmley Road	SC54	June 2013	Data not available
Newtownabbey	Jordanstown Park and Ride Lynda Avenue	SC141	June 2013	14
Newtownabbey	Mossley West Park and Ride	SC147	June 2013	1
Newtownabbey	The Valley Leisure Centre	SC44	June 2013	2
Toomebridge	Park and Ride Toome Bypass	SC145	June 2013	Data not available

Installation of Water Meters: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many water meters incurred an installation charge in North Down, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26812/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that customers are not charged for water meter installations and consequently there have been no customers charged for meter installation in North Down during any of the past 5 years. Charges are not applied for water meter installation because the meters are owned by and remain the responsibility of NIW.

Installation of Water Meters: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many water meters have been installed in North Down, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26814/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the number of water meters installed in North Down, in each of the last five financial years, is as detailed in the table below. These figures have been determined by reference to the property addresses and post codes within the North Down constituency and they include all water meter installations irrespective of reason (newly connected properties, existing properties not previously metered, and renewal of existing meters).

Financial Year	Number of Meters Installed
2008/09	692
2009/10	210
2010/11	313
2011/12	249
2012/13	195

Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the Cycle to Work Scheme (i) for his assessment of the level of bureaucracy involved when employers join the scheme; (ii) whether he considers this appropriate for small businesses and organisations; and (iii) what action he will take to minimise the present level of bureaucracy and widen the appeal of the scheme.

(AQW 26817/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The Cycle to Work Scheme is an initiative introduced by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in 1999 to support the promotion of sustainable travel to the workplace. In 2009/2010 my Department carried out a limited internal Pilot Study of the scheme to evaluate how it could be introduced across the NI Civil Service (NICS). The pilot study identified some initial learning points which were passed to the Department of Finance And Personnel prior to the scheme being introduced across all of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, in June 2012. I now believe the scheme is operating well with 171 members of staff in my Department participating in the scheme out of a total of 1156 across the wider NICS (figures at 19 September 2013).
- (ii) My Departments Travelwise Team provides information and advice to employers in regard to the development and implementation of WorkplaceTravel Plans (WTP's) to encourage sustainable travel and the Cycle to Work Scheme is a key strand of these plans. It also provides information to employers on the options available in regard to the Cycle to Work Scheme which employers may find useful. This information is aimed at assisting in helping to reduce levels of bureaucracy encountered by employers. I am not aware of any significant negative feedback on this issue.
- (iii) My Department does not have a role in relation to the operation of the HMRC Scheme but we will however continue to encourage any employers who may have concerns above the perceived level of bureaucracy to raise those concerns with HMRC. My officials will also continue to make employers aware of the scheme as part of the promotion of sustainable travel and the benefits the scheme can have for employers and their employees.

Travel Survey for Northern Ireland

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25776/11-15, whether he will consider reviewing the data measured by the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI).

(AQW 26820/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As a National Statistics Publication, the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) is reviewed annually and a comprehensive review took place between 2010 and 2011 which took the form of a number of user consultations. As a result of that review, a number of questions, including a set of cycling specific questions, were added into the 2012 TSNI for the first time. However, as the survey requires 3 years of data, results will not be available until the 2012-2014 In-depth TSNI report is published in December 2015.

For details of the questions used in 2012, please see the TSNI 2010-2012 Technical Report:
http://www.drdni.gov.uk/tsni_technical_report_2010-2012.pdf.

Residential Developments in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the residential developments in South Antrim that have a road surety bond; and how long each bond has been outstanding.

(AQW 26841/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the residential developments in South Antrim that have a road surety bond and time outstanding (calculated to the nearest year) are as follows:

Site Description	Date Bonded	Time Outstanding (Years)
Toberdowney, Ballynure	05/Mar/1997	16
Arthur Crescent, Carnmoney	03/Jun/1998	15
Arthur Crescent, Carnmoney	03/Jun/1998	15
Arthur Crescent, Carnmoney	18/Jan/1999	14
Forthaven, The Longshot, Ballyrobert, Ballyclare	15/Jul/2009	4
Russell Court, Ballyclare	04/Oct/2010	3
Orwood Mews, Newtownabbey	08/Jun/1998	15
Glen Mews, Ballyclare	07/Mar/2000	13
Ellisfield Mews, Straid	10/Nov/2003	10
Carnbank, Templepatrick	19/May/2003	10
Exchange Avenue, Station Road, Doagh	20/May/2010	3
Ballyhamage, Burn Road, Doagh	10/Nov/2003	10
Ross's Avenue, Ballyclare	05/May/2009	4
Mayfield Village, Mallusk	08/Oct/2004	9
Richmond Park, Ballyclare	27/Apr/2004	9
Richmond Park, Ballyclare	17/Oct/2006	7
Richmond Park, Ballyclare	17/Oct/2006	7
Richmond Park, Ballyclare	08/Nov/2006	7
Mayfield Village, Mallusk	30/Jan/2006	7

Site Description	Date Bonded	Time Outstanding (Years)
Ballyduff Road, Newtownabbey	20/Jun/2005	8
Rogan Wood, Antrim Road, Newtownabbey	16/Nov/2006	7
Mayfield Village, Mallusk	27/Mar/2006	7
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	10/Dec/2008	5
Ballycorr Road, Ballyclare	08/Jan/2008	5
Hydepark Road, Newtownabbey	01/Jun/2007	6
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	11/Dec/2006	7
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	19/Dec/2006	7
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	19/Dec/2006	7
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	10/Dec/2008	5
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	12/Dec/2012	1
Hydepark Road, Mallusk	10/Dec/2008	5
Main Street, Ballynure	10/Oct/2012	1
Main Street, Ballynure	10/Oct/2012	1
Ballyeaston Road, Ballyclare	09/Jan/2008	5
Ballyeaston Road, Ballyclare	09/Jan/2008	5
Doagh Road, Ballyclare	28/Sep/2012	1
Doagh Road, Ballyclare	11/Sep/2012	1
Ballyrobert Road, Newtownabbey	15/Jun/2012	1
Doagh Road, Ballyclare	15/Sep/2008	5
Doagh Road, Ballyclare	04/Apr/2008	5
Doagh Road, Ballyclare	20/Aug/2009	4
Ballylagan Road, Straid	17/Aug/2009	4
Ballyrobert Road, Ballyrobert	12/Sep/2011	2
Aspen View, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	04/Apr/2011	2
Clarke Lodge Mews, Templepatrick	01/Mar/2012	1
Green Acres, Glebe Road, Newtownabbey	26/Oct/2012	1
Rashee Road, Ballyclare	12/Aug/2010	3
Readers Park, Rashee Road, Ballyclare	01/Aug/2011	2
Readers Drive, Rashee Road, Ballyclare	01/Aug/2011	2
Knockview Road, Newtownabbey	10/Jun/2011	2
Ballylagan Road, Straid	05/May/2011	2
Mayfield Village, Hydepark Road, Mallusk	18/Oct/2010	3

Site Description	Date Bonded	Time Outstanding (Years)
Ballyearl Drive, New Mossley, Newtownabbey	20/Oct/2011	2
Abercorn Drive, Ballyclare	09/Feb/2011	2
Rashee Drive, Ballyclare	14/Jun/2011	2
Rashee Drive, Ballyclare	14/Jun/2011	2
Beechwood Avenue, Carnmoney	01/Nov/2012	1
Beechwood Avenue, Carnmoney	07/Nov/2012	1
Forthaven, The Longshot, Ballyclare	10/May/2002	11
Forthaven, The Longshot, Ballyclare	22/Sep/2003	10
Millmount, Randalstown	06/Nov/2000	13
Millmount, Randalstown	13/Dec/2000	13
Millmount, Randalstown	22/Sep/2003	10
Castle Road, Randalstown	06/Jun/2002	11
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Jan/2006	7
Millhouse Village, Antrim	06/Feb/2006	7
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Dec/2005	8
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Jan/2006	7
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Jan/2006	7
Millhouse Village, Antrim	22/Sep/2006	7
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Dec/2005	8
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Dec/2005	8
Millhouse Village, Antrim	18/May/2006	7
Millhouse Village, Antrim	22/Feb/2007	6
Millhouse Village, Antrim	17/May/2007	6
Millhouse Village, Antrim	22/Mar/2007	6
Millhouse Village, Antrim	22/Mar/2007	6
Millhouse Village, Antrim	30/Jan/2007	6
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Jun/2008	5
Millhouse Village, Antrim	12/Sep/2008	5
Millhouse Village, Antrim	13/Nov/2009	4
Millhouse Village, Antrim	21/Oct/2009	4
Millhouse Village, Antrim	15/Jul/2009	4
Millhouse Village, Antrim	22/Mar/2010	3
Millhouse Village, Antrim	10/Dec/2010	3

Site Description	Date Bonded	Time Outstanding (Years)
Millhouse Village, Antrim	02/Aug/2011	2
Millhouse Village, Antrim	29/Apr/2013	0
Birchdale, Randalstown	14/Mar/2003	10
Carnbeg, Antrim	18/Apr/2008	5
Carnbeg, Antrim	09/Jan/2012	1
Carnbeg, Kilbegs Road, Antrim	06/Feb/2013	0
Castle Avenue, Randalstown	07/Dec/2004	9
Bush Manor, Antrim	07/Jul/2008	5
Bush Manor, Antrim	11/Jul/2008	5
Bushforde Manor, Antrim	09/Jan/2012	1
Bushforde Manor, Antrim	26/Oct/2012	1
Maple Park, Lurgan Road, Crumlin	04/May/2005	8
The Cedars, Cunningham Way, Antrim	06/Jun/2005	8
The Cedars, Cunningham Way, Antrim	28/Aug/2007	6
Bleach Green, Dunadry	24/Mar/2005	8
Packenham Court, Crumlin	20/Apr/2007	6
Lamonts Mill, Riverside, Antrim	22/Jun/2007	6
Lamonts Mill, Riverside, Antrim	28/Aug/2007	6
Lamonts Mill, Riverside, Antrim	22/Jun/2007	6
Lamonts Mill, Riverside, Antrim	22/Jun/2007	6
Lamonts Mill, Riverside, Antrim	28/Aug/2007	6
Lamonts Mill, Riverside, Antrim	15/Jun/2007	6
Bush Road, Antrim	05/Sep/2007	6
Belfast Road, Antrim	20/Nov/2012	1
Red Row, Toomebridge	12/Mar/2010	3
Red Row, Toomebridge	02/Feb/2012	1
Shanes Street, Randalstown	18/Mar/2011	2
Nutts Corner Road, Crumlin	14/Feb/2013	0
Portmore Hall, Crumlin	18/Jun/2010	3
Portmore Hall, Crumlin	04/Sep/2013	0
Steeple Road, Antrim	14/Mar/2011	2
Steeple Road, Antrim	18/Mar/2011	2
Ferrard Meadow, Antrim	05/Apr/2011	2

Site Description	Date Bonded	Time Outstanding (Years)
Cunningham Way, Antrim	11/Aug/2011	2
Grange Lodge, Antrim	05/Aug/2011	2
Grange Lodge, Antrim	05/Aug/2011	2
Grange Lodge, Antrim	29/Oct/2012	1
Grange Lodge, Antrim	05/Aug/2011	2
Tresna Park, Randalstown	09/Jan/2012	1
Ballydonaghy Road, Crumlin	12/Aug/2013	0
Ballydonaghy Road, Crumlin	12/Aug/2013	0
Main Street, Crumlin	13/Feb/2013	0
Main Street, Crumlin	08/Mar/2013	0
Main Street, Parkgate	24/Jul/2013	0

Passenger Numbers Using Antrim Station

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how the passenger numbers using Antrim Station compares for (i) the year ending 31 March 2013 with the year ending 31 March 2011; and (ii) the first six months of this financial year compares with the same period last year.

(AQW 26891/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following passenger flows were recorded for Antrim Station:

(i)

2010/11	2012/13	% Difference
278,711	302,383*	+ 8.5

* Based on 52 weeks

(ii)

2012/13 April-September	2013/14 April- September	% Difference
146,287	201,622	+ 37.8

Passenger Numbers Using the Coleraine to Belfast Line

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how the passenger numbers using the Coleraine to Belfast line compares for (i) the year end 31 March 2013 with the year ending 31 March 2011; and (ii) the first six months of this financial year compares with the same period last year.

(AQW 26892/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following passenger journeys were recorded on the Coleraine to Belfast corridor:

(i)

2010/11	2012/13	% Difference
1,189,863	1,302,687 *	+ 9.5

* Based on 52 weeks

(ii)

2012/13 April-September	2013/14 April- September	% Difference
644,118	861,547	+33.8

Passenger Numbers Using Ballymoney Station

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the passenger numbers using Ballymoney Station in the year ending 31 March 2013; and how that compares with the year ending 31 March 2011.

(AQW 26893/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following passenger flows were recorded for Ballymoney Station:

2010/11	2012/13	% Difference
269,961	318,678*	+ 18.0

* Based on 52 weeks

Severe Winter Conditions: Keeping Roads Open

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what preparations have been made for potentially difficult winter conditions in relation to keeping roads open.

(AQW 26912/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is well prepared for the coming winter. Staffing arrangements are being finalised, pre-season checks on winter service equipment are complete and salt stocks have been replenished. From the end of October, Roads Service will have over 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads. Contracts are also in place to enable contractors and farmers to help to clear roads during periods of prolonged snow.

Following the two snow events last winter, I commissioned an independent review of the performance of Roads Service over the period. The National Winter Service Research Group carried out a comprehensive review, examining every aspect of the winter service programme. The outcome of the review was positive and concluded our winter service policies were well-considered and consistent. I have placed a copy of the review in the Assembly Library.

One of the key recommendations from the review was that the winter service fleet replacement programme continues to be prioritised in order to reduce the unreliability of gritters and other equipment. I am committed to investing in the winter service fleet and to that end, will continue to seek funding to ensure the fleet we have is fit for purpose and capable of dealing with the long winter period. I hope Members will support bids for this additional funding.

A further recommendation highlighted the need for consistency of service in relation to the salting of footways. My Department has arrangements with 24 of the 26 District Councils to salt city and town centre footways during times of prolonged ice and snow. I have written to the Chief Executives of the remaining two councils to encourage them to come on board.

Number of People that use Cycling as a Means of Transport

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what process is in place to monitor the number of people that use cycling as a means of transport; and to detail the baseline figure used to ascertain changes in the number people using cycling as a means of transport.

(AQW 26934/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) is the only source of data that records how and why people travel in Northern Ireland. A range of cycling specific information is recorded, including the average distance travelled per person per year by bicycle, the number of cycling journeys taken per person per year and the average journey length for bicycle journeys.

More information on the TSNI can be found at:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-categories/northern_ireland_travel_survey.htm.

The baseline will vary according to the strategy or target being monitored.

Traffic Wardens

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many traffic wardens are employed.

(AQW 26938/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Traffic Attendants are employed by NSL, which is a private company. NSL employs a total of 165 Traffic Attendants for deployment across Northern Ireland.

Cars Parked on Footpaths

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how Roads Service deal with cars parked on footpaths.

(AQW 26939/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Parking restrictions, such as yellow lines, which are marked on the carriageway also apply to the footway and a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) can be issued to a vehicle which is parked on the footway, in breach of the restriction. A PCN can also be issued to a vehicle which is parked on the footway in breach of clearway restrictions.

The PSNI can also take action when a vehicle is parked on the footway and causing an obstruction, where no parking restrictions apply.

Penalty Charge Notices: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices have been issued in North Down, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26940/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in North Down, in each of the last five years, are provided in the table below:

Year	PCNs Issued
2012/13	4,506
2011/12	5,065
2010/11	5,015
2009/10	4,873
2008/09	5,502

Clamping Vehicles

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's position on clamping vehicles.

(AQW 26941/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department currently uses vehicle clamping only in relation to the recovery of debt arising from unpaid Penalty Charge Notices.

Double Yellow Lines: Road Junctions

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's position on painting double yellow lines on the corner of a road junction.

(AQW 26942/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Corner restrictions are provided primarily for road safety reasons and, in general, parking within 15m of a junction is prohibited unless within a lay-by in specified circumstances, or in a designated parking area.

Where a corner is not marked with a double yellow line, the prohibition can only be enforced by the police. However, where the prohibition is marked with a double yellow line, it can also be enforced by Traffic Attendants.

In town and city centres and busier urban areas, most corners are already marked to facilitate enforcement by traffic attendants. Beyond this, corners are normally only marked where regular and sustained parking is impeding traffic progression.

Road Surety Bonds: East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the value of each Road Surety Bond in East Antrim; and (ii) who receives any interest accrued from the money deposited.

(AQW 26961/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the initial value and current value of each road bond in East Antrim. The majority of bonds listed are surety bonds with no interest payable. Cash bonds, where interest would be payable, are in bold upper case. Interest is calculated at 0.5% below the Bank of England base rate (currently 0.5%) therefore the interest charge is zero. Interest is paid to the developer who deposited the cash bond. In the instances where the developer is no longer trading, interest is paid to the developer's representative or administrator.

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)	Initial Bond Value	Current Bond value
Beechwood Avenue, Newtownabbey	01/Nov/2012	1	£22,800.00	£22,800.00
Beechwood Avenue, Newtownabbey	07/Nov/2012	1	£40,000.00	£40,000.00
Brackenridge, Sloefield Road, Carrickfergus	21/Sep/2001	12	£20,500.00	£2,050.00
Bridewell Drive, Carrickfergus	29/Oct/2004	9	£28,700.00	£28,700.00
Brooklands Gardens, Carrickfergus	22/Mar/2005	8	£30,300.00	£3,030.00
Cambridge Close, Carrickfergus	27/Aug/1996	17	£69,700.00	£69,700.00
Circular Road, Jordanstown	10/Aug/2006	7	£4,000.00	£4,000.00

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)	Initial Bond Value	Current Bond value
Craiglands, Carrickfergus	12/Mar/1997	16	£30,500.00	£9,150.00
Edenvale Avenue, Carrickfergus	04/Apr/2012	1	£67,200.00	£67,200.00
Farm Lodge Park, Greenisland	02/Apr/2012	1	£38,500.00	£38,500.00
Farm Lodge, Greenisland	04/Jul/2000	13	£146,000.00	£43,800.00
Farm Lodge, Greenisland	06/Feb/2006	7	£108,300.00	£54,150.00
Glenavna, Shore Road, Newtownabbey	10/Sep/2009	4	£73,400.00	£36,700.00
Glenavna, Shore Road, Newtownabbey	06/Sep/2013	0	£21,200.00	£21,200.00
Glenisland Terrace, Greenisland	31/Oct/2011	2	£41,600.00	£41,600.00
Glenview Park, Newtownabbey	09/Oct/2002	11	£26,750.00	£13,375.00
Glenview Park, Newtownabbey	19/Jan/2009	4	£35,000.00	£17,500.00
Glenville Road, Newtownabbey	14/May/2008	5	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Jordanstown Road, Newtownabbey	14/Jun/2010	3	£29,000.00	£29,000.00
Larne Road, Carrickfergus	07/Sep/2009	4	£69,050.00	£69,050.00
Larne Road, Carrickfergus	17/Dec/2009	4	£31,700.00	£15,850.00
Longpark, Farm Lodge, Greenisland	06/Feb/2006	7	£109,800.00	£54,900.00
Loughshore Courtyard, Shore Road, Jordanstown	04/Jan/2011	2	£43,250.00	£4,325.00
Meadowbank Farm, Jordanstown	09/Mar/2007	6	£52,750.00	£52,750.00
Mountpleasant View, Mountpleasant Road, Jordanstown	14/Jun/2010	3	£33,200.00	£16,600.00
North Lodge Court, Carrickfergus	11/Mar/2002	11	£38,700.00	£3,870.00
Old Shore Court, Carrickfergus	22/Aug/2005	8	£90,650.00	£45,325.00
Rhanbuoy Close, Carrickfergus	21/Feb/2013	0	£22,250.00	£11,125.00
Riverbrook, Brooklands Drive, Carrickfergus	10/Jun/1998	15	£37,200.00	£37,200.00
Riverforde, Slaughterford Road, Whitehead	02/Mar/2005	8	£96,850.00	£96,850.00
Riverforde, Slaughterford Road, Whitehead	02/Aug/2006	7	£224,850.00	£224,850.00
Shorelands, Shore Road, Greenisland	20/Jan/2011	2	£234,400.00	£117,200.00

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)	Initial Bond Value	Current Bond value
Shorelands, Shore Road, Greenisland	25/Jan/2013	0	£23,400.00	£23,400.00
The Cairns, Upper Station Road, Greenisland	13/Jan/2012	1	£69,450.00	£34,725.00
Thralcot Link, Carrickfergus	22/Feb/2013	0	£14,200.00	£14,200.00
Trailcock Road, Carrickfergus	02/Apr/2012	1	£42,400.00	£42,400.00
Trailcock Road, Carrickfergus	15/May/2013	0	£30,100.00	£30,100.00
Tudor Road, Carrickfergus	22/Jan/2013	0	£43,200.00	£43,200.00
Upper Road, Greenisland	13/Nov/2007	6	£35,450.00	£17,725.00
Windmill Park, Carrickfergus	23/Nov/2011	2	£42,300.00	£4,230.00
Woodlawn, Carrickfergus	11/Sep/1987	26	£26,000.00	£7,800.00
Whinfield, Larne	27/Apr/1990	23	£15,800.00	£15,800.00
Whinfield, Larne	04/Feb/1997	16	£43,900.00	£21,950.00
Inver Heights, Larne	29/Oct/1991	22	£12,360.00	£3,708.00
Inver Heights, Larne	18/Sep/1992	21	£27,340.00	£8,202.00
Oakdene, Larne	03/Sep/2007	6	£3,950.00	£3,950.00
Ballyloran Manor, Larne	11/Sep/2000	13	£99,600.00	£29,880.00
Hampton Manor, Larne	04/Oct/2002	11	£24,700.00	£7,410.00
Lindara, Larne	14/Dec/2001	12	£106,600.00	£53,300.00
Lindara, Larne	14/Aug/2003	10	£88,200.00	£44,100.00
Lindara, Larne	17/Nov/2004	9	£213,100.00	£106,550.00
Lindara, Larne	27/Apr/2006	7	£105,950.00	£105,950.00
Lindara, Larne	27/Apr/2006	7	£61,950.00	£61,950.00
Lindara, Larne	27/Apr/2006	7	£63,650.00	£63,650.00
Lindara, Larne	24/Jan/2007	6	£110,350.00	£110,350.00
Lindara, Larne	28/Nov/2007	6	£141,700.00	£141,700.00
Lindara, Larne	28/Nov/2007	6	£96,900.00	£96,900.00
Lindara, Larne	28/Nov/2007	6	£105,000.00	£105,000.00
Lindara, Larne	12/Apr/2002	11	£10,900.00	£10,900.00
Mullaghboy Heights, Islandmagee	03/Oct/2007	6	£45,200.00	£22,600.00
Mullaghboy Heights, Islandmagee	27/Jan/2010	3	£34,500.00	£17,250.00
Drumahoe Manor, Larne	29/Apr/2004	9	£111,400.00	£111,400.00
Drumahoe Manor, Larne	10/Aug/2006	7	£50,300.00	£50,300.00

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)	Initial Bond Value	Current Bond value
Leaffield, Ballycarry	14/Aug/2006	7	£124,900.00	£12,490.00
Leaffield, Ballycarry	12/Aug/2010	3	£28,300.00	£8,490.00
Bayfields, Carnlough	02/Nov/2006	7	£52,150.00	£5,215.00
Bayfields, Carnlough	10/May/2007	6	£85,100.00	£85,100.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	08/Sep/2005	8	£65,250.00	£32,625.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	27/Sep/2005	8	£69,600.00	£34,800.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	08/Sep/2005	8	£59,250.00	£29,625.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	08/Sep/2005	8	£68,000.00	£34,000.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	22/Sep/2005	8	£44,450.00	£22,225.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	22/Sep/2005	8	£46,900.00	£23,450.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	22/Sep/2005	8	£34,100.00	£17,050.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	10/Jan/2006	7	£40,000.00	£20,000.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	10/Jan/2006	7	£53,200.00	£26,600.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	10/Jan/2006	7	£50,250.00	£25,125.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	10/Jan/2006	7	£54,400.00	£27,200.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	17/Oct/2006	7	£56,200.00	£28,100.00
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	16/Jan/2007	6	£21,400.00	£10,700.00
Barklie Grove, Larne	17/Oct/2011	2	£22,500.00	£2,250.00
The Hamptons, Larne	02/Nov/2006	7	£267,250.00	£26,725.00
The Hamptons, Larne	02/Nov/2006	7	£42,700.00	£21,350.00
The Hamptons, Larne	02/Nov/2006	7	£24,600.00	£12,300.00
The Hamptons, Larne	23/Jan/2007	6	£135,750.00	£67,875.00
Lislaynan, Ballycarry	12/Aug/2013	0	£18,500.00	£18,500.00
Lislaynan, Ballycarry	12/Aug/2013	0	£7,400.00	£7,400.00
Seven Springs, Larne	10/Sep/2009	4	£102,200.00	£51,100.00
Porter Green, Larne	02/Aug/2011	2	£40,700.00	£20,350.00
Logans Loanen, Larne	26/ OCT/2012	1	£31,400.00	£3,140.00
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	03/Mar/2010	3	£59,500.00	£29,750.00
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	03/Mar/2010	3	£51,800.00	£25,900.00
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	23/May/2011	2	£11,500.00	£5,750.00
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	05/Oct/2011	2	£34,100.00	£17,050.00
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	29/Nov/2011	2	£19,700.00	£9,850.00

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)	Initial Bond Value	Current Bond value
Larne West Distributor Road, Larne	13/Apr/2012	1	£50,300.00	£50,300.00
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	03/Dec/2012	0	£44,400.00	£44,400.00
Rose Place, Islandmagee	02/Oct/2012	1	£33,700.00	£33,700.00
Rose Place, Islandmagee	02/Oct/2012	1	£32,900.00	£32,900.00
Redlands Road, Larne	16/Jul/2012	1	£172,000.00	£172,000.00
Curran Road, Larne	24/Jan/2012	1	£33,300.00	£33,300.00
Curran Road, Larne	24/Jan/2012	1	£3,900.00	£3,900.00
Gorse Meadow, Larne	20/Mar/2012	1	£29,800.00	£29,800.00

Residential Developments in the Glens of Antrim: Road Safety Bond

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25973/11-15, to detail the residential developments in the Glens of Antrim that have a Road Surety Bond.

(AQW 26962/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of residential developments in the Glens of Antrim that have a Road Surety Bond are included in the table below:

Residential Developments in the Glens of Antrim that have a Road Surety Bond

Location	Date Sealed
Bayfields, Carnlough	2 November 2006
Bayfields, Carnlough	10 May 2007
Cregagh View, Knocknacarry	14 November 2008

Route from Central Station to Belfast City Centre: Cyclists

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25260/11-15, to outline the issues that Roads Service is aware of in regard to cyclists using the route from Central Station to Belfast City Centre.

(AQW 26971/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: With regard to cyclists at this location, the issues are the same as for all road users across the public road network, namely that they can go about their daily business effectively and without undue concern over delays or safety.

Car Parking Fees in Magherafelt Town Centre

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total income derived from car parking fees in Magherafelt Town Centre on each Saturday for the last three months.

(AQW 27019/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of income from car parks in Magherafelt are provided in the table below:

Date	Car Parking Charges Income (£)
06/07/2013	1,010.37
13/07/2013	* 0.00
20/07/2013	877.05
27/07/2013	960.83
03/08/2013	1,030.09
10/08/2013	963.95
17/08/2013	1,008.78
24/08/2013	1,081.30
31/08/2013	1,105.29
07/09/2013	1,116.89
14/09/2013	1,076.71
21/09/2013	1,068.89
28/09/2013	1,119.20

* 13 July 2013 is one of 6 days when charges do not apply.

Number of Passengers Using the Ulsterbus 212 Service

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of people using the Ulsterbus 212 service at (i) Belfast; (ii) Toome; (iii) Dungiven; and (iv) Londonderry, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27027/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The number of passengers boarding and alighting at the locations referred to, in the last five years, is detailed in the table below. You should note that the totals for boardings and alightings are not the same as there are other stops along the 212 service. The figures represent journeys undertaken rather actual numbers of people.

212 Passenger Information by Stage 2008/2009

Boarding	Passengers
Belfast	228867
Dungiven	50217
L/Derry	217249
Toome Bypass	22815

Alighting	Passengers
Belfast	319095
Dungiven	25530
L/Derry	188895
Toome Bypass	15005

2009/2010

Boarding	Passengers
Belfast	237181
Dungiven	45587
L/Derry	214935
Toome Bypass	23068

Alighting	Passengers
Belfast	309480
Dungiven	27010
L/Derry	188849
Toome Bypass	17262

2010/2011

Boarding	Passengers
Belfast	250735
Dungiven	46334
L/Derry	200416
Toome Bypass	21059

Alighting	Passengers
Belfast	313266
Dungiven	28615
L/Derry	199617
Toome Bypass	16296

2011/12

Boarding	Passengers
Belfast	267539
Dungiven	51410
L/Derry	195599
Toome Bypass	22747

Alighting	Passengers
Belfast	330874
Dungiven	31110
L/Derry	213077
Toome Bypass	18346

2012/13

Boarding	Passengers
Belfast	299732
Dungiven	55421
L/Derry	220369
Toome Bypass	26251

Alighting	Passengers
Belfast	372762
Dungiven	32504
L/Derry	241530
Toome Bypass	21188

Free Parking for Construction Workers and Tradespeople

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans to introduce free parking for construction workers and tradespeople for a limited period whilst work is being carried out on nearby premises.

(AQW 27030/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am not aware of any current proposal to introduce free parking for circumstances such as you have described.

Cycling Fatalities: Albert Bridge, Belfast

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has made an assessment of the risk of cycling fatalities where city centre bound lanes and traffic merge at the start of the Albert Bridge, Belfast.

(AQW 27035/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The bus lane / cycle facility on the Albertbridge Road, approaching the Albert Bridge, was provided in 1996 to accommodate buses, cyclists and taxis approaching the city centre. The merge arrangement, provided at the end of the bus lane, where the road narrows for the Albert Bridge, is a common layout which operates at other locations in Belfast and elsewhere.

Collision records, provided by the PSNI, for this location are monitored, as part of the normal collision data gathering exercise. Over the last five years records show there have been no reported injury collisions at this merge location, involving cyclists.

Cost of Grass Cutting in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much Roads Service has spent on grass cutting in the North Down Constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27068/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain an analysis of grass cutting expenditure by Constituency area; however, it can provide details of total expenditure in Roads Eastern Division on Grass Cutting and Environmental Maintenance. Expenditure for each of the last three years is detailed in the table below.

Financial Year	Eastern Division Spend on Grass Cutting and Environmental Maintenance £000's
2010/11	2,005
2011/12	1,815
2012/13	2,026
Total	5,846

The Councils listed in the table below are those that would be primarily classed as being in the Roads Eastern Divisional area.

Council Area

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ Belfast City Council | ■ Lisburn City Council |
| ■ Carrickfergus Borough Council | ■ Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| ■ Castlereagh Borough Council | ■ North Down Borough Council |

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 27069/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is committed to promoting inclusion and provision for people with a disability and achieves this in a number of ways as detailed below:

Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS)

The ATS was published in 2005 and seeks to address the wide ranging barriers that impede the use of the transport system by people with a disability and also looks at the improvements to the physical

environment including the accessibility of bus and rail stations and to town and city centres. The Strategy has been implemented through a series of action plans. The current action plan covers the policies and actions to be progressed during the period 2012-2015. Copies of the ATS and the latest action plan can be accessed on the Department's website via these links

- http://www.drdni.gov.uk/accessible_transport_strategy_for_northern_ireland_2015-10.pdf
- <http://drdinsite.intranet.nigov.net/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=8583>

Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme

This is an important service for people with severe mobility problems that enables holders to park close to where they need to go. Blue Badges enable people with a disability to access services and facilities through a range of parking concessions.

DRD Equality Scheme

The Scheme sets out how my Department intends to meet its commitments under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Section 75 is mainstreamed across business areas and all new or revised policies are subject to equality screening to assess impacts on all nine equality categories set out under Section 75, including people with a disability. The Equality Scheme also contains an action plan setting out action measures we propose to take during the period 2011-2016 to address key inequalities which have been identified relating to my Department's functions, and includes a few aimed specifically at improving inequalities for people with a disability.

My Department has also recently submitted an Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission which contains a number of good practice examples of how Section 75 commitments have been met during the 2012-2013 year.

The Equality Scheme and Audit of Inequalities Action Plan is available on my Department's website via this link:

- <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=6707>

Disability Action Plan

My Department also has in place a Disability Action Plan which sets out how we propose to meet the two disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. We have also recently published a five-year review of our Disability Action Plans which sets out the progress made in meeting these duties over the years since the introduction of our first Disability Action Plan on 1 July 2007.

The Disability Action Plan and Five Year Review are available on my Department's website via these links:

- http://www.drdni.gov.uk/drd_dap_2013_14_font_pdf_309kb
- http://www.drdni.gov.uk/drd_dap_consultation_report_and_five_year_review_2013__14_font_.pdf

Drain Blockages: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many drain blockages were reported in the North Down area in the last financial year.

(AQW 27087/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: During the 2012 /2013 financial year, 106 blocked drainage systems in the North Down area were reported to my Department's Roads Service. It should be noted not all the reports related to systems which are the maintenance responsibility of Roads Service.

Northern Ireland Water informs me the number of sewer blockages in the North Down Council area in the last financial year was 828. On average 65 per cent of these blockages were caused by inappropriate items being placed in the sewerage network.

Road Calming Measures: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to put further road calming measures in the North Down area.

(AQW 27088/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and so it is not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Public Consultation: New Train Station for Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development when the findings of the public consultation on a potential new train station for Derry will be published.

(AQW 27293/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The consultation report was shared with this Department in early September. We have asked Translink to take forward an economic appraisal as a matter of urgency. I see the consultation as one element of the economic appraisal and planning process. That economic appraisal is being progressed to look at all costs and benefits and funding scenarios.

Department for Social Development

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Community Projects

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has spent on community projects in each of the last five years; and how such projects will be funded after the proposed social housing reforms.

(AQW 26720/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has detailed their funding on community projects in each of the last five years in the tables below.

Table 1 – Housing Executive Restorative Justice Payments

Year	Northern Ireland Alternatives	Community Restorative Justice Ireland
2008/09	£24,500	-
2009/10	£35,000	£35,000
2010/11	£37,500	£37,500
2011/12	£37,500	£37,500
2012/13	£60,000	£60,000

Table 2 – Housing Executive Community Cohesion Funding

Year	
2008/09	£122,364.52
2009/10	£211,237.00
2010/11	£266,737.00
2011/12	£256,515.90
2012/13	£236,016.67
2013/14 (at 08/10/2013)	£176,563.99
2011 to date (Shared Communities Programme)	£ 67,579.55

Table 3 – Housing Executive Community Development Funding

Year	
2008/09	£930,830
2009/10	£792,386
2010/11	£1,028,779
2011/12	£900,628
2012/13	£876,513

However, at this stage of the Social housing Reform Programme it is too early to state how community projects will be funded in the future, this will become clearer as structures for the future delivery of Landlord and non Landlord services are developed.

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Support Band Grade Staff

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the rationale for outsourcing Support Band Grade staff within his Department.

(AQW 26721/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The decision by the Department for Social Development to outsource its Soft Services was an operational one driven by a need to achieve efficiencies.

The Department is working to support the affected staff who have the option to: (i) transfer to another NICS department; (ii) transfer laterally to an administrative post within DSD (where staff meet the qualifying conditions); or, (iii) transfer to the new provider under TUPE.

Support Grade Band Staff: Pay and Conditions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what guarantees he can give that current and future Support Grade Band staff's pay and conditions will not be reduced as a result of outsourcing these functions.

(AQW 26722/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The pay and conditions of staff associated with the functions to be the subject of the contract will be matters for the contractor. However, those permanent NICS Support Grade Band staff who transfer to the contractor will do so under the protection afforded by The Transfer of Undertakings

(Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and the Service Provision Change (Protection of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, collectively known as 'TUPE'.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of reported anti-social behaviour cases in Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 26729/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency. The information is also not available for 2012/13 as the Housing Executive's new Management System was being implemented at that time and reporting was suspended.

The attached table details the number of reported anti-social behaviour cases in Housing Executive properties from 2007/08 to 2011/12 by Housing Executive local office area.

Table 1 – Reported Anti-Social Behaviour Cases: -

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
East	48	51	52	328	295
West	283	340	373	92	104
North	110	182	189	230	290
Shankill	15	30	41	270	172
South	37	88	104	34	40
Belfast Area Total	493	691	759	954	901
Bangor	230	201	225	233	234
Newtownards	226	160	173	188	242
Castlereagh	191	139	137	171	99
Lisburn	423	463	261	216	247
Dairyfarm	169	99	137	108	142
Downpatrick	81	142	218	189	189
South East Area Total	1320	1204	1151	1105	1153
Banbridge	118	132	112	103	66
Newry	252	286	301	290	305
Armagh	73	92	58	120	65
Lurgan	83	90	140	164	131
Portadown	64	113	134	87	66
Dungannon	53	67	103	102	110
Fermanagh	147	127	186	233	167
South Area Total	790	907	1034	1099	910

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Ballymena	233	112	75	98	117
Antrim	306	348	252	173	136
Newtownabbey 1	132	67	104	100	86
Newtownabbey 2	34	64	170	155	121
Carrickfergus	49	62	135	154	126
Larne	64	78	69	73	77
Ballycastle	42	32	26	27	33
Ballymoney	91	89	87	57	69
Coleraine	115	81	81	67	94
North East Area Total	1066	933	999	904	859
Waterloo	18	32	54	15	75
Waterside	85	96	113	58	103
Collon Terrace	166	209	192	123	162
Limavady	31	64	98	85	56
Magherafelt	46	50	65	48	61
Strabane	47	79	93	121	136
Omagh	99	72	76	91	89
Cookstown	28	53	50	64	56
West Area total	520	655	741	605	738
NI Total	4189	4390	4684	4667	4561

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Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of reported anti-social behaviour cases in Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties that were resolved in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 26732/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary Constituency. The information is also only available for the financial years 2010/11 and 2011/12.

The Housing Executive has advised that Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) cases are resolved in a variety of ways. The Housing Executive receives about 4,500 reports of ASB every year, the majority of which are dealt with quickly and effectively by Housing Officers and Neighbourhood Officers through personal contact and warning letters. If such action does not resolve the ASB, the Housing Executive can instigate a more intensive intervention through its centralised Community Safety Team. Such actions include the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or the offer of mediation and community support. The most serious cases of ASB may have to be addressed through legal action including injunctions and, as a last resort, repossession of properties.

The tables below provide details of the number of ASB cases in Housing Executive properties 2010/11 and 2011/12 broken down by Housing Executive District Office area: -

District Office ASB Activity Period: April 10 - March 11

Housing Executive Area	Recorded Cases Simple Complex		Cases Referred to ACSO	NSP/NOP SERVED	Decrees Obtained	Injunctions Granted	Under Takings	Possessions Obtained	ABC'S Signed	APAC / Floating Support Referrals	Mediation referrals
Belfast											
North	162	108	12	3	2	0	0	9	1	0	5
South	213	17	5	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	4
East	87	5	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
West	293	35	10	1	1	0	0	5	3	2	10
Shankill	32	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area Total	787	167	28	6	5	0	0	18	5	3	19
South East											
Bangor	220	13	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
N'ards	172	16	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
C'reagh	154	17	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Lisburn	207	9	3	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	2
Dairy Farm	106	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Downpatrick	182	7	7	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Area Total	1041	64	33	5	3	0	0	5	1	1	18
South											
Banbridge	72	31	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Newry	251	39	3	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Armagh	95	25	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Lurgan	99	65	8	1	0	0	0	6	2	0	3
Portadown	58	29	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Dungannon	87	15	3	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	1
Fermanagh	170	63	21	2	3	0	0	9	5	4	3
Area Total	832	267	41	11	5	1	0	25	7	7	10

Housing Executive Area	Recorded Cases Simple Complex	Cases Referred to ACSO	NSP / NOP SERVED	Decrees Obtained	Injunctions Granted	Under Takings	Possessions Obtained	ABC'S Signed	APAC / Floating Support Referrals	Mediation referrals
North East										
Ballymena	94	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	5
Antrim	158	15	9	1	0	0	3	0	1	2
N'abbey1	90	10	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
N'abbey2	150	5	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
C'fergus	152	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Larne	69	4	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	2
Ballycastle	24	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ballymoney	48	9	9	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
Coleraine	64	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area Total	849	55	39	3	1	0	7	6	10	16
West										
Waterloo	15	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Waterside	51	7	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	3
Collon Terrace	117	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Limavady	67	18	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Magherafelt	44	4	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Strabane	116	5	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Omagh	84	7	3	0	0	0	2	1	4	1
Cookstown	52	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area Total	546	59	25	1	1	0	7	2	4	15
Overall Totals	4055	612	166	26	15	1	0	62	21	78*

* Figures For Mediation Do Not Include Cases Outsourced To Northern Ireland Alternatives Or Community Restorative Justice Ireland.

ACSO – Area Community Safety Officer

ABC – Anti-social Behaviour Contract

NSP – Notice Seeking Possession

NOP – Notice of Possession

District Office ASB Activity Period: April 11 - March 2012

Housing Executive Area	Recorded Cases Simple Complex		Cases Referred to ACSO	NSP/NOP SERVED	Decrees Obtained	Injunctions Granted	Under Takings	Possessions Obtained	ABCs Signed	APAC / Floating Support Referrals	Mediation referrals
Belfast											
North	102	70	7	3	0	0	0	3	2	2	1
South	281	9	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2
East	88	16	8	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3
West	259	36	8	0	0	0	0	5	3	1	4
Shankill	39	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
Area Total	769	132	25	3	0	1	0	10	9	10	13
South East											
Bangor	226	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
N'ards	223	19	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
C'reagh	88	11	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Lisburn	231	16	11	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	1
Dairy Farm	140	2	3	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	2
Downpatrick	179	10	6	2	2	0	1	3	0	0	5
Area Total	1087	66	34	11	3	1	1	11	0	1	20
South											
Banbridge	47	19	1	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Newry	228	74	3	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	5
Armagh	60	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lurgan	109	22	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	4
Portadown	40	26	4	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Dungannon	96	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fermanagh	148	19	5	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	2
Area Total	728	179	16	7	6	0	0	14	2	4	17

Housing Executive Area	Recorded Cases Simple Complex		Cases Referred to ACSO	NSP/NOP SERVED	Decrees Obtained	Injunctions Granted	Under Takings	Possessions Obtained	ABCs Signed	APAC / Floating Support Referrals	Mediation referrals
North East											
Ballymena	116	1	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1
Antrim	130	6	7	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	1
N'abbey1	79	7	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
N'abbey2	119	2	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
C'fergus	125	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
Larne	70	7	6	2	0	0	0	0	3	3	1
Ballycastle	27	6	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Ballymoney	62	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Coleraine	86	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Area Total	814	45	35	2	1	1	0	7	10	9	19
West											
Waterloo	68	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Waterside	91	12	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2
Collon Terrace	141	21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	50	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Magherafelt	60	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Strabane	125	11	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	4
Omagh	79	10	11	0	0	0	0	6	1	1	1
Cookstown	52	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area Total	666	72	30	0	0	0	0	9	4	10	14
Overall Totals	4064	494	140	23	10	3	1	51	25	34	83 *

* This figure of 83 for Mediation does not include the 184 cases outsourced to Restorative Justice Groups, Community Restorative Justice Ireland & Northern Ireland Alternatives in the Greater Belfast and North Down Areas

ACSO – Area Community Safety Officer

ABC – Anti-social Behaviour Contract

NSP – Notice Seeking Possession

NOP – Notice of Possession

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Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the effectiveness of the current Northern Ireland Housing Executive policy on dealing with anti-social behaviour at its properties. (AQW 26733/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Community safety is a quality of life issue which impacts on all of society, individually and collectively. The Housing Executive first launched its Community Safety Team in 2000 and the effectiveness of the organisation in addressing Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) has improved year on year.

The Housing Executive has a well-developed system for tackling ASB based on a written strategy, currently being updated, which sets out their objectives and priorities. These objectives have been aligned with those set out in the Department of Justice community safety strategy, Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities. The Housing Executive has also produced and published a 40 page Statement of Policy and Procedures on ASB which details the services it provides and the procedures it uses to investigate and remedy reported incidents of ASB.

The Housing Executive's use of standardised ASB documentation facilitates a consistent approach by the Executive's staff across the whole organisation. The Statement of Policy and Procedures on ASB provides the foundation stone of the Housing Executive's competency-based staff training programme. This programme is delivered to all front line housing staff with a role in tackling ASB.

In addressing ASB, the Housing Executive employs an incremental and proportionate approach at all times. It works with the perpetrator through a range of interventions in an attempt to keep the individual in their home, while at the same time addressing the ASB. However, if the individual fails to respond to offers of assistance and the ASB continues, or if the ASB is of such a serious nature that the Housing Executive must take immediate action, then it will use the legal powers available to it to ensure that the victims of ASB are protected and the unacceptable behaviour is stopped.

The Housing Executive's non statutory interventions include warning letters, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, mediation, and community support. In addition, the Housing Executive is one of the founding partners and participants - along with PSNI and local councils - in the ASB forums which meet to discuss ASB in nearly every council area. They also have 65 Neighbourhood Officers who contribute to making their estates cleaner and safer places to live. The Housing Executive also contributes funding to various schemes, for example the 4 Tier Scheme in Antrim and Newtownabbey and a number of night time warden schemes to address crime and the fear of crime on its estates.

Housing Executive legal interventions can take a number of forms, up to and including repossession of a property.

Most of the Housing Executive's interventions, statutory or non statutory, are based firmly on the principle of partnership working. ASB is not an issue which can be dealt with by one statutory agency working in isolation. It requires the intervention of all the relevant government bodies working closely with the community to deliver real results, so working together with other groups and agencies forms the core of their ASB strategy. The Housing Executive's unique contribution to these collaborative efforts is its staff's experience of community safety issues and their knowledge of grassroot concerns.

A cost analysis of the Housing Executive's ASB services in 2010/2011, in which the organisation's ASB unit costs were compared with other UK services using the Housemark Benchmarking methodology, placed the Housing Executive in the Upper Quartile of services examined.

To further support current policy, I will, in the near future, be publishing proposals for new legislation to help the Housing Executive and other social landlords to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Empty Homes Loan Fund

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what impact a successful bid for £3.6m for an Empty Homes Loan Fund in the October monitoring round will have on the number of empty properties in 2014.

(AQW 26735/11-15)

Mr McCausland: On the basis of the original outline proposal submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel, a successful bid of £3.6m for an Empty Home Loans Fund estimated that approximately 60 empty homes could be brought back into use.

However, in light of further evidence, from other jurisdictions, my officials are seeking to refine the proposals in an effort to substantially increase the number of empty homes that could be brought back into use with such funding.

Social Security Agency: Sanctions

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people who were sanctioned by the Social Security Agency in each of the last two years, including the type and length of sanction.

(AQW 26744/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is set out in the tables below.

Benefit Fraud Sanctions	2011-2012	2012-2013
Convictions	519	567
Administrative Penalties	506	491
Total Sanctions	1025	1058

Loss of Benefit Sanctions Sept 12 to Aug 13	20% Reduction in Benefit	40% Reduction in Benefit	Loss of Benefit	Total
4 weeks "One Strike"	10	21	69	100
13 weeks "Two Strikes"	0	2	1	3
Total	10	23	70	103

Claimants Reported for Potential Sanction

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how many benefit claimants have been reported for potential sanction in each of the last two years.

(AQW 26746/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

	2011-2012	2012-2013
Number of reports of potential benefit fraud received	5935	6151

Asset Transfer of Public Resources

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when he will introduce legislation to empower asset transfer of public resources to the third and social enterprise sectors, as anticipated in the Programme for Government 2011-15.

(AQW 26754/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Consultation on a draft policy framework for Community Asset Transfer concluded on 23rd August 2013. When I have considered the responses received I will bring forward my proposals to the Executive. While the Programme for Government made no commitment to introduce legislation, the question of whether legislation is needed is one of a range of issues that will be addressed in the policy framework.

Double Glazing in Donaghadee and Millisle

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the timetable for the completion of the installation of double glazing in homes in the (i) Donaghadee; and (ii) Millisle areas.

(AQW 26760/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the remaining dwellings in Donaghadee and Millisle that require double glazing are included in a planned scheme: Ards District Double Glazing Mop-Up. The Housing Executive is currently unable to provide a definitive start date for this scheme as they are still in the process of appointing contractors to deliver the double glazing programme.

Jobs and Benefits Office: Missed Calls

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of missed calls to each Jobs and Benefits Office in 2012/13.

(AQW 26778/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As part of an ongoing modernisation programme, the Social Security Agency has over the past two years, been reorganising its telephony services for Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Social Fund. This has involved installing a new network infrastructure and centralising telephony services into a smaller number of centres. These centres are Andersonstown, Antrim, Coleraine, Falls Road, Foyle, Lisburn, Knockbreda, Magherafelt, Omagh and Royston House, with each centre supporting a number of other Jobs and Benefits offices.

Information requested for the 2012/13 financial year is only available from those sites where the new telephony service was operational at that time and is set out in the following table:

Table A - Social Fund, Income Support and Jobseekers Allowance Call Data 2012/2013

Site	Benefit Type	Calls Offered	Calls Answered	Calls Not Answered
Andersonstown	Income Support	51512	49980	1532
Andersonstown	Jobseekers Allowance	70174	67803	2371
Antrim	Social Fund	54685	53669	1016
Coleraine	Income Support	54729	52376	2353
Lisburn	Social Fund	59148	58290	858
Magherafelt	Jobseekers Allowance	66847	65916	931
Totals		357095	348034	9061

The five remaining centres became operational on the following dates:

- Foyle – 20 March 2013
- Falls Road – 22 March 2013
- Royston House – 22 March 2013
- Knockbreda – 26 March 2013
- Omagh – 10 April 2013

Discretionary Housing Payments

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how many people who applied for Discretionary Housing payments in the last three years had their application refused.

(AQW 26794/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of people who have applied for Discretionary Housing payments in the last three years and had their application refused is detailed in the table below.

Period	Awards refused
2011/12	427
2012/13	2,063
2013/14 (to 30/09/2013)	1,379

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Kilcooley Estate in Bangor: Allotment Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the Kilcooley Estate in Bangor have gained employment as a result of the allotment scheme.

(AQW 26798/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Kilcooley allotment scheme is a health project the objective of which is to provide a base from which structured activities aimed at addressing mental health, physical health, general well being initiatives, victim support and people still affected by trauma, can be offered for local residents. There are no objectives relating to creation of employment and information of this nature is not, therefore, recorded.

Job Seekers Allowance Claimants, Under the Age of 25

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the percentage of Job Seekers Allowance claimants, under the age of 25, who are single parents.

(AQW 26800/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At May 2013, there were 15,890 Jobseekers Allowance claimants aged under 25, of whom 100 were single parents. This represents 0.6% of the total figure.

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Benefits Recipients Under the Age of 25

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of benefits recipients under the age of 25; and the number of these people in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance.

(AQW 26803/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At May 2013, there were 35,230 benefit recipients aged 16 to 25, of which 15,390 were Jobseekers Allowance recipients.

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Programmes to Tackle Fuel Poverty

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has to bring forward programmes to tackle fuel poverty in the top 13 percent of areas identified as being in extreme fuel poverty. **(AQW 26852/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Warm Homes Scheme is my Department's main fuel poverty scheme which helps privately owned and privately rented low income households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The Warm Homes Scheme has an annual target of installing energy efficiency improvements in 9,000 homes and has been meeting the target consistently since 2009. The Warm Homes Scheme provides a range of measures, including insulation of lofts and cavity walls, to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.

In addition, the boiler replacement scheme which is available in Northern Ireland only, helps owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. To date 7,320 replacement boilers have been installed. The scheme is open to owner occupiers whose household income is less than £40,000 and who have a boiler which is at least 15 years old.

My Department recently completed an Achieving Affordable Warmth area based pilot, in partnership with OFMDFM, DARD, the University of Ulster, Housing Executive and 19 local Councils. The aim of this unique approach was to deliver energy efficiency improvements to homes in small concentrated areas using a targeting tool developed by the University of Ulster. Targeting enabled the Department to identify areas of poor housing and low incomes indicating a high prevalence of fuel poverty. The University's evaluation of the pilot estimates that one in two houses contacted proved eligible for assistance from the Warm Homes Scheme. Following on from these positive results we have now moved onto phase 2 of the pilot, which is to test how the energy efficiency measures can be delivered using local installers to carry out the work. This will mean that those homes identified and proven to be eligible for energy efficiency improvements in phase 2 of this pilot will have those improvements delivered by a local installer not contracted to the Warm Homes Scheme. This part of the pilot has only recently commenced and my Department will be reporting and evaluating on the outcomes over the coming months. All councils are aware of the pilot and my Department is working closely with them.

Community Groups: Allotments and Gardens

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what grants are available to community groups to develop allotments and gardens.

(AQW 26855/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not have specific grants available for community groups to develop allotments and gardens. However, through its Neighbourhood Renewal Programme funding may be considered where a priority need is identified within local Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans and where resources are available.

Housing Executive Schemes: Ards, North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive Schemes are planned, in the next financial year, for each housing estate in (i) Ards; and (ii) North Down.

(AQW 26860/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has provided details of schemes currently programmed in 2014/15 for Newtownards and Bangor District Office areas as set out in the Table attached.

District	Estate	Work Group	No of Dwgs	Year Currently Programmed
Newtownards	Movilla	ECM	207	14/15
Bangor	Kilcooley	ECM	322	14/15
Bangor	Rathgill/Willowbrook	Kitchens	37	14/15
Bangor	Loughview	Double glazing	54	14/15
Bangor	Loughview	ECM	289	14/15
Bangor	Redburn	Double glazing	43	14/15
Bangor	Spencer St/Woodlands	Double glazing	81	14/15
Bangor	Conlig	Double glazing	10	14/15

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Turkington Holdings Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to list the occasions on which he has met with representatives of Turkington Holdings Limited or any of its subsidiaries.

(AQW 26867/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A meeting I had with the Glass and Glazing Federation on 16 April 2012 was attended by representatives of Turkington Holdings Ltd.

Underspend in Housing Executive Budgets

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the underspend in Housing Executive budgets; and whether this underspend can be directed towards tackling fuel poverty.

(AQW 26869/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The underspend in the current financial year is £35 million and is made up as follows:

- £10 million was declared as an easement in June Monitoring as planned maintenance procurement has not been completed and contracts have not been let. This funding is no longer available.
- £25 million has been declared at the October Monitoring Round, the majority of which is from the Housing Executive's maintenance budgets including delays issuing new contracts for planned maintenance and double glazing.

The underspend cannot be directed towards tackling fuel poverty because:

- The Housing Executive is already addressing fuel poverty, by heating replacement and insulation schemes to its own properties. Where there are no contractual issues, the in year target is expected to be achieved.
- Housing Executive budgets are directed towards social housing stock and are therefore not suitable for transfer to schemes which target owner occupiers and private rented properties.
- The Warm Homes, Fuel Poverty and Boiler Replacement Schemes are in place for private sector properties and this year a budget of £23 million has been made available.

Oaklee Housing Association

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 20017/11-15, and given that Oaklee Housing Association outlined a start date for the properties of August/September 2013, when he expects this work to commence.

(AQW 26872/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Work is currently out to tender with plans to now start work on the refurbishment of the first ten houses in December 2013.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Housing Executive Properties

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development what his Department is doing to help address violence and anti-social behaviour in housing estates.

(AQW 26920/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have a range of interventions for tackling violence and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in housing estates. Warning letters have proved extremely successful in stemming ASB, often stopping unacceptable behaviour before more robust action becomes necessary.

While many disputes are resolved through informal discussion by the parties involved, mediation provides an alternative when that is unsuccessful. The Housing Executive introduced its own in house Mediation Service in 2002/03 and now has over 30 accredited external mediators. They also use the services of community based restorative justice groups, Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) and Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) to provide community based mediation as a means of addressing reported incidents of ASB in many areas.

The Housing Executive also makes use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts which are voluntary written agreements between the Housing Executive and persons involved in ASB. The Housing Executive has advised that, since their introduction in 2006/07, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have proved to be helpful in stopping ASB. If the individual fails to respond to offers of assistance and the ASB continues, or if the ASB is of such a serious nature that the Housing Executive must take immediate action, they will then use legal interventions that are available. For example they may choose to repossess the property occupied by the perpetrator, or may seek an injunction to stop the ASB and protect the community.

Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP) and District and Community Safety Partnerships (DCSP) are statutory bodies established under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Under the Act, Councils are obliged to establish a PCSP structure in their locality. The overall purpose of these bodies is to help make communities safer and to ensure that the views of local people are heard on policing and community safety issues. The Housing Executive is a designated body for the purposes of the Justice Act and is expected to send a representative to the PCSP for each council area.

The Housing Executive has 65 Neighbourhood Officers in post who contribute to making their estates cleaner and safer places to live. The Housing Executive also funds various schemes with partner agencies to address crime and the fear of crime on their estates. The 4 Tier Scheme in Antrim and Newtownabbey is an example of partnership working, and provides a flexible tailored approach to meet specific crime prevention and community safety needs. The Housing Executive is also involved in the funding of a number of night-time warden schemes aimed at addressing issues of ASB and nuisance related incidents. The wardens work with local PSNI Neighbourhood Policing Teams and also with Housing Executive staff, and act as a point of contact for the public who have concerns regarding ASB, especially at nights or weekends.

My Department is also supporting Housing Associations to effectively tackle violence and anti-social behaviour. This included a training event my Department funded and ran with Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations last year to disseminate good practice.

All Housing Associations are expected to have anti-social behaviour policies in place. Local Housing Associations are using a range of programmes including the REACT programme and the Chartered Institute of Housing's Respect programme, to help ensure housing officers are well-trained in dealing with these matters. When specific problems occur, Housing Associations work closely with the PSNI and Housing Executive in the first instance, then with mediation and other agencies to address issues with tenants. Associations are also doing a range of preventative work, such as Helm Housing's anti-bullying, anti-violence work with primary schools on both sides of the community in Belfast.

To further support current policy, I will, in the near future, be publishing proposals for new legislation to help the Housing Executive and other social landlords to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Inter-Departmental Group on Fuel Poverty

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the work of the Inter-Departmental Group on Fuel Poverty, including when it last met.

(AQW 26921/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Interdepartmental Group on Fuel Poverty and the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group merged in 2011 to become the Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum. The Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum last met on 22 August 2013.

The Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum introduced thematic sub groups to consider how fuel poverty could be tackled under the following themes:

- Affordable Warmth;
- Prevention;
- Targeting; and,
- Opportunities, synergies and risks.

The groups have been working for over one year and have produced detailed action plans. I have asked officials to review the role of the Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum and sub groups to ensure that the most appropriate structures are in place to support the Department's Fuel Poverty strategy.

Fuel Poverty Advisory Group on Fuel Poverty

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the work of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group on Fuel Poverty, including when it last met.

(AQW 26922/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Fuel Poverty Advisory Group and the Interdepartmental Group on Fuel Poverty merged in 2011 to become the Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum. The Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum last met on 22 August 2013.

The Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum introduced thematic sub groups to consider how fuel poverty could be tackled under the following themes:

- Affordable Warmth;
- Prevention;
- Targeting; and,
- Opportunities, synergies and risks.

The groups have been working for over one year and have produced detailed action plans. I have asked officials to review the role of the Cross Sectoral Fuel Poverty Forum and sub groups to ensure that the most appropriate structures are in place to support the Department's Fuel Poverty strategy.

Co-ownership Housing Scheme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been assisted in buying their own home under the Co-Ownership housing scheme since its inception; and what is the uptake of this scheme in North Antrim compared with other constituencies.

(AQW 26923/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since its inception the Co-Ownership scheme has supported 23,369 households to buy their own home.

The information is not readily available in the constituency format requested. The table below details the number of homes purchased under the Co-Ownership Scheme since its inception, broken down by Council area.

Council Area	Cumulative Total at 30 September 2013
Derry City Council	1308
Limavady Borough Council	405
Coleraine Borough Council	1190
Ballymoney Borough Council	338
Moyle District Council	114
Larne Borough Council	329
Ballymena Borough Council	537
Magherafelt District Council	425
Cookstown District Council	383
Strabane District Council	226
Omagh District Council	317
Fermanagh District Council	295
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	243
Craigavon Borough Council	1587
Armagh City and District Council	296
Newry and Mourne District Council	583
Banbridge District Council	446
Down District Council	836
Lisburn City Council	2208
Antrim Borough Council	701
Newtownabbey Borough Council	1690
Carrickfergus Borough Council	1046
North Down Borough Council	2716
Ards Borough Council	1413
Castlereagh Borough Council	974
Belfast City Council	2763
Total	23,369

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Employment Support Allowance Assessments

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what advice is available to people facing Employment Support Allowance assessments, including specific advice for people with a mental illness. (AQW 26926/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Throughout the application process for Employment and Support Allowance there is a range of advice and support available including: an enquiry line to provide advice and guidance to claimants as they progress through the assessment process; telephony staff who are trained to identify if a claimant is having difficulty in making a claim and in such circumstances they will advise the claimant that an advocate can complete the call on their behalf; and the offer of face to face assistance at a local Jobs & Benefits/Social Security Office.

Claimants are encouraged to bring a friend or companion with them to a work capability assessment, and are advised of the importance of supplying all relevant medical evidence at a number of stages throughout the claim process: at the initial claim stage; when completing a limited capability for work questionnaire; when attending a medical examination; when contacted prior to a disallowance decision being made; and upon receipt of an appeal.

For those claimants undergoing Incapacity Benefit reassessment, there are a number of contact points at key stages to provide support and ensure that they understand what is happening and to advise what to do next. Claimants are contacted by telephone as the process begins to explain why changes are being made, what they need to do and what will happen next. This initial call also reassures the claimant that further support will be available throughout the reassessment process. If a claimant is not entitled to Employment and Support Allowance a member of the Claimant Advice and Support Team will make contact with them to discuss their options and provide further help and assistance, which includes help with making a claim to another benefit and help with appealing the disallowance decision.

Special arrangements are in place to safeguard claimants who suffer from a mental health condition. If they fail to return their medical questionnaire they will not be automatically disallowed, but instead invited to attend a medical assessment. If a claimant with mental health incapacity fails to attend their medical assessment or subsequently fails to make contact with the Employment and Support Allowance Centre or the Incapacity Benefit Reassessment Office, a visit can be carried out to ensure the claimant clearly understands their obligations. This visit is also aimed at preventing unnecessary disallowance of the benefit entitlement of these vulnerable claimants.

Benefit System: People with a Mental Illness

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how reforms to the benefit system will result in more clarity for people with a mental illness. (AQW 26927/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform Bill contains a number of proposed reforms aimed at protecting those most in need; simplifying the benefit system and making work pay. Key reforms include:

Universal Credit – Universal Credit, when introduced, will replace income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA (IR)) as well as other benefits including Income Support; Jobseeker's Allowance (income related) and Tax Credits. Universal Credit will mean that people can see how work will benefit them as there will be one taper applied to their net earnings.

Personal Independence Payment – Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will replace Disability Living Allowance for those of working age (16-64). It will be a non-contributory, non-means-tested, non-taxable cash benefit payable to people whether they are in or out of work. The PIP assessment criteria have been designed to better identify those most in need of extra support to live independently and participate in everyday life.

In terms of providing clarity for people with a mental illness, under Universal Credit there will be additional elements payable for those claimants who have limited capability for work and/or work related activity, this includes claimants with a mental illness. To determine the level of capability, an assessment will be undertaken by a health care professional and as is currently the case, the assessment will include a specific mental, cognitive and intellectual function test. Details of the tasks/functions to be examined together with the number of points allocated for each will be described in the proposed Universal Credit Regulations.

In relation to Personal Independence Payment my officials have worked closely with the Department for Work and Pensions during the development of the assessment criteria to ensure that changes being proposed take into account the differences in the Disability Living Allowance caseload here, in particular highlighting circumstances around mental health.

The current eligibility conditions for Disability Living Allowance focus mostly on physical disability however the assessment for Personal Independence Payment will look at disabled people as individuals and will not base entitlement on having a particular disability or impairment, but instead will consider the individual's ability to carry out key everyday activities. In terms of providing clarity for people with a mental illness, PIP will take greater account of mental, intellectual, cognitive and sensory impairments compared with DLA. The assessment criteria have been developed in collaboration with independent specialists in health, social care and disability, including disabled people and have been extensively consulted on.

Most people will receive a face-to-face consultation with a trained healthcare professional, which will provide a more accurate and consistent assessment of individual need and provide individuals with the opportunity to put across their own views of the impact of their impairment on their everyday lives. Use will also be made of further evidence from the people who provide support such as a GP, consultant, specialist nurse or other health professional.

Double Glazing Window Framework Contracts

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development when the contractors, named in his statement to the Assembly on 10 June 2013, were admitted to tender for the Double Glazing Window Framework contracts; and for what reason.

(AQW 26944/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive published a Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union on 21 March 2013 advising that it proposed to establish a Framework Agreement from which contracts would subsequently be awarded to undertake double glazing contracts. The Notice advised potential tenderers that the contract procedure to be used in establishing the Agreement would be the Open Procedure under Regulation 15 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

The Open Procedure does not include a pre-qualification or tenderer short listing stage. It is a single stage procedure under which any tenderer may express an interest in a contract, request the Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents and submit a tender via the eSourcing NI Portal in accordance with NI Public Procurement Policy. The closing date for the submission of tenders for this Framework Agreement was 22 April 2013.

Following the evaluation of tenders and the establishment of the Framework Agreement individual contract awards are made following a secondary competition limited to those contractors appointed to the Framework. To date the Housing Executive has not awarded any double glazing contracts under the Framework.

Housing Executive Double Glazing Window Framework Contracts

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in regard to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Double Glazing Window Framework contracts, who will make the decision whether reversible

windows and hinges or casement windows and hinges will be installed in any given upgrade; and on what basis will such decisions be taken.

(AQW 26945/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that in relation to window replacement, contractors are asked to prepare an outline design for approval on the basis of the contract specifications and relevant code of practice. All design proposals are then presented at a Housing Executive Area Clearance House and a Central Clearing House Meeting and are reviewed and approved according to individual scheme merits and on a value for money basis.

Redeveloped Area of the Village, South Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the redevelopment of the Village, South Belfast, what commitment he can give that adequate resources will be given to the development of the Amenity Space/Public Park in Phase 3.

(AQW 26946/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The provision of the amenity space/public park is a planning condition of Phase 3 being undertaken by Fold Housing Association. As such it is eligible for funding in the normal way along with all other elements of the social housing scheme. An application for scheme funding has yet to be received from Fold.

Redeveloped Area of the Village, South Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the redevelopment of the Village, South Belfast, what commitment he can give that any open space, that would not be built on for some years, will be developed and controlled for temporary community use.

(AQW 26947/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Open space created by ongoing redevelopment and not required for the first three phases of development will be grassed by the Housing Executive as an interim measure pending future development for private sector housing.

The Housing Executive, as owner of the land, has confirmed that it is content to engage with the community about potential temporary uses.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Grass Cutting

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has spent on grass cutting in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26967/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information cannot be provided in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary Constituency. However the Housing Executive has advised that costs for grass cutting in its South Belfast Area Office area for the past three years are detailed in the table below: -

Year	Grass Cutting Cost
2011	£16,153.90
2012	£17,538.52
2013	£11,076.96

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New Social Housing Developments: South Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the planned new social housing developments in the South Belfast constituency.

(AQW 26968/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the schemes for general needs within the South Belfast Constituency contained in the current Social Housing Development Programme.

Housing Association	Scheme Name	Need Group	Number of Units
2013/14			
Apex	Onslow Parade	General Needs	14
Clanmil	137-141 Ormeau Road	General Needs	15
Clanmil	Posnett Street	General Needs	30
Fold	Ravenhill Avenue	General Needs	86
Fold	Village URA	General Needs	27
Fold	Village ATC Rehabs	General Needs	11
Hearth	Rosetta Cottages	General Needs	2
Trinity	London Road	General Needs	15
Trinity	48 Carrington St	General Needs	1
Total 9 schemes / 201 units			
2014/15			
Apex	McClure Street	General Needs	20
Oaklee	Brunswick Street	General Needs	150
Total 2 schemes / 170 units			
2015/16			
Fold	Finaghy Road North	General Needs	109
Total 1 scheme / 109 units			

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Window Replacement Schemes: South Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development to list the outstanding window replacement schemes in the South Belfast constituency; and when they will be completed.

(AQW 26969/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that its outstanding window replacement schemes for the South Belfast area, as currently programmed are detailed in the table below.

Window Replacement Programme	Number
Lower Woodstock Phase 2	203
Village Non RDA	294

Window Replacement Programme	Number
Lisburn Road/Ulsterville	129
Abingdon/Barrington	90
Taughmonagh 1	217
Taughmonagh 2	176
Upper Ormeau	111
Markets Phase 1	174
Markets Phase 2	179
Donegall Pass	203
Sandy Row Phase 1	150
Sandy Row Phase 2	150
Flush Park	108
Finaghy phase 1	150
Finaghy phase 2	150
Total	2484

The Housing Executive is currently in the process of appointing contractors to deliver this programme and plans to have it completed by the Programme for Government target date of March 2015.

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Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Rent Arrears

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the rent arrears that have been written off by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in each of the last five years, broken down by District Office area.

(AQW 27016/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the information by District Office area is only available for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11. After that, the Housing Executive moved to recording the information by the relevant rent accounting office. The details for both are provided in the tables attached.

Table 1 – By NIHE District Office Area

	Write off as at 31.03.09 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.10 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.11 (£k)
Belfast 1	3	10	16
Belfast 2	64	86	33
Belfast 3	5	16	4
Belfast 4	130	70	119
Belfast 5	82	44	42
Belfast 6	41	35	67

	Write off as at 31.03.09 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.10 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.11 (£k)
Belfast 7	61	54	27
Belfast Area	387	316	308
Bangor	41	32	41
Newtownards	81	31	26
Castlereagh	35	43	81
Lisburn A St	15	55	21
Lisburn Dfarm	28	97	47
Downpatrick	27	26	34
S.E. Area	228	284	250
Banbridge	11	22	17
Newry	38	50	31
Armagh	28	25	31
Lurgan/B'low	16	25	23
Portadown	21	44	17
Dungannon	30	25	39
Fermanagh	9	21	15
South Area	154	211	173
Ballymena	20	31	12
Antrim	24	15	9
N'abbey 1	36	17	25
N'abbey 2	17	11	27
C'fergus	49	7	11
Larne	27	15	20
Ballycastle	10	9	7
Ballymoney	13	2	6
Coleraine	56	37	3
N.E. Area	252	144	121

	Write off as at 31.03.09 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.10 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.11 (£k)
Waterloo PI	2	19	1
Waterside	45	58	19
Collon Tce	33	24	2
Limavady	4	13	20
Magherafelt	18	15	17
Strabane	10	30	12
Omagh	10	16	14
Cookstown	10	6	15
West Area	131	181	100

Table 2 – By Rent Accounting Office

Rent A/Cs Unit	Write off as at 31.03.12 £(k)	Write off as at 31.03.13 £(k)
Belfast	189	504
Lisburn As	42	59
Newtownards	57	226
SE Region Total	99	285
South	71	191
North East	125	183
Omagh	50	111
West	47	167
West Region Total	97	278

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Elected Members of the Housing Council: Repayments

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Social Development how many elected members of the Housing Council are making repayments as a result of an overpayment of rent.

(AQW 27017/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I understand that the Member's question should be how many elected members of the Housing Council are making repayments as a result of an overpayment of housing benefit.

The Housing Executive has advised that the information is not available as they do not hold certain personal data relating to each Housing Council member which would be needed to carry out the appropriate search of housing benefit records

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Contractors

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to place in the Assembly Library the documentation, which he relied on to ascertain that the four contractors, that he named in his statement to the Assembly on 10 June 2013, had overcharged the Northern Ireland Housing Executive by £18m.
(AQW 27042/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Following a meeting of the Housing Executive Board on 29 May 2013, I met with the Chairman of the Housing Executive who advised me that the Board, at its meeting, had considered the findings of an internal investigation into the matter of overpayments to planned maintenance contractors, which indicated an estimated £18m had been overpaid.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has spent in the North Down constituency, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 27045/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has provided the table below to detail its expenditure in each of the last three years in the North Down constituency.

Type of expenditure	£		
	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £
Capital	1,205,000	713,000	65,000
Response	1,496,000	1,634,000	1,439,000
Planned maintenance	868,000	1,794,000	859,000
New Build	1,432,000	6,854,000	4,447,000
Private Sector Grants	695,000	354,000	420,000
Warm Homes	371,000	378,000	508,000
Supporting People	4,300,000	3,700,000	4,167,000
Total	10,367,000	15,427,000	11,905,000

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Compensation Recovery Unit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total amount paid to the Compensation Recovery Unit, including the source of payment, in each of the financial years ending on 31 March (i) 2011; and (ii) 2012.
(AQW 27054/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total amounts paid over to the Compensation Recovery Unit in the financial year ending on 31 March 2011 were £5,042,035 for benefits and £ 9,862,566 for Health Services charges. For the financial year ending on 31 March 2012, the amounts were £5,186,027 for benefits and £10,931,666 for Health Services charges.

The Compensation Recovery Scheme recovers specified Social Security benefits from compensators (generally insurance companies but can also include Government Departments, public bodies and schemes to make compensation payments where drivers are uninsured or untraceable, such as the Motor Insurers' Bureau) where people have received compensation for an accident, injury or disease

and who have claimed benefits as a consequence of that accident, injury or disease. Compensation Recovery Unit also recover Health Service charges from those bodies on behalf of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety where an injured person avails of ambulance services and/or Health Service treatment following an injury for which compensation is later paid.

Social Housing Development Programme Strategic Guidelines

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the Social Housing Development Programme Strategic Guidelines and when were they agreed by the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

(AQW 27059/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The prime purpose of the Strategic Guidelines is to facilitate development and planning of the social housing programme. The guidelines allocate programme share geographically and across a range of client categories. The guidelines are there to ensure that the programme is targeted objectively and distributed through an evidence based approach. They are reviewed annually which allows the Housing Executive to more effectively target both traditional and emerging housing needs.

Also factored into the guidelines are the Housing Executives' strategic objectives - equality, reducing unfitness, promoting social inclusion and programmes based on need.

Currently, and as a result of the introduction of new policies and strategies, the allocation of the programme is split into four categories; General Needs, Rural Housing, Supported Housing, and Travellers Housing.

For 2013/14, general needs housing has been identified as requiring 68.1% of the programme, rural housing requires 10.0%, supported housing requires 21.5% and travellers housing requires 0.4%.

The Strategic Guidelines are reviewed annually and are approved by the Housing Executive each October.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Construction of Social Housing

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development when the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive approved the policy of ring fencing in relation to the construction of social housing for (i) North Belfast; (ii) West Belfast; and (iii) Londonderry.

(AQW 27061/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive approved its Londonderry Strategy in 1999. This identified a need for 120 new dwellings per annum in the West Bank. The decision to ring fence this number became operative as part of the Strategic Guidelines review in 1999/00.

The Housing Executive approved its North Belfast Strategy in 2000. This identified a need for 250 new dwellings per annum. The decision to ring fence this number became operative as part of the Strategic Guidelines review in 2001/02.

The Housing Executive approved its West Belfast Strategy in 2003. This identified a need for 275 new dwellings per annum. The decision to ring fence this number became operative as part of the Strategic Guidelines review in 2003/04.

Social Housing Construction: North Belfast, West Belfast, Londonderry

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development when and why the policy of ring fencing social housing building was terminated for (i) North Belfast; (ii) West Belfast; and (iii) Londonderry.

(AQW 27062/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The concept of ring fencing to the formulation of the social housing programme through the Strategic Guidelines was introduced by the Housing Executive in the 1990's, prior to the introduction of the 2000 equality legislation in Northern Ireland. Ring Fencing was one of the

mechanisms used for distributing the programme and directed scarce new social housing into areas of particularly acute housing need.

Sectoral studies and strategies for North Belfast, West Belfast and Londonderry had identified these areas as requiring special consideration because of the chronic need in these areas.

However, in the context of more limited funding, this approach, which was sound when high levels of need were concentrated in the Belfast and Londonderry areas, did not recognise sufficiently the huge growth in housing need which was dispersed throughout Northern Ireland - in particular in Lisburn, Newry and Ballymena.

The Housing Executive therefore applied an Equality Impact Assessment to the Strategic Guidelines in 2007/08 and as a result the 'ring fencing' was removed in 2008/09.

Social Housing Development Programme Strategic Guidelines: Equality Impact Assessment

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) when and why the Northern Ireland Housing Executive completed an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the Social Housing Development Programme Strategic Guidelines; (ii) when the draft EQIA was published; and (iii) when the EQIA was published.

(AQW 27063/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Following an initial screening of all its housing policies, the Housing Executive determined that Strategic Guidelines was amongst a group of policies requiring EQIA. Strategic Guidelines were subsequently programmed as the last of a series of EQIA's and scheduled for Year 5 of the equality scheme timetable.

The first draft EQIA on the Strategic Guidelines was sent out for consultation in September 2008. After an elongated consultation period the final document was approved by the Housing Executive in December 2009. The results were published on the Housing Executive's website in October 2010.

The second draft EQIA was sent out for consultation in October 2010. The final document was approved by the Housing Executive in April 2011. The results were published on the Housing Executive's website in June 2011.

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 27072/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's Disability Action Plan 2011- 2013 (DAP) can be found on the Department's website. My Department provides an annual update on progress to the Equality Commission, which sets out action measures carried out in relation to the implementation of the DAP

The Department is currently undertaking a Five Year Review of its Disability Action Plans, and working on its Disability Action Plan for 2013-15. Consultation will then provide additional opportunities to engage with people with disabilities and the organisations representing them.

Housing Executive in Bangor: Gas Installation

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive areas in Bangor will have gas installed over the next twelve months.

(AQW 27084/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in the next twelve months they will install gas heating in the following areas in Bangor:-

- Rathgill & Willowbrook – 32 dwellings

- Kilcooley – 36 dwellings
- Groomsport – 13 dwellings
- Conlig – 5 dwellings

The Housing Executive will also replace a small number of 15 year old oil systems and gas back-boiler units during 2014/15 but these are still to be programmed.

Housing Executive Stock: Double Glazing and Thermal Efficiency

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on his Department's progress to fulfil the Programme for Government 2011-2015 commitment to improve thermal efficiency of Housing Executive stock and ensure full double glazing in its properties.

(AQW 27100/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there are around 14,800 of its dwellings that still require double glazing work. The Housing Executive is currently in the process of appointing contactors to deliver the double glazing programme and intend to have this completed by the Programme for Government target date of March 2015.

Housing Executive Areas in Holywood: Gas Installation

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive areas in Holywood will have domestic gas installed over the next twelve months.

(AQW 27107/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in the next twelve months they will install gas heating systems in the following areas of Holywood:-

- Loughview – 24 dwellings
- Redburn – 5 dwellings
- Spencer Street/ Strand Avenue – 3 dwellings

The Housing Executive will also replace a small number of 15 year old oil systems and gas back- boiler units during 2014/15, but these are still to be programmed.

Soft Services Function

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26787/11-15, to detail (i) the total number of redundancies that will result from the decision to outsource the Soft Services function; (ii) the location of each office that delivers Soft Services function; and (iii) the number of redundancies in each office.

(AQW 27129/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No redundancies are anticipated as a result of the planned outsourcing exercise. The nature of soft facilities management services means that each of the Department for Social Development's 66 locations across Northern Ireland will be impacted to some extent.

The Impact of Welfare Reform on Northern Ireland

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action's recent publication The Impact of Welfare Reform on Northern Ireland.

(AQW 27131/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While I welcome any report which contributes to our understanding of the impact of Welfare Reform on Northern Ireland, I am concerned about reports which claim to be focused on welfare reform but which only serve to cause concern. Social security benefit spending in Northern Ireland is projected to increase from £5.5 billion in 2013/3014 to around £6.3 billion by 2018 and it is

therefore inaccurate to say that social security spending in Northern Ireland is going to be reduced by £750 million.

It is generally accepted that Welfare Reform relates to the Welfare Reform Bill currently being considered by the Assembly. This report does not focus on the implications of the Welfare Reform Bill rather it is more concerned with how the coalition government is managing the increase in expenditure on the social security and tax benefit systems.

Over a third of monies claimed in this report to be disappearing from the Northern Ireland economy have never actually been in anyone's pockets. The report focuses on the 1% cap and changes to tax credits but does not point out that this is money which has never been in the local economy.

The report also focuses on reforms that have been largely implemented, a number of which were introduced by the previous Labour government and others which are focused on controlling expenditure as part of the normal budgetary cycle.

The positive aspects of the changes to the benefit and tax credit systems of helping people into work and to beat the benefit trap, such as Universal Credit and its impact, are ignored.

I have met with the Chief Executive of NICVA, Seamus McAleavey and the current Chair, Marie Cavanagh, CEO of Gingerbread NI to discuss these concerns further.

Claims of Financial Loss: Twaddell Avenue

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development what steps his Department has taken to protect itself from claims of financial loss resulting from the occupation of its property on Twaddell Avenue.

(AQW 27136/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The site at Twaddell Avenue is owned by the Housing Executive who advise that it is surplus to their requirements and has been on the open market 18 months prior to it being occupied. To date there has been no offers. The Housing Executive does not anticipate any claims of financial loss resulting from the occupation of the site and they are continuing to liaise closely with the Police Service NI on issues relating to this matter.

Development of Anne Street, Dungannon

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department is prepared to lead a multi-agency initiative to consider the obstacles to the full development of Anne Street, Dungannon, given that no single agency has full responsibility for the overall development of this site.

(AQW 27148/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As my Department has responsibility for town centre regeneration and owns a large portion of land in this area, I am happy for my Department to take the lead in bringing together key partners including business representatives to work on a collaborative basis to explore the issues and identify actions for the economic development and regeneration potential for the Anne Street area of Dungannon.

Funding for Social Housing in 2010

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Social Development what area of Londonderry was subject to the policy ring-fencing funding for social housing in 2010.

(AQW 27149/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive applied an Equality Impact Assessment on the Strategic Guidelines in 2007/8 from which the concept of ring fencing was introduced. As a consequence of this ring fencing was removed in 2008/9. Therefore, no area of Londonderry was subject to the policy ring fencing funding for social housing in 2010.

Social Housing Development Programme Strategic Guidelines

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the differences between the Social Housing Development Programme Strategic Guidelines (a) before the 2008 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA); (b) after the 2008 EQIA; and (c) after the 2010 EQIA.

(AQW 27161/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

Pre 2008 EQIA

The concept of ring fencing to the formulation of the social housing programme through the Strategic Guidelines was introduced by the Housing Executive in the 1990's, prior to the introduction of the 2000 equality legislation in Northern Ireland. Ring Fencing was one of the mechanisms used for distributing the programme and directed scarce new social housing into areas of particularly acute housing need.

Sectoral studies and strategies for North Belfast, West Belfast and Londonderry had identified these areas as requiring special consideration because of the chronic need in these areas.

2008 EQIA

However, in the context of more limited funding, this approach, which was sound when high levels of need were concentrated in the Belfast and Londonderry areas, did not recognise sufficiently the huge growth in housing need which was dispersed throughout Northern Ireland - in particular in Lisburn, Newry and Ballymena.

The Housing Executive therefore applied an Equality Impact Assessment to the Strategic Guidelines in 2007/08 and given that the ring fencing was creating an imbalance to the detriment of the rest of Northern Ireland, it was removed in 2008/09.

2010 EQIA

As a result of increasing levels of housing stress and limited funding for new build, in 2009 the Housing Executive examined whether or not the new build programme was being directed at those areas of greatest housing need. The result was more focus being given to areas with the highest number of applicants in housing stress, highest points levels and those waiting longest to be housed. This new approach was applied to the strategic guidelines resulting in a change of policy. This in turn required the Housing Executive to carry out another EQIA on the Strategic Guidelines.

The impact of the 2010 EQIA was a re-distribution of the programme to those areas demonstrating the most intense housing need.

North West Regional Science Park

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail any expressions of interest he has received from companies wishing to locate in the North West Regional Science Park.

(AQW 27182/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Expressions of interest will be made directly to the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) rather than my Department. NISP and Letterkenny Institute of Technology are currently liaising with Invest NI and the IDA Ireland to raise the profile of the project to secure tenants. The target is to have 70% occupancy at Fort George by Year 5 after the practical completion date of 2014.

Social Fund Crisis Loans Service

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26352/11-15, how he plans to remedy the large number of calls which go unanswered to the Crisis Loans Tele Claims Service.

(AQW 27209/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Fund Crisis Loan Service is primarily a face to face service delivered at the front office and in addition, a limited telephone service is provided to support this service. The Agency recognises that the telephone service is constrained and requires modernisation and, as part of Welfare Reform, a programme of investment is underway which is due for completion next year. This new service will significantly improve the telephony service offered. Claimants who cannot currently access the Crisis Loan telephony should call into their local office.

Crisis Loan Telephone Service

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26352/11-15, to detail the measures he is taking to improve the Crisis Loan telephone service; and whether he will implement measurable targets for unanswered calls at each Jobs and Benefits office.

(AQW 27240/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Fund Crisis Loan Service is primarily a face to face service delivered at the front office and in addition, a limited telephone service is provided to support this service. The Agency recognises that the current telephone service is constrained and requires modernisation and, as part of Welfare Reform, a programme of investment is underway which is due for completion next year. This new service will significantly improve the telephony service offered. As part of the modernisation the Agency is also reviewing its performance indicators in relation to the newly established telephony centres. Claimants who cannot currently access the Crisis Loan telephony should call into their local office.

Housing Executive Properties: Gas Installation

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans there are to install domestic gas into Housing Executive properties in Millisle.

(AQW 27279/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advise that all its properties in Millisle currently have oil heating with the exception of those where tenants have chosen to keep their existing solid fuel or Economy 7 systems.

In line with Housing Executive policy, oil heating systems will be replaced as they reach the end of their useful life (after 15 years) and, at that stage, gas heating will be installed where gas is available. However, gas is currently only available in parts of Millisle and outside of those areas existing systems will be replaced with a new oil system. The Housing Executive will continue to replace any remaining solid fuel or Economy 7 systems at change of tenancy or as the system fails.

Prosecutions for Benefit Fraud

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been prosecuted for benefit fraud over the last three years.

(AQW 27284/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested for each of the last three years is set out in the following table:

Year ending 31st March	Number prosecuted
2013	*570
2012	*527
2011	*549

The figures above refer to the number of people prosecuted and not the number of convictions.

* The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The production and dissemination of all Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Queens Parade Project, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Queens Parade project, Bangor.
(AQW 27378/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Earlier this year, I announced that my Department had stepped in and purchased a significant portfolio of land along Queen's Parade, Bangor as private sector plans to develop the area had stalled. Since then my Department has established a Project Board to oversee the comprehensive development of the site and attain planning approval for the development. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and North Down Borough Council has been agreed. This is a major regeneration project and it will take in the region of 18 months to assemble all the land needed and attain planning approval.

Welfare Reform Bill: Consideration Stage

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development if he intends to bring the Welfare Reform Bill to the Assembly for consideration stage; and whether he will ensure any amendments he intends to make to the Bill will be submitted to the Bill Office at least two weeks prior to the introduction of the Bill for scrutiny by the Assembly.

(AQW 27409/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I fully intend to bring the Welfare Reform Bill back to this Assembly for Consideration Stage as soon as there is the political consensus to do so. Members will be aware that I have been discussing various measures with Executive colleagues with a view to offsetting some of the more negative aspects of the reform agenda.

The timing of Consideration stage and the scheduling of same is a matter for the Assembly Business Office and it would be my intention that Members have adequate time to consider tabled amendments in advance of Consideration Stage for the Bill.

Soft Services Function

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26787/11-15, why efficiencies cannot be achieved within the current model.

(AQW 27433/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development when deciding to outsource its Soft Services considered a number of options, one of which was using the current model. The decision to outsource was an operational one driven by a need to achieve efficiencies and the most economically advantageous option providing the greatest efficiencies was selected.

Housing Executive: Update

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the verification of the alleged overcharging by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive contractors named in his statement to the Assembly on 10 June 2013.

(AQO 4861/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised me that they are continuing to work with the contractors and the appointed experts to agree the additional work necessary to enable a final estimate to be produced. The contractors have been supportive and both parties are committed to bring this matter to a conclusion as soon as possible

Social Housing Development Programme

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development how the current Social Housing Development Programme will meet the needs of future provision for supported housing.

(AQO 4865/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Programme for Government 2011-2015 includes a commitment to deliver 6000 new social homes, of which 850 are supported housing, and 2000 affordable new homes over this period.

259 Supported Housing units have been delivered in the first two years and it is anticipated a further 390 Supported units will be delivered in the last two years. Whilst this suggests a shortfall of 201 on the four year target, the full re-settlement target for the mental health and learning disability client groups will be met.

The current Social Housing Development Programme for 2013/14 includes 28 schemes totalling 334 units to deliver the Supported Housing Programme. Some of these schemes however may not achieve a start on site this year due to acquisition and planning difficulties.

The Supported Housing Programme reflects the needs analysis as identified by the Health and Social Care Trusts. A new Social Housing and Development Programme for the three year period 2014/15 – 2016/17 is currently being formulated and subject to approval will be published in January 2014.

Personal Independence Payment

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development whether savings would be made by the gradual removal of Disability Living Allowance from people of working age, and the introduction of the Personal Independence Payment.

(AQO 4859/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Once the Welfare Reform bill and supporting regulations are passed by the Assembly, Personal Independence Payment, which is replacing Disability Living Allowance for people aged 16-64, will be introduced on a gradual basis beginning with new claims. Existing Disability Living Allowance recipients whose award has an end date or where they report a change in their care or mobility needs, will at the same time, be invited to claim Personal Independence Payment.

For the vast majority of the existing 118,000 working age Disability Living Allowance recipients, the reassessment process will not start until October 2015 at the earliest and is expected to be completed by March 2018.

Given this incremental approach and based on an anticipated October 2013 start date, my Department earlier in the year published information on the impacts of Personal Independence Payment up to October 2015 which indicated that there would be a projected annual saving of just over £30 million for the expected cohort of people who would undergo reassessment up to October 2015. It is extremely important to remember that this is a forecast and each person will be individually assessed. Due to the slippage in the Welfare Reform Bill these forecasts will now need to be revised.

No forecasts have been published for the period beyond October 2015 as the Personal Independence Payment assessment criteria will be the subject of two independent reviews, the first completing in December 2014. These findings need to be fully considered, and any necessary changes made to the current criteria and assent process before the majority of Disability Living Allowance recipients begin to be reassessed from October 2015.

Town Centre Regeneration

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development what progress his Department has made, in conjunction with other Departments, in implementing the recommendations set out in the Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration (14/09/10R) conducted by the Committee for Social Development.

(AQO 4860/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Committee for Social Development's 'Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration Report' was published in October 2009. It made a number of recommendations focusing on the areas of; policy, monitoring and effectiveness, the roles of councils and town centre bodies, practical support for councils and stakeholders and supporting town centre development.

The Department advised that several of the recommendations were outside of its remit but accepted the majority. The Committee was updated last year on progress against these. A number of significant achievements to date include:

- The publication of the Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework and the priority given therein to supporting the competitiveness of our towns and cities;
- The commencement of work to establish a set of Key Performance Indicators for town centres;
- The introduction of legislation and support for Business Improvement Districts;
- The roll-out of the Town Centre Master Planning process which addresses many of the Committee's concerns about the capture of information about dereliction in town centres and the inclusion of decent affordable housing in town centre regeneration plans; and
- The progress under the Reform of Local Government which will see the extension of powers and budgets to the 11 new councils coupled with Community Planning powers.

In addition I published the DSD High Street Taskforce Report earlier this year which not only set out a number of recommendations for the Department but also highlighted the main issues for other Departments which I brought to the Executive sub-committee on the Economy for consideration.

Social Housing: Mixed Tenure

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department can encourage housing associations to have mixed tenure developments, such as co-ownership or equity share and social housing.

(AQO 4862/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland: Facing the Future, outlines a number of proposals for moving forward that can encourage the advancement of mixed tenure developments in the future. These include:

- Increasing access to affordable housing;
- Developing further innovation in the funding of new social housing;
- Maintaining pathways into affordable home ownership for social housing tenants;
- Bringing more empty homes back into use;
- Taking a housing-led approach to regenerating communities experiencing blight, dereliction or decline; and
- Supporting town and city centre regeneration through a revitalised Living Over the Shops initiative.

My officials are already advancing a number of these proposals and have been engaging with the Housing Association movement to maximise the delivery of social and affordable homes, and the opportunities to do so in the future.

Social Housing: Welfare Reform

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his strategy for the future provision of social housing in the context of the challenges posed by the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQO 4863/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are approximately 32,000 social housing tenants potentially affected by under-occupation restrictions. However, I am currently frustrated in dealing with these proposals. I cannot discuss at this time any details of the package which has been suggested following discussions with the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Minister of Finance.

One channel to help meet the need is through re-lets of existing social housing stock. To facilitate those wishing to downsize, the Housing Executive has consulted on amendments to the Housing

Selection Scheme enacted with the introduction of welfare reform in Northern Ireland, giving priority status to tenants under-occupying their property and who wish to transfer to a suitable dwelling.

Other options available include tenants exchanging homes with others who have a tenancy through the exchange scheme. Landlords can carry out a search for potential properties to swap through the Homeswapper initiative. In addition my Department is actively encouraging and supporting the inclusion of one bed accommodation within new build proposals.

I have instructed that Housing Associations should bring forward 200 singles units each year from 2013/14 and for the Housing Executive to prepare a new draft Social Housing Development Programme by December 2013 and that this should aim to deliver a minimum of 600 one bed units across the three year programme.

Roof Repairs

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the work scheduled for the roofs of the owner-occupied homes in Duke Street, Ballymacarrett.

(AQO 4864/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is proposing to carry out re-roofing works to ten Housing Executive properties and four privately owned properties in Duke Street and the neighbouring area. The properties will be re-roofed with metal tiles to provide enhanced protection.

The Housing Executive's Procurement Unit and Belfast Property Services met last week to finalise the contract details for tendering of the work.

Help to Buy

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will consider allocating additional financial assistance to the Co-Ownership Scheme to enable applicants to take advantage of the recently announced Help to Buy scheme.

(AQO 4852/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The recently announced Help to Buy Mortgage Guarantee is not available to homes purchased under shared equity schemes, such as Co-Ownership, as these schemes already receive government funding to support the purchase of affordable homes.

However, I am delighted that the Scheme has been launched, as it should help give many more local people an opportunity to enter the housing market and the net benefit of this across the local economy should be a welcome boost.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Cost of Software Licenses

Mr B McCreagh asked the Assembly Commission to detail the total cost of software licenses, such as Microsoft Office, in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 26620/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Information Systems Office currently manages a very large number of individual software licences for use by Assembly Members and Secretariat staff. This encompasses a wide variety of licensing agreements with a large number of external suppliers.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission purchases all Microsoft software product licences under a discounted volume licensing arrangement called the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. Under the current Public Sector Agreement 2012 (PSA12), negotiated between Microsoft and the UK Government Procurement Service (GPS), the NI Assembly receives significantly discounted pricing arrangements

for Microsoft software products. The total costs for Microsoft Office Professional software licences are detailed below. These costs are inclusive of “Software Assurance” which provides automatic upgrades to the latest versions of Microsoft Office software as well as a range of other services such as 24 x 7 software telephone / web support and on-site training and consultancy advice.

Year	No. of licences	Total cost
2011-2012	700	£33,936.00
2012-2013	700	£33,936.00
2013-2014	940	£51,059.00

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 25 October 2013

(AQW 26594/11-15)

In my response, I inadvertently stated that South West College (SWC) provided part-time courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the Dungannon campus, in conjunction with the Beacon Centre.

The correct response is that SWC does not deliver provision to young people leaving special schools through Beacon Centres.

As I stated in AQW 25524/11-15, during the 2012/13 academic year, SWC provided a range of part-time courses for adults with mental health issues at the Dungannon campus, in conjunction with the Beacon Centre. SWC considered that this type of provision was not appropriate for young adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leaving special schools.

Please accept my apologies for any confusion caused.

I am copying this letter to the Business office and the Assembly Library.

(AQW 27059/11-15)

The prime purpose of the Strategic Guidelines is to facilitate development and planning of the social housing programme. The guidelines allocate programme share geographically and across a range of client categories. The guidelines are there to ensure that the programme is targeted objectively and distributed through an evidence based approach. They are reviewed annually which allows the Housing Executive to more effectively target both traditional and emerging housing needs.

Also factored into the guidelines are the Housing Executives' strategic objectives - equality, reducing unfitness, promoting social inclusion and programmes based on need.

Currently, and as a result of the introduction of new policies and strategies, the allocation of the programme is split into four categories; General Needs, Rural Housing, Supported Housing, and Travellers Housing.

For 2013/14, general needs housing has been identified as requiring 68.1% of the programme, rural housing requires 10.0%, supported housing requires 21.5% and travellers housing requires 0.4%.

The Strategic Guidelines are reviewed annually and are approved by the Housing Executive each October.



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