

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 20 December 2013

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 20 December 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Derry Social Investment Fund Steering Group

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will announce the projects that have applied successfully for funding from the Derry Social Investment Fund Steering Group.
(AQW 27842/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): A significant number of SIF projects have been cleared internally through the economic approval process. Discussions have commenced with steering groups to inform them of successful projects, budgets and to discuss implementation.

Creation of Jobs

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 27446/11-15, for a breakdown of (i) the total number of jobs created in Derry in 2012/13; (ii) the number of jobs created in each firm; (iii) the total number of jobs promoted in Derry in 2012/13; and (iv) the number of jobs promoted in each firm.
(AQW 28009/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Research and monitoring across government departments, Derry City Council and the private and community sectors indicates that 1,180 jobs were promoted in 2012/13. An additional 10 jobs have now been accepted following a meeting of the Jobs Sub-Group, held on 8 November 2013, and these have been added to the total jobs promoted figure.

The full jobs created figure is not yet available and this will require monitoring job figures at a later stage. Due to commercial sensitivities it has not been possible to provide information on a firm by firm basis; however, the jobs were generated in the construction, hospitality, community, business and cultural sectors.

Levels of Deprivation

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in instances where statistical data is being used to determine levels of deprivation, the basis of which is then used to allocate a range of funding measures, what account is taken of the different levels of tax free welfare benefits that are paid.
(AQW 28419/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure is the official measure of spatial deprivation. The measure was introduced in 2010 by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from all departments and other relevant bodies.

The measure provides information on seven domains of deprivation, including income deprivation, and an overall measure comprising of a weighted combination of the seven domains. The measure used the most recent data available at the time.

The income deprivation domain comprises a count of people living in households in receipt of income-related benefits and tax credits, including Income Support; State Pension Credit; and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. The measure thus counts people and not the level of benefit. Those in receipt of multiple benefits were counted only once.

The usage of the measure in the allocation of funding is the responsibility of individual departments.

Report of the Northern Ireland Workforce 2012

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, with the Report of the Northern Ireland Workforce 2012 due, what steps they will take to ensure that the Equality Commission gives sufficient emphasis to the emerging trends of recruitment in both the public and private sectors when deciding what action is required to address emerging imbalances in the workforce.

(AQW 28480/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Equality Commission intends publishing in early December the annual summary of monitoring returns for 2012, together with a summary of the change over time in the overall composition of the monitored workforce.

The Equality Commission's engagement with employers extends beyond the annual monitoring exercise. Employers also carry out three-yearly comprehensive reviews under Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, looking at persons in employment, applicants, appointments and those who leave. The Reviews consider employment practices with the purpose of determining whether appropriate affirmative action measures should be implemented.

The Commission, in its engagement with employers, provides support and expertise to help them with all equality related issues.

We await the analysis to be presented in the annual monitoring report for 2012 and our officials will liaise closely with the Equality Commission on any follow-up action to the report.

Absolute and Relative Child Poverty

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an estimate of the percentage of children who will be living in both absolute and relative child poverty in each year until 2020.

(AQW 28683/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We do not have departmental projections. However, a report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) on Child and Working-Age Poverty in Northern Ireland from 2010 to 2020 in May 2013 has been published by OFMDFM which contains projections. This is available online.

Strategic Investment Board: Public Land

Mr McCarthy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what information is held by Strategic Investment Board on surplus and disused public land; and how this information is shared.

(AQW 28932/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) Asset Management Unit (AMU) has developed an asset database to record information, such as location, size, occupancy and running costs, for land and property assets held by central government which are in use or not for immediate disposal. Departments can access the database directly. It is the intention to develop this database to incorporate surplus land and property assets.

In parallel, AMU has been working to digitally map the Land and Property Services database of surplus land and property. To date, just over 1,000 land and property assets have been mapped, and this work is ongoing.

Departments have a duty to identify surplus land and property and dispose of it with the least possible delay; to assess the current and strategic use of assets; and to identify potential future surplus assets for disposal. This process is managed by DFP Land and Property Services.

A list of central government land and property assets currently on the open market is available on http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/property_valuation/valuation-public-sector-bodies/disposal_of_surplus_public_sector_property.htm

Public Hire Taxis in Greater Belfast

Mrs Cochrane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to their disability strategy, for their assessment of the accessibility of Public Hire Taxis in Greater Belfast for people with a disability.

(AQW 29059/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive's Disability Strategy "A strategy to improve the lives of disabled people – 2012 to 2015" has a specific priority 6 to "Eliminate the barriers people with disabilities face in accessing transport ensuring measures are in place to allow personal mobility for people with disabilities".

In taking forward the delivery of the Disability Strategy, departments will consider and take forward action under the strategic priorities. All departments will be expected to report annually on the actions they have taken to support the delivery of the Strategy.

We understand that, currently, only taxis licensed as Belfast Public Hire are required to be wheelchair accessible. The specification for a wheelchair accessible vehicle is contained in the Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, and was carried forward from previous taxi legislation. All Belfast Public Hire taxis must meet this specification in order to operate.

In recognition that the specification had not been reviewed for some time, and may no longer be suitable for the carriage of more modern wheelchairs and their users, the Department of the Environment is undertaking a review which is due for completion shortly. We understand DOE plans to consult on the recommendations of the Review in early 2014.

Goods, Facilities and Services Legislation

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 28825/11-15, to answer the question that was asked.

(AQW 29470/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have nothing further to add to our answer to AQW 28825/11-15.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Single Farm Payment Applications

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the procedures her Department follows in processing Single Farm Payment applications which involve land that is the subject of more than one claim.

(AQW 28892/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): In line with EU Regulations, administrative checks are in place to identify land that is the subject of more than one Single Farm

Payment application. Under the Regulations, penalties are applicable to the business which has incorrectly included the land on its claim.

In order to resolve a duplicate field issue, the Department writes to both businesses explaining that each of them must acknowledge which is the rightful claimant and which is not.

Where both businesses insist they are the rightful claimant the Department will investigate to establish which has control of the land. This can only be resolved by looking at the particular arrangements between all those concerned and, if necessary, clarifying the position on the ground to determine to what extent each business satisfies the SFP scheme requirements.

In circumstances where one party to a duplicate field case ignores repeated correspondence the Department has no option other than to progress the matter in favour of the party which is actively pursuing their claim on the land.

SFP will only be paid when claims are fully validated and duplicate field issues resolved.

Single Farm Payment Applications

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Single Farm Payment applications involving duplicate field enquiries her Department processed in (i) 2012; and (ii) 2013.
(AQW 28893/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: For the 2012 year, 706 Single Farm Payment applications involving duplicate field enquiries were processed.

For the 2013 year, 1,610 Single Farm Payment applications involving duplicate field enquiries were processed. Of these, 394 remain to be resolved.

Single Farm Payment

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what process her Department follows in determining the ownership of land that is the subject of duplicate claims for Single Farm Payment.

(AQW 28894/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In duplicate field cases, the Department is required to establish which of the claimants involved in the duplication meets the SFP scheme requirements.

In line with the EU requirements, DARD has to ensure that SFP is paid to the claimant that has the land at his/her disposal on 15 May and is undertaking agricultural activity on that land throughout the scheme year. While ownership may indicate that the land is at the owner's disposal, it does not demonstrate that the owner is undertaking agricultural activity on the duplicated land.

In circumstances where there is a disagreement the Department will investigate which claimant meets the eligibility rules. This may on occasion involve checking out who owns the land and any contractual agreements that exist between the owner and the other claimant(s) involved in the duplication. This could involve contacting Land and Property Services for details of land ownership or it could involve asking the landowner to provide evidence of ownership.

Single Farm Payment Applications

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department can take to ensure that genuine Single Farm Payment applications are not unduly delayed by duplicate claims on the same land.

(AQW 28895/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Administrative checks are carried out on all claims received with all land claimed by farm businesses accepted as genuine.

Where duplicate field areas are identified the processes outlined in response to AQW 28892/11-15 are followed as quickly as possible in order to resolve the duplicate field query.

In some instances, legal proceedings are underway between the parties and the Department is unable to determine the rightful claimant until it has been notified of the outcome of the proceedings.

Restrictions on Northern Ireland Milk

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, was suitable support from the Republic of Ireland Government in removing restrictions on Northern Ireland milk entering the Republic of Ireland market not forthcoming, whether she will request that the United Kingdom Government consider the same stance in regard to cheese coming into the United Kingdom from the Republic of Ireland. **(AQW 28907/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: I understand that to help differentiate products at retail level the south's National Dairy Council has introduced a labelling mark for milk and cream coming from farms in the south. This mark is additional to that required under EU rules and its inclusion on products is a commercial matter.

I fully support consumers' right to information to allow them to choose to buy local produce. However, I am very concerned that pressure is being exerted on retailers in the south to market only products labelled 'Farmed in the Republic of Ireland' and about any loss of business by our milk processors here in the North. That is why I raised my concerns about restrictions on competition in the dairy sector with Minister Coveney at the recent North South Ministerial Council meeting and we have agreed to continue to work together on this matter.

Both the north and the south have for many years benefited from free trade in milk and dairy products. Also, we are both heavily reliant on external sales, particularly to Britain. In light of this it could be very damaging for both of us if a similar campaign was replicated by the dairy industry in Britain. I do not therefore propose to ask the British Government to adopt the stance you suggest in relation to exports of cheese.

I have consistently made the point that a joint approach to the marketing of products from the island of Ireland would benefit all farmers. I strongly believe that fostering all Ireland trade would benefit producers both north and south and that neither us should be protectionist.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is the time period in which Bovine Viral Diarrhoea could be eradicated if the legislative proposals, currently being finalised, were introduced.

(AQW 28930/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Following my decision to legislate for BVD, further work is now underway to finalise a robust programme to achieve a high level of success in eradicating this disease. It is most likely that the compulsory programme here will be predicated on the current voluntary scheme, which anticipated a 6 year programme including 3 years tag and test combined with 3 years of monitoring. Until the details of the proposed compulsory programme are finalised it is not possible to put a time frame on future eradication. In addition, it must be recognised that the success of any programme is very much dependent on the level of compliance and farmer's willingness to quickly and responsibly dispose of persistently infected animals.

However, I do not wish to introduce a programme which will run indefinitely, next year when I announce the detail of the compulsory programme, I will also be advising of the timeframe in which the programme will be reviewed. I wish to see a clear exist strategy for this programme, I do not want farmers having to tag and test calves any longer than necessary.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the wider trade implications for the farming industry if Bovine Viral Diarrhoea is not eradicated.

(AQW 28931/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Two of our key trading partners, within Ireland and Scotland, have already compulsory BVD eradication schemes in place and well underway. To ensure that our animal health status is on par with them, every measure should be taken to reduce the risk that our farming industry could be at a competitive disadvantage when exporting live cattle. The introduction of compulsory testing for Bovine Viral Diarrhoea will put our herd keepers on an equal footing to those in the south and Scotland.

Cattle movement in 2011 and 2012 from here to the south of Ireland for breeding and production was approximately 6000 animals each year. However this year the figure to date has dropped to 2,950. While it is not clear if this is a direct result of the south's introduction of compulsory BVD legislation earlier this year, there is anecdotal evidence that some buyers (without any legal obligation) are requesting a negative BVD test result before importing cattle.

In addition, given the progress being made with BVD eradication programmes in other EU Member States, BVD is expected to feature as a trade issue in the forthcoming EU Animal Health Regulation. A preliminary disease listing and categorisation paper listing BVD as a disease likely to affect trade was submitted, for discussion, by the Commission to a recent EU CVOs meeting.

Clogher Farmland: Cruelty and Neglect

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking over the recent discovery of multiple cases of cruelty and neglect and fallen equine stock on Clogher farmland; and what other Departments or agencies have a role in this matter.

(AQW 28953/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since 2 April 2012 District Councils have been responsible for the enforcement of the powers in the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 in respect of non-farmed animals including horses. My Department provides annual funding to enable Councils to undertake this work and my officials provide advice and guidance to support Council officials. In undertaking this new role Councils have decided to adopt a collaborative approach and have 5 regional offices covering the north.

This incident is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Council's Animal Welfare Officers in Southern Region, and I understand they are liaising as necessary with their counterparts in Monaghan Local Authority. You will appreciate that I cannot comment further on an ongoing case.

The enforcement roles under the new Welfare of Animals Act 2011 are as follows: DARD in respect of farmed animals, Councils in respect of domestic pets and horses, and the PSNI in respect of wild animals, animal fighting, and welfare issues where other criminal activities are involved. Where appropriate, enforcement action may involve a multi-agency approach involving a combination of DARD, PSNI and Council Officers. If a case involves a cross-border dimension then the appropriate agencies in the south may also be involved.

The animal welfare contact points for DARD, the Councils' Animal Welfare Officers and the PSNI are published on my Department's website and similar information is available on the NIDirect website and local Councils' websites. I would encourage anyone with concerns about animal welfare to contact the relevant authority.

Rural Broadband

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 25684/11-15, for an update on the procurement for this project.

(AQW 28982/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Procurement for the NI Broadband Improvement Project concluded on 8 November and I understand that the tender is currently being assessed.

Assuming that the evaluation is satisfactory and, pending necessary approvals, it is anticipated that a contract will be awarded by the end of 2013 with implementation commencing in 2014 and ending in 2015.

Relocation of Forest Service Headquarters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many posts will be moved to Fermanagh as a result of the relocation of the Forest Service headquarters; and how many members of staff have agreed to relocate.

(AQW 28998/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are approximately 60 Forest Service Headquarter posts under consideration for relocation to Co. Fermanagh.

A human resources strategy is being developed which includes a detailed questionnaire to each member of staff and when analysed will confirm the number of staff who agree to work in the relocated headquarters.

Abuse of Animals

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she is taking to end the abuse of animals.

(AQW 29011/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In my reply to you in February (AQW 19179/11-15) I advised that the welfare of animals here is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011. The Act includes significant new powers to protect animals from unnecessary suffering, including domestic pets and horses. It allows action to be taken before an animal actually suffers, as opposed to after the event. The Act also recognises that causing unnecessary suffering to any animal is a very serious offence and it contains tough penalties which reflect this.

Enforcement of the powers in the new Act is undertaken by my Department in respect of farmed animals; Councils, for the first time, in respect of domestic pets and horses; and the PSNI in respect of wild animals, animal fighting, and welfare issues where other criminal activities are involved.

Since the Act was introduced I have brought forward several Statutory Rules and Codes of Practice to safeguard and promote the welfare of both farmed and non-farmed animals. During 2012 I introduced the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2012, which lay down the standards for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, and the Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations 2012.

From 1 January 2013, it has been an offence for a person to dock a dog's tail or allow someone else to dock their dog's tail. The Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations, which came into operation on 1 April 2013, provides commercial dog breeders with clear standards which they must meet to ensure the welfare of all breeding bitches, stud dogs and pups in their establishment. I am confident that the new enforcement powers and penalties will act as a deterrent to those taking part in illegal dog breeding activities.

At present, Regulations regarding the welfare of animals at the time of killing are progressing through the legislative process. Next year I plan to bring forward legislative proposals in relation to the welfare of animals in petshops, animal boarding establishments, riding and other establishments.

The animal welfare contact points for DARD, the Councils' Animal Welfare Officers and the PSNI are publicised on my Department's website and similar information is available on the NI Direct website and local Councils' websites. I would encourage anyone with concerns about animal welfare to contact the relevant authority.

Price of Fertilizers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what actions her Department is taking to help to reduce the price that farmers pay for fertilizers.

(AQW 29014/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Fertiliser prices are determined by local, national and international market forces and I have no powers to intervene in commercial transactions.

I am, of course, aware that fertilisers represent a significant cost for farmers and that prices have increased significantly in recent years. Therefore, it is important that fertilisers, both inorganic and organic, are used as effectively and efficiently as possible (to benefit business performance as well as the environment). To this end, my Department has taken a number of steps to help farmers make best use of fertilisers and manures. Training is available on nutrient management planning (including the interpretation of soil analysis and the maintenance of optimum soil pH for efficient fertiliser uptake), matching fertiliser applications to crop demand and maximising the benefits of organic manures. Training is also available on drainage and grassland management, again to ensure effective use of fertilisers. As well as training, my Department has also provided financial support through the Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme to enable farmers to improve nitrogen utilisation from slurry. Through all of these measures, farmers have been able to match their nutrient applications more closely to crop demands and, thus, help mitigate the impact of rising fertiliser prices on their businesses.

Milk Production

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what actions her Department is taking to increase the price that farmers receive for the milk they produce, that is currently being bought at 17 pence a litre.

(AQW 29015/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The price that farmers receive for their milk is a commercial matter and therefore not something in which I can directly intervene. However, I believe that farmers should receive a fair price for the milk that they produce.

Whilst the basis of the 17 pence per litre which you quote is unclear, I am pleased that in recent months the market for raw milk and dairy products has been strong. As a result the average producer price for raw milk (after deduction of transport charges) during the period January to October 2013 was 30.76 pence per litre which compares with 25.06 pence per litre during the same period in 2012.

To assist dairy farmers to maximise their financial return from milk production my Department funds research, education, training and technical support. Financial assistance is also available to the dairy sector under the Rural Development Programme and a range of support measures are available to dairy processing companies from Invest NI to help them remain competitive.

The dairy sector has the potential to grow further in a sustainable way and to exploit opportunities arising from the predicted world population expansion. In this respect the Agri-Food Strategy Board's report Going for Growth has set challenging growth targets and I am pleased that the Board recognises the need for all parts of the supply chain to be sustainable and profitable. Development of the Executive response to the report is at an advanced stage and we hope to announce the way forward in the near future. I will continue to work with my Executive colleagues to help support the industry's plans for expansion.

Passporting and Micro-Chipping of Equine Animals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) to outline the current position on the passporting and micro-chipping of equine animals; and (ii) whether she will make this a mandatory requirement to assist in the detection of stolen animals and in identifying abandoned animals and dumped carcasses with a view to prosecution.

(AQW 29031/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under Commission Decision 2000/68/EC passports for equine animals have been mandatory since 2005 and under Commission Regulation 504/2008 micro-chipping has been mandatory for equine animals issued with passports since 1 July 2009. The Horse Passports Regulations (NI) 2010, on the identification of equidae implement Commission Regulation (EC) No. 504/2008 in the north of Ireland.

Wind Turbine Grants

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants or finance are available for farmers who wish to install a wind turbine on their land.

(AQW 29045/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At present clusters are not open for calls. Axis 3 has reached 100% commitment for this programme which means it is unlikely that there will be any further calls.

However, grants were available up to £50,000 to farm families wishing to diversify away from agricultural activities under Measure 3.1 (Farm Diversification) for standalone renewable energy initiatives, including wind turbines. Applications were subject to the criteria set by the programme operating rules including the EU requirement that 100% of the output is sold to the grid and none is used to reduce farm or farm household running costs.

Organic Farming

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants or finance are available for farmers who wish to switch to free range or organic farming.

(AQW 29046/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not offer funding to assist with meeting the criteria for free range production methods. However DARD does deliver the Organic Farming Scheme which provides payments to help farmers with the additional costs and loss of income that occurs during the conversion period to organic production. The Scheme is now closed to new applications. The recent Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014 – 2020 consultation asked whether the next Agri-Environment Scheme should include an Organic Management Option. The consultation responses will be considered as part of the ongoing development of the next Agri-Environment Scheme.

Animal and Public Health Information System

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans are in place to advance and upgrade the Aphis System.

(AQW 29097/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A decision has been taken to replace the current Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) through open procurement. The system will provide similar functionality while optimising use of technology to ensure that the Department and the wider Agri-food sector have access to a system that is modern and meets business needs for the future. The new system will be known as the NI Food Animal Information System (NIFAIS).

Work on the NIFAIS Programme commenced in July 2011. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from across the Department have been involved in preparing a detailed specification for NIFAIS. Negotiations on an APHIS exit agreement with the incumbent supplier are well advanced. As the NIFAIS system is particularly complex, DARD proposes to use the competitive dialogue process to select the most suitable supplier. Specifications are being produced based on outputs to maximise the opportunities for innovation and flexibility with the NIFAIS system.

The Programme are currently reviewing and revising the Outline Business Case to ensure it reflects any strategic changes that have occurred and ensure the projected costs accurately reflect the current development costs for such a complex system. On re-approval of the business case the programme will

advertise the procurement opportunity in the Official Journal of the European Union and commence the formal procurement process.

NIFAIS will form a critical element of many DARD front line business processes and interface with key departmental and industry systems.

The aim of NIFAIS is to be a flexible, innovative IT solution that supports efficient and effective delivery of current and future food animal information services. It will meet DARD and industry needs and be capable of adapting to ensure compliance with legislation, technological development, NICS structures and standards.

During the procurement and implementation of NIFAIS, APHIS will continue to support the industry and will be developed accordingly by the current supplier until NIFAIS is fully operational.

Animal and Public Health Information System

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans are in place to improve the paper forms filled in when selling livestock through the Aphis System; and what problems the Department are aware of with the carbon copies of these forms.

(AQW 29098/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are currently no plans to change the paper documentation required to record animal movements. However, movement documents will be reviewed as part of the NIFAIS (NI Food Animal Information System) project. NIFAIS is the replacement computerised database for APHIS.

Queries regarding copies of the original movement documents e.g. amended or illegible copies, are processed and investigated by my staff. In the case of simple queries, my administrative staff in the local DARD Direct Office may contact the seller or buyer for clarification. In the case of more complex documentary concerns, the matter may be passed on to my enforcement staff for detailed investigation.

Livestock Identification

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in instances where a farmer is late in notifying her Department regarding livestock, why late or no notification status is put on that animal until its processing is complete.

(AQW 29099/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under European Union (EU) and north of Ireland legislation farmers are required to make certain notifications, births, deaths and movements to and from the herd, to the competent authority within fixed time periods. These rules are in place to support livestock traceability. If a farmer is late in notifying DARD then a status is applied to the animal to indicate that the notification was received late. Some statuses may restrict the animal's movements e.g. the status applied because of a late birth notification.

If an incomplete or partially illegible notification is received by DARD, a status may be applied to an animal as it may only be possible to process part of the notification. This procedure enables DARD to monitor incomplete information and, if appropriate, to restrict the movement of the animal until this is rectified. The information is recorded on the APHIS database and actions taken by DARD to ensure robust livestock traceability. When the required information has been received and processed by DARD, the "late" or "no notification" status may be removed; provided the notification is deemed to have been received within the appropriate time period.

Vet Certificates

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why herd keepers need vet certificates to export animals to the rest of the UK for slaughter.

(AQW 29100/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is currently a licensing regime for movements of livestock from the north to Britain and vice versa, for both slaughter and breeding and production. The licensing regime has existed for many years and is a reflection of the fact that the north is part of a separate epidemiological unit from Britain and the differing animal health and disease statuses in each.

The issue of licences, and therefore the subsequent need for veterinary certificates to export, are laid down in the Diseases of Animals (NI) Order 1981 and the Importation of Animals Order (NI) 1986 for moves from Britain to here, and in the Animal Health Act 1981 and the Importation of Animals Order 1977 for moves from here to Britain.

These arrangements have served the agriculture industry here well in preventing the incursion of diseases which are endemic in Britain and, for example, specifically protecting our cattle herd and sheep flock from Bluetongue after there was an incursion into Britain in 2007.

The arrangements also allow us to maintain trade if Britain is affected by an animal disease when we are not, an example of this being the north's ability to continue trading when Britain was affected by Foot and Mouth Disease in 2007.

Our current licensing and veterinary certification arrangements exist to protect our animal health status and ability to trade.

Import of Lamb from Republic of Ireland

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why sheep farmers cannot import store lambs from the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 29101/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is no legislative impediment which would prevent the importation of store lambs from the south of Ireland.

Intra-Community trade in sheep is governed by Council Directive 91/68 which sets out the conditions which have to be met to allow a legal movement. This directive was last amended on 31 August 2013 but that amendment would not prevent store lambs being imported from the south of Ireland.

Ear Tags for Livestock

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the number of ear tags that are lost each year through wear and tear.

(AQW 29120/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department are unable to determine the number of ear tags lost each year through wear and tear. The table below gives the number of duplicate replacement tags, to replace lost tags, used in cattle and sheep in each of the last 3 years.

	2011	2012	2013 to 11/12/13
Cattle replacement tags	217,904	218,868	203,685
Sheep replacement tags	2357	2741	3116

For cattle this means that approximately 7% of cattle ear tags are replaced annually.

For sheep the flock keeper can either replace the lost tag with a matching replacement tag (see above table) or the flock keeper can apply a new tag set. The flock keeper must record the details in the flock register in accordance with the legislation to ensure traceability is maintained.

- Tags are replaced for a number of reasons;
- They are lost from the animal's ears
- They become illegible

- They are removed for welfare reasons e.g. an infected ear
- In some cases, the ear tag numbers of older cattle moving to other Member States for breeding and production, do not contain sufficient characters in their number to meet the requirements of the importing country. Therefore the tags have to be updated and replaced.

Agricultural Crime

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of recorded incidents of agricultural crimes, including livestock and machinery thefts, in each constituency, in each of the last two years; and of these, how many have seen (i) property recovered; and (ii) prosecutions or pending prosecutions.

(AQW 29125/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Responsibility for tackling crime, including agricultural crime, lies primarily with the PSNI and the Department of Justice. My Department does not hold the information you ask for.

I understand that the PSNI records statistical information on crime.

Livestock Theft

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assurances she can give that no livestock which may have been stolen, particularly if it is not tagged or incorrectly tagged, can be presented for slaughter in an abattoir; and (ii) what assurances she has obtained from her counterparts in the Republic of Ireland in respect of same.

(AQW 29127/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The theft of livestock from farms is an issue that I take very seriously. The PSNI, who take the lead on these issues in the north, notify DARD of all reports of stolen livestock. This information is immediately communicated to the DARD Meat Inspection Teams in all the abattoirs in the north. The PSNI also notify An Garda Síochána who communicate with the abattoirs in the south. This two-way communication process ensures vigilance both north and south.

Cattle keepers must notify DARD in writing, within 7 days of becoming aware that an animal is missing believed lost or stolen. The ear tag numbers are removed from the keeper's herd on my Department's database the Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) and moved into a special "lost/stolen" cattle herd on APHIS. If a lost/stolen animal re-appears its ear tag number cannot be moved out of this herd on the database, until DARD has carried out a detailed tracing investigation..

When a bovine animal is moved to an abattoir it must be accompanied by a movement document on which its details must be recorded. It is the responsibility of the Food Business Operator to ensure that the animal presented for slaughter matches its details on the movement document and on APHIS. If an animal is not recorded on APHIS in the presenter's herd or if there are discrepancies with regard to tagging or the animal's description then it cannot be slaughtered until they are resolved. The Official Veterinarian also carries out checks on 10% of the animals.

Cattle with no ear tags or incorrect ear tags are ineligible for slaughter for human consumption. If an animal is declared ineligible for slaughter for human consumption it is not allowed to leave the abattoir alive. It is destroyed on the premises and disposed as animal by-product.

Within EU legislation for animal identification and movement, and the rules for the entry of animals into the human food chain, effective controls must be fully and consistently implemented in all Member States. My officials regularly liaise with colleagues in the south to co-operate on policies for livestock traceability. The Identification and Traceability Working Group meets under the North South Ministerial Council arrangements and is a key part of the implementation of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy

Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many entries her Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 29161/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Special Adviser has not received any gifts or hospitality.

Number of Trees

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development where Northern Ireland ranks in terms of trees per acre.

(AQW 29164/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since 2012 estimates of the area of woodland in the north of Ireland have been based on the Woodland Register, which was established by Forest Service in response to the Forestry Act 2010.

The area of woodland in hectares and the percentage of woodland in the north of Ireland in comparison with the south of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England and the average of 27 countries in the European Union (prior to 1 July 2013), is given in the table below.

	Area of woodland (ha)	% of land
North of Ireland	111, 000	8.2
South of Ireland	679, 485	9.9
Scotland	1, 410, 000	18.1
Wales	305, 000	14.7
England	1, 300, 300	10.0
European Union – 27	157, 000, 000	37.0

Bovine TB

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the proposed pilot scheme for the trapping, testing, vaccination and release of non-infected badgers to prevent the spread of Bovine TB, including an estimated commencement date.

(AQW 29205/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: On 3 July 2012, I advised the Assembly Committee that I asked my officials to develop a “test and vaccinate or remove (TVR)” wildlife intervention research project. The aim of this wildlife intervention research will be to test the effectiveness of this approach on the level of TB in badgers and in cattle in the north.

The TVR study design is complex and there are a number of preparatory phases that must be completed before the main elements of this research project can get underway. However, substantial preparatory work has already been undertaken.

We commissioned the then Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) to provide computer modelling outputs to inform the TVR design, using our farm business, TB disease and badger ecology data. This information has helped us to design the overall TVR study.

A badger sett survey is also required before any TVR research can commence and this work is already well underway in two 100km² areas. Good progress has been made with this work. I am pleased to report that we have received permission to survey some 81% of the Banbridge / Rathfriland area and 82% of the area near Castlewellan.

Work is also ongoing in relation to the preparation of the Outline Business Case. Subject to the necessary financial approval and securing the necessary licences and funding, it is hoped that the intervention element of TVR fieldwork will begin in mid 2014.

Agri-Environment Schemes

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the correspondence that she has received over the past 6 months requesting the transfer of funds from pillar 1 to pillar 2 in order to support the delivery of agri-environment schemes in the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. (AQW 29254/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the past six months I have received correspondence requesting the transfer of funds from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2, to support the delivery of agri-environment schemes in the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, from 354 individuals and one letter from the RSPB on behalf of 69 farmers and agri-businesses. The majority of individual responses were made using the template provided by the RSPB on their website under the 'Vote for Nature' campaign.

Rural Development Programme: Wildlife Friendly Farming

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when she will make a decision on the transfer of funds from pillar 1 to pillar 2 of the Rural Development Programme, to help wildlife friendly farming.

(AQW 29255/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A decision on the transfer of funds from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy must be notified to the European Commission by Member States before 31 December 2013. I intend to make my decision in advance of that date.

Aerial Inspection Photographs

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what the target time is for her Department forwarding aerial inspection photographs to farmers and their local departmental office; and what is the average time taken.

(AQW 29268/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is no requirement for the Department to forward aerial inspection photographs to farmers and the Department has not done so in 2013.

The Department is considering the provision of maps based on ortho-photography, which show what was found at inspections and will seek to provide these for inspections in future years. In the interim, farmers will have the opportunity to visit their local DARD Direct offices to view their inspection maps on DARD's systems and to use this information and the details provided in the inspection report to accurately complete their 2014 Single Application Form.

Aerial Inspections of Land

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what duty her Department has to tell farmers or landowners that an aerial inspection (i) will take place; or (ii) has taken place on their land. (AQW 29269/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has no requirement to notify land owners or farmers that an aerial inspection has taken place or will take place. The Department issued letters to affected farm businesses in December 2013, informing them that their land was subject to control with remote sensing. Land owners will not be notified, unless they are also claimant farmers that have had an inspection by control with remote sensing.

Repairs: Strathmore Stream and Mount Vernon Stream Culverted Watercourses

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what upgrade or repair work has been carried out in the last five years to the (i) Strathmore Stream; and (ii) Mount Vernon Stream culverted watercourses.

(AQW 29287/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) **Strathmore Park Stream** - Rivers Agency completed works, at a cost of £219k, from May to August 2009 to repair structurally unsound culverts on the Strathmore Park Stream. The works extended from the junction of North Circular Road and Coolmoyne Park, in a generally southerly direction through gardens of properties in North Circular Road and Slievemoyne Park, beneath the eastern end of Slievemoyne Park, beneath Antrim Road to terminate at the junction of Antrim Road and Old Cavehill Road.
- (ii) **Mount Vernon Stream** - Rivers Agency completed extensive works, at a cost of £569k, during 2009/2010 which involved substantial culvert replacement on the Mount Vernon Stream. The works extended from the Antrim Road through the grounds of the Landsdowne Court Hotel, eastward beneath Landsdowne Road, Landsdowne Drive and Landsdowne Park to outlet into an open reach of this watercourse at the rear of No 1 Landsdowne Park.

Flooding: Strathmore Stream and Mount Vernon Stream Culverted Watercourses

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many instances or reports of flooding in the last five years have been attributed to the (i) Strathmore Stream; and (ii) Mount Vernon Stream culverted watercourses.

(AQW 29288/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the last 5 years Rivers Agency have reports of one incident of flooding of a garden during December 2012 possibly connected to Strathmore Stream, and one incident of a garden flooding during November 2010 possibly connected to Mount Vernon Stream. Other potential sources of flooding have been identified for both these flooding instances.

Repairs: Strathmore Stream and Mount Vernon Stream Culverted Watercourses

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans her Department has to upgrade or carry out repair work to the (i) Strathmore Stream; and (ii) Mount Vernon Stream culverted watercourses.

(AQW 29289/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) **Strathmore Park Stream** - Rivers Agency completed works during August 2009 to repair structurally unsound culverts on the Strathmore Park Stream. Rivers Agency has no current plans to undertake further works on this reach of this watercourse.
- (ii) **Mount Vernon Stream** - Rivers Agency completed extensive works during August 2010 which involved substantial culvert replacement on the Mount Vernon Stream. Rivers Agency has no current plans to undertake further works on this reach of this watercourse.

Forest Service in North Antrim: Revenue

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much revenue her Department received from the Forest Service in North Antrim, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29299/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service is an Agency of the Department and all Agency income and expenditure is contained within the DARD Estimates and accounted for through both the DARD and Agency Resource Accounts.

The Forest Service revenue in the North Antrim constituency comes from its operating activities in the area. This was £1,102,000 in 2010/11, £718,326 in 2011/12 and £466,605 in 2012/13.

Single Farm Payment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the nature of any issues that have been identified by her Department that will delay the receipt of the Single Farm Payment for any eligible farmers; and should delays be identified, when will affected farmers receive their payment.
(AQW 29454/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Single Farm Payment (SFP) scheme is fully funded by the European Union and the rules governing its administration are set in European Council legislation. These rules provide that payments can only be made on fully verified claims. The findings of verification checks on individual claims must be fully taken into account in order to calculate the correct amount of SFP due in each case. The Department has no discretion to vary the rules detailed in the European Council legislation.

A Single Farm Payment can only be made to a farm business when the verification checks have been completed. Delays can be experienced for a wide variety of reasons. Where a claim is the subject of an On the Spot Check, or land eligibility inspection, the claim will be processed as soon as the land has been inspected and the inspection results finalised. In such cases, it is anticipated that the majority of inspected claims will be processed by the end of February 2014.

The payment of SFP claims can also be delayed by factors outside the Department's control. These factors are varied and include:

- Bank details not supplied by the farm business;
- Ownership of the farm business and/or SFP entitlements are subject to probate proceedings;
- Disputes between landowners and tenants as to which is the correct claimant under the scheme;
- Queries arising from farm businesses claiming areas of eligible land greater than the Maximum Eligible Area (MEA) held by the Department;
- Two or more farm businesses claiming the same parcel of land; and
- Farm businesses have not supplied all of the necessary information to enable a claim to be processed.

The Department has established processes for resolving these issues but is largely and often wholly dependent on the provision of information from the farm business or the completion of legal procedures. These processes are followed as quickly as possible by the Department in order to finalise claims for SFP in an expeditious manner.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Major Capital Projects

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the major capital projects funded by her Department in the Foyle constituency in 2011.
(AQW 28877/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Spend is recorded by my Department according to financial years. For the purpose of this answer I will, therefore, detail major capital projects funded by my Department in the Foyle constituency from the 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

The Department allocated £251k towards Derry's Live Site which was located in Waterloo Place. Live Sites are big screens in city centres reaching out-of-home audiences through large community screens.

Major Capital Projects

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the major capital projects that will be funded by her Department in the Foyle constituency in (i) 2014; and (ii) 2015.

(AQW 28918/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Budgets are allocated according to financial years. For the purposes of this answer, I will, therefore, detail the capital position for the years ended 31 March 2015 (2014/15) and 31 March 2016 (2015/16). As I was happy to announce recently, my Department will invest at least £2m in Daisyfields and Showgrounds in Derry in 2014/15 as part of the City of Culture legacy programme. The Executive has not yet set budgets for 2015/16 but I have already made it clear that City of Culture legacy will play a prominent part in my own Department's proposals.

Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many entries her Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 29008/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: None.

Department: Language Diversity Unit

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how many people are employed in the Language Diversity Unit.

(AQW 29203/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There is no Language Diversity Unit within DCAL.

A total of fourteen staff are currently employed within Languages and Waterways Ireland Branch.

City of Culture 2013: Legacy Plan

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 28717/11-15, which stakeholders were consulted; and what were the dates of the consultations.

(AQW 29260/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials are working closely with stakeholders in the North West to discuss plans for future support and development of the culture, arts and leisure sectors. Officials regularly meet with our primary stakeholders, Derry City Council and Culture Company.

A series of informal meetings have also been held with organisations in the City throughout 2013. Examples of recent meetings between officials and organisations in the context of legacy plans include the Chief Executive's Forum on 26 September; Ilex on 4 October; Voluntary Arts Ireland on 8 October; Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau on 15 October; Playhouse on 30 October; Nerve Centre 13 November; DSD 13 November; Walled City Tattoo representatives on 26 November; and North West Volunteer Centre on 3 December.

Officials are also working closely with DSD Community Engagement Officers in the context of the Waterside, Triax, Outer North and Outer West cultural strategies. My Department is represented on the Community Engagement Steering Committee which last met on 28 November 2013.

Independent Working Group Examining Boxing in Ulster

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the report of the Independent Working Group Examining Boxing in Ulster, what steps she will take to assist and facilitate local boxers who aspire to fight for the UK to attain their ambition.

(AQW 29342/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The report of the Independent Working Group (IWG) states that “the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA), the British Amateur Boxing Association (BABA), the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA) along with associated bodies/organisations should work together to identify the implementations of the Good Friday Agreement for national representation and work to implement any recommendations including devising a plan to accommodate Ulster boxers who might represent Team GB at elite level.”

The IABA has publicly stated that they will examine the findings in the report and take some time to consult with its membership before delivering a response in the New Year.

My Department and Sport NI will be available to provide practical support to the IABA as they take forward their considerations of the IWG recommendations, including the recommendation on national representation.

Independent Working Group Examining Boxing in Ulster

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given that the report of the Independent Working Group Examining Boxing in Ulster has substantiated the claims of Sandy Row Boxing Club that incidents of sectarianism and racism have occurred, what plans she has to provide funding for which the Club will be eligible.

(AQW 29343/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department has a responsibility for the general provision of funding for the development of sport in the north of Ireland. As part of this, Sport NI established the Lottery funded Boxing Investment Programme to meet an identified need in boxing, and which had a clear focus on improving facilities and building capacity in the sport. Sandy Row Amateur Boxing Club (ABC) was eligible to submit an expression of interest for this funding; however, in order to progress to the next stages of the programme, all clubs, including Sandy Row ABC, were required to be affiliated to a recognised governing body. This is a standard requirement for all Sport NI funding programmes.

Independent Working Group's Report on Sectarianism in Boxing

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department is taking in response to the Independent Working Group's report on sectarianism in boxing.

(AQW 29370/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I welcome the Independent Working Group's report and acknowledge its findings and recommendations.

However, responsibility for action on the findings rests in the first instance with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) who commissioned the report. The IABA has publicly stated that they will examine the findings in the report and take some time to consult with its membership before delivering a response in the New Year.

My Department and Sport NI, an arms length body of DCAL, will be available to provide practical support to the IABA as they take forward their considerations of these recommendations.

Irish Amateur Boxing Association

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department will take to ensure that the review of existing practice for complaint and investigation in the Irish Amateur Boxing Association takes place.

(AQW 29384/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I welcome the Independent Working Group's report and acknowledge its findings and recommendations.

Responsibility for action to review the existing practice for complaint and investigation procedures, rests wholly with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA), who commissioned the report.

The IABA has publicly stated that they will examine the findings in the report and take some time to consult with its membership before delivering a response in the New Year.

My Department and Sport NI, an arms length body of DCAL, will be available to provide practical support to the IABA as they take forward their considerations of these recommendations.

Independent Working Group Examining Boxing in Ulster

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action is being taken to address the chill factors, identified in the report by the Independent Working Group Examining Boxing in Ulster, which discourage people from the Protestant community getting involved in boxing.

(AQW 29385/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I welcome the Independent Working Group's report and acknowledge its findings and recommendations. Responsibility for action to address the issues raised in the report rests, in the first instance, with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA). The IABA has publicly stated that they will examine the findings in the report and take some time to consult with its membership before delivering a response in the New Year.

I am aware of the ongoing work of the IABA, through its Club Development Manager, to promote and develop boxing in all areas and across all communities in the north of Ireland. In ongoing support of this, my Department and Sport NI will be available to provide practical support to the IABA as they take forward their considerations of the recommendations made.

Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games: Northern Ireland Team

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support, financial or otherwise, her Department will provide to the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Team for the 2014 Glasgow games.

(AQW 29397/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for entering competitors from the north of Ireland, into the Commonwealth Games 2014, rests with the NI Commonwealth Games Council (NICGC) which has not yet selected local competitors for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) provides support to athletes through SportNI, who are investing £543,129 in Commonwealth Games sports through its Athlete Investment Programme in this current financial year. The Sports Costs strand of the Programme, which contributes to the implementation of agreed training and competition programmes, is made to the Governing Body which in turn selects the most suitable athletes. Athletes may apply directly to Sport NI for the Living Costs strand of the Programme which contributes to essential living and travel costs.

This funding is not solely for preparation for the Commonwealth Games, but also in respect of other competitions that take place during the investment period.

An ongoing investment programme in the development of high quality facilities, such as the Aurora Complex in Bangor and the stadia projects, provide athletes with a professional training environment.

Commonwealth Games 2014

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans she has to profile and showcase Northern Ireland during the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

(AQW 29399/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department is constantly considering opportunities to showcase the diversity and the very best of culture from across the island. Officials from the Department continue to liaise with their counterparts in Scotland regarding the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme.

I am aware that a number of governing bodies have mentioned proposals to invite teams/athletes from other countries to preparation camps ahead of the Glasgow Games. However their main focus will be on preparing our athletes for the Games.

The World Police and Fire Games was a huge success and demonstrated that we can deliver major games in the north of Ireland. Whilst, 'Events' are the responsibility of DETI, as part of the WPFPG legacy, my Department is considering how we can build on that success and opportunities for hosting future major sporting events.

Department of Education

Woodlands Speech and Language Unit

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education, in light of the closure of Woodlands Speech and Language Unit, what plans have been put in place for students who may have been referred for speech and language places in the current year; and what action his Department has taken to set up the new classes and required resources.

(AQW 28845/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Western Education and Library Board (WELB) has confirmed that any students who currently attend Woodlands Speech and Language Unit will finish their placements there. New provision at Ebrington, St. Anne's and Ballykelly Primary Schools will commence from September 2014.

WELB has advised that meetings have taken place to progress arrangements for accommodation needs in the new settings and it plans to engage with staff in the near future.

Outdoor Sporting Facilities

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what collaboration has taken place with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to ensure that there are adequate outdoor sporting facilities for use by community and sporting groups and local schools in Bangor.

(AQW 28925/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is the responsibility of the Department of Education to ensure that schools are designed to provide an appropriate learning environment for the delivery of the curriculum. The provision of adequate outdoor sporting facilities for use by the community is not the responsibility of the Department.

However, when planning new or improved play and sporting facilities at schools the Department's Building Handbook for Primary and Post Primary Schools does provide design advice to enable all school facilities to be used by the community. The local management and arrangements for the use of such facilities by the community is a matter for a school's Board of Governors.

ESA: Salary Ranges

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 28317/11-15, how many of these posts are currently filled.

(AQW 28963/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A Chief Executive (Designate) has been appointed. Three individuals have accepted offers of a Director post.

Salary ranges for each of the posts in the senior management structure are set out below:

Chief Executive (Designate)	£145,000 - £150,000
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Director of Operations & Estates	£81,460 - £108,618
Director of Education Quality & Strategic Planning	£95,039 - £126,717
Director of Children and Young Peoples Services	£81,460 - £108,618
Director of Finance & ICT	£81,460 - £108,618
Director of HR & Workforce Development	£81,460 - £108,618

ESA: Salary Ranges

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 28317/11-15, what is the salary attached to each post.

(AQW 28964/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A Chief Executive (Designate) has been appointed. Three individuals have accepted offers of a Director post.

Salary ranges for each of the posts in the senior management structure are set out below:

Chief Executive (Designate)	£145,000 - £150,000
Director of Operations & Estates	£81,460 - £108,618
Director of Education Quality & Strategic Planning	£95,039 - £126,717
Director of Children and Young Peoples Services	£81,460 - £108,618
Director of Finance & ICT	£81,460 - £108,618
Director of HR & Workforce Development	£81,460 - £108,618

Common Funding Formula

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education how he intends to protect strategic small schools in the long term through his revision of the Common Funding Formula.

(AQW 28979/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: One of the recommendations in the Independent review of the Common Funding Scheme was to remove all small schools support factors from the current funding formula. While I accepted this recommendation in principle, I decided not to implement it at this time. The small schools support factors in the current formula will be retained for the 2014-15 financial year.

I already have an extensive area based planning process underway designed to ensure that schools are planned strategically to deliver sustainable, high quality education. I want to see more progress on area planning.

We have a Sustainable Schools policy that sets out the criteria and quality indicators to help managing authorities to assess schools' sustainability.

I will provide further clarification within existing policy on the circumstances as to when a small school will need to be retained and how it will be supported.

Appointment of Headteachers

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the appointment of headteachers to the primary sector over the last three years, what percentage of applicants met the essential criteria; and what percentage of posts had to be readvertised.

(AQW 28981/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have advised that the figures for the appointment of Principals to the primary sector over the last three years are:

Employing Authority	% of applicants who met essential criteria	% of posts that had to be readvertised
BELB	100	11
NEELB	71.52	21.43
SEELB	86	11
SELB	97.64	5.88
WELB	100	Nil
CCMS	97.34	3.9

Please note in respect of the BELB figures for % of applicants who met essential criteria, these relate to only 8 out of 9 appointments as figures are not held by the BELB and they were not in a position to obtain these within the timescale.

New Build Schools

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of (i) planning fees; (ii) architects; (iii) consultants; and (iv) other associated costs for school new builds in the last ten years which have not been built.

(AQW 29022/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not possible, without incurring disproportionate expense, to provide the breakdown of costs on new school builds in the way requested. However, costs have been provided as detailed below.

The costs for new build schools included in Capital Announcements but where construction work has not yet commenced are detailed in the table below. The information provided covers all costs incurred since the commencement of planning up to 31 March 2013.

School Ref No.	Scheme	Total spend to 31 Mar 2013 £000s
306-6551	Braidside IPS, Ballymena	36
104-6596	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	67
124-0291	Colaiste Feirste, Belfast	2,717 - includes site purchase of £2.35m
306-6561	Corran IPS, Larne	13
203-2277	Craigbrack, Mullabuoy, Listress PS, Derry	16
223-0138	Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore	133
503-2585	Edendork PS	91
242-0229	Foyle & Londonderry College	15,073 - includes site purchase of £14.5m
204-6638	Gaelscoil Ui Dhochartaigh, Strabane	40
504-6637	Gaelscoil Ui Neill, Coalisland	45
506-6553	Portadown IPS	26

School Ref No.	Scheme	Total spend to 31 Mar 2013 £000s
303-6562	Holy Family PS, Magherafelt	155
523-0278	Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	227
123-0009	Little Flower Girls SS, Belfast	153
242-0065	Loreto College, Omagh	43
142-0022	Methodist College, Belfast	221
206-6552	Omagh IPS 03/04	486 - includes site purchase of £400,000
342-0058	Rainey Endowed, Magherafelt	70
503-1387	St Bronagh's PS, Rostrevor	519
503-6435	St Clare's Abbey PS, Newry	654
423-0107	St Columbanus College, Bangor	671
203-2737	St Columbkilles's PS, Carrickmore	247
203-6116	St Conor's PS, Omagh	112
503-6675	St Joseph's & St James, Newry	0
542-0045	St Louis GS, Kilkeel	672
503-6043	St Mary's PS, Banbridge	85
303-0625	St Mary's, Cargan, Glenravel PS, Ballymena	0
542-0056	St Mary's, St Paul's, St Michael's, Lurgan	0
542-0038	St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	619
523-0076	St Patrick's College, Banbridge	243
542-0268	St Patrick's GS, Armagh	378
542-0304	St Pat's Boys/Girls Acad. Dungannon	621
203-1898	St Paul's PS, Irvinestown	26
503-1160	St Teresa's PS, Lurgan	186
503-1103	Tannaghmore PS, Lurgan	207
142-0264	Victoria College, Belfast	376
201-6068	Artigarvan PS, Strabane	112
301-3315	BallyKelly PS, Limavady	169
231-0015	Belmont Special School	3
331-6676	Castletower Special school	10
221-0305	Devenish College	59
501-1575	Dromore Central PS.	337
201-0382	Ebrington PS, Derry	151

School Ref No.	Scheme	Total spend to 31 Mar 2013 £000s
101-6485 111-0003	Glenwood PS./Edenderry N.S. Belfast	226
201-2245	Eglinton PS, Derry	154
201-6152	Enniskillen Model PS	132
421-0046	Glastry College, Ballyhalbert	697
421-0086	Knockbreda HS, Belfast	1189
431-6516	Knockevin Spec School, Downpatrick	323
231-6662	Limegrove/Glasvey (Rossmar) Special School	6
541-0057	Lurgan College	434
201-2261	New Buildings PS, Derry	92
321-0207	Parkhall College, Antrim	956
541-0067	Portadown College	243
101-0307	Springhill PS. Belfast	128
101-0252	Strandtown PS, Belfast	308
421-0029	The High School, Ballynahinch	385

To the end of the 2012/13 financial year £3.8m has been spent on the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus. However, of this total amount circa £600k relates to the “carrying cost” of the Department owning the Lisanelly site (i.e. site security and utilities). Please see the table below for a breakdown of expenditure.

Area of Spend	Total Spend to 31/03/13
Development of Exemplar Designs and Programme Director costs	£2,754,337.76
Development of Strategic and Outline Business Cases	£116,600.97
Legal Advice for input to Business Cases	£32,344.88
Decontamination Survey Costs	£260,818.27
Holding Costs (Security and Utilities)	£614,505.63
Total	£3,778,607.51

Cost of Hospitality in the Department

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the cost of hospitality in his Department in each of the last five years; (ii) the cost of conferences and similar events held by his Department; and (iii) the spend on public relations, including press staff.

(AQW 29025/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The costs of hospitality by the Department in each of the last five years is shown in the following table.

Financial year	£'000
2008-09	74
2009-10	57
2010-11	26
2011-12	19
2012-13	27

- (ii) The costs of conferences and similar events held by the Department is shown in the following table.

Financial Year	£'000
2008-09	149
2009-10	49
2010-11	26
2011-12	7
2012-13	9

- (iii) The spend on public relations, including press staff by the Department, is shown in the following table.

Financial Year	£'000
2008-09	189
2009-10	184
2010-11	204
2011-12	227
2012-13	184

In addition to the expenditure detailed above, Communication Consultants are engaged on the Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus project in Omagh through the Integrated Design Team, to provide planning and stakeholder engagement services for the project. The Integrated Design Team was appointed through open OJEU competition in March 2010. A small element of the contract would include the provision of occasional PR services on behalf of the project. This expenditure is not invoiced separately.

Community Network Groups

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what actions he is taking, or considering, to work with community groups, such as Community Network groups, to ensure that disadvantaged areas are given local services to benefit education in the community.

(AQW 29042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have allocated £2 million pounds to a Community Education Initiatives Programme in this and the next financial year. The aim of the programme is to identify and allocate resources to community-based initiatives which have a specific focus on positive educational outcomes. The intention is to join up community-based and school-based activity in a more coherent way, promoting

partnership working between voluntary and community organisations and schools in order to provide educationally focused programmes in communities with particular concentrations of educational disadvantage. The funding will be allocated through the Education and Library Boards to the Neighbourhood renewal Partnerships, Belfast Area Partnerships and Super Output Areas with high levels of educational disadvantage.

In addition, my Department works closely with the Department for Social Development in relation to education-related Neighbourhood Renewal Projects which target children in the most disadvantaged areas, providing additional support to address educational underachievement.

Free Pre-School Funded Places in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of free pre-school funded places in North Down in each of the last five years.

(AQW 29065/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of funded pre-school places in the North Down constituency, in each of the last five years is follows:

Provision in North Down District Council Area¹

PROVIDERS	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Statutory nursery	468	468	468	468	468
Voluntary/private	304	314	359	390	396
Total	772	782	827	858	864

Education and Skills Authority: Projected Cost Savings

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Education what are the projected cost savings based on the current plans for management bodies to be included within the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 29092/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: According to the Full Business Case for the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), completed by my Department and approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel in June 2013, ESA will save £185 million over the ten year period following its establishment. This calculation was arrived at by comparing the costs, over this period, of establishing and maintaining ESA with the costs of the alternative: restoring and maintaining existing structures.

Child Internet Safety

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Education what action his Department and its arm's-length bodies are taking to protect children from abuse through the internet.

(AQW 29148/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Action taken to protect children from abuse through the internet is part of the overall approach to eSafety within the education sector. Action taken has two objectives, namely, to offer a safe environment within which pupils can use the internet and for pupils to learn about potential dangers and how to keep safe.

Boards of Governors of grant-aided schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. In the exercise of this duty schools are required to have in place eSafety policies covering the safe and effective use of the internet and digital technologies. The eSafety policies must operate in conjunction with other school policies including Behaviour, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Acceptable Use.

¹ Figures as at conclusion of Open Enrolment procedure

DE Circular 2007/1 – ‘Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools’ provides advice on the matters which must be addressed by schools in ensuring safe and appropriate use of the internet. The circular also drew attention to useful sources of advice from expert organisations involved in child protection. Additional guidance was issued to schools in September 2011 in DE Circular 2011/22 - Internet Safety. This provided advice on arrangements for preventing access to inappropriate material, the educational use of materials from blocked sites and the provision of information to parents. It also provided information about security considerations for those schools that have set up their own networks outside C2k’s centrally managed service.

DE Circular 2013/25 – ‘eSafety Guidance’ was issued on 6 December 2013 and provides guidance on eSafety in the context of the new C2k contract, Education Network (NI) and also non C2k networks. The C2k managed service includes an eSafety Zone, which provides advice and guidance for teachers.

The C2k Education Network service provides schools with a fully managed ICT service thus ensuring pupils’ safety while using the internet in school. This service operates a rigorous internet filtering policy which blocks access to sites classed as unsuitable. The service has in place internet monitoring, web and email filtering as well as physical controls such as firewalls and password protection.

ICT plays a central role in the Revised Curriculum with ‘Using ICT’ set as a cross-curricular skill, statutory across all key stages. While development of ICT skills can be introduced across all subject areas, at post –primary level, the ‘Learning for Life and Work’ Area of Learning and at primary level, the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Area of learning, provide direct opportunities to allow pupils to develop strategies to promote their personal safety.

Information about on line safety is targeted directly to pupils. The homework diary inserts prepared and distributed through the ‘iMatter’ Programme include internet safety under the topic ‘Keeping Yourself Safe’. Pupils are alerted to sources of advice and support if they have concerns about a contact over the internet. Advice is available to schools from the Boards’ Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) and from PSNI.

The ‘iMatter’ Programme’s ‘Message of the Month’ will highlight ‘eSafety Day’ in February 2014 .

In other education settings where provision is made by the Education and Library Boards account must be taken of guidance issued by the Department.

Integrated Education

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education why his Department’s corporate plan 2012/15, or the 2013/14 revision, contain no reference to integrated education; and whether he will reaffirm his commitment, as required by statute to encourage and facilitate integrated education.

(AQW 29149/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Department has a duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education (that is to say the education together, at school, of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils) and takes that duty seriously. Indeed work is currently progressing regarding the future development of integrated education.

The corporate plan sets out the high level actions to deliver on specific targets in 2013/14. There is a particular emphasis on Programme for Government targets, which identify progressing shared education as a key area. The work to progress shared education will take full and careful consideration of the Department’s duty in relation to integrated education.

The Department’s priority of raising standards and closing the performance gap applies across all schools. This in no way takes away from the Department’s focus on encouraging the development of integrated education.

Integrated Education

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to fulfil its legal obligations in respect of integrated education.

(AQW 29150/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department takes its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education (i.e. the education together, at school, of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils), very seriously, and will continue to do so.

To help with the facilitation of integrated education, my Department will continue to provide funding to the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to assist the development of integrated schools for public benefit. Funding of £646k has been allocated for 2013/14.

I have met with NICIE officials, twice in recent months, to discuss proposals to further promote and facilitate the development and growth of integrated education. I remain willing to consider further innovative approaches which will facilitate the development of the sector.

The Department of Education will also continue to provide funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This supports schools in the initial stages of the transformation process and with the employment of a teacher, from the minority community in the school, to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2013/14 is £185k.

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

Going forward, the Department of Education will ensure that it continues to have a rigorous approach to its duty to integrated education.

Primary Curriculum

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education whether he has given any consideration to the introduction of computer coding into the primary curriculum.

(AQW 29185/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum has been designed to provide flexibility for schools to develop experiences that suit the needs of their pupils. Embedding mandatory, cross curricular skills and keeping prescribed content to a minimum, allows schools to choose the most appropriate approach to take to ensure that pupils are engaged and challenged, to reach their full potential.

Computer Science, which includes computer coding, is a specialised field and the flexibility already in place within the revised curriculum, enables schools to teach Computer Science in any Key Stage, including at primary school level, if they feel it appropriate.

At this time there are no plans to make computer programming mandatory in the revised curriculum. However, should schools feel it meets the needs of their pupils, there is sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to allow them to teach it.

In order to contribute to the skills gap in the ICT sector, the Department has commissioned the development and delivery of a bespoke computer programming continuum of practical pupil engagement activity covering Key Stage 2 – Post 16. The programme, co-financed by Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning and Invest NI, 'IT's Your Choice – A Computer Programming Continuum for Schools', was launched into schools in September 2013 and will engage approximately 10,000 pupils annually. This programme is being delivered as part of the ICT action plan which forms part of the Government's delivery of the Economic Strategy and aligns to the STEM Strategy 'Success Through STEM'.

Relationship and Sex Education

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether his department holds any information on (i) young people being shown abortion videos as part of their Relationship and Sex Education; and (ii) how often organisations such as Precious Life are given access to schools.

(AQW 29191/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold any information on young people being shown abortion videos or how often organisations such as Precious Life are given access to schools.

Legislation sets out the minimum content to be taught in schools as Areas of Learning (AOLs) for each Key Stage. The teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education is covered by the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Area of Learning at primary level and the Personal Development strand of the Learning for Life and Work Area of Learning at post-primary level. While the specifics of what is taught under each Area of Learning, including topics such as abortion, is a matter for each teacher/school, the Department does require each school to have in place a RSE policy on how it will address the delivery of RSE. This policy should be subject to consultation with parents and it must be endorsed by the school's Board of Governors.

The Department does not prescribe the resources that should be used by a school in its delivery of the curriculum. It is a matter for teachers/schools to determine the resources they use to enhance their delivery of the curriculum and this includes any decision to bring external organisations such as Precious Life into the classroom.

Relationship and Sex Education

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether he has given any consideration to an immediate review and subsequent change in the Northern Ireland Curriculum on Relationship and Sex Education.

(AQW 29192/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Reading this question in conjunction with other questions you have raised I am assuming that this question about a review and change to the curriculum would relate to prescribing specific teaching about abortion in our schools.

The revised curriculum which has been taught to all pupils of compulsory school age since 2009/10 is less prescriptive, with the minimum to be taught detailed in legislation as Areas of Learning (AOLs) for each Key Stage. It provides our teachers with greater flexibility to make decisions on how best to interpret and combine minimum requirements to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils. In line with this flexibility the Department does not prescribe the specifics of what should be taught or the resources that teachers should use in their delivery of any aspect of the curriculum for each of the Areas of Learning.

The Department considers that the existing Minimum Content Regulations provide appropriate cover for the delivery of this element of RSE in the classroom. The Department has no plans to review or change its current policy of giving teachers/schools the flexibility to decide how to best deliver the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils.

Relationship and Sex Education

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether he is aware of best practice in Relationship and Sex Education; and whether he has given any consideration to a minimum Relationship and Sex Education package issued by Education and Library Boards, to include stringent, standardised guidelines to be followed by all schools.

(AQW 29193/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: An ETI report published in 2011 on the provision of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in our post-primary schools does give evidence of best practice and cites helpful case studies. Overall the report provides a summary of the characteristics associated with best practice. One example is that there is a need for clear, informed and purposeful leadership from the Principal and

the senior management team, ensuring that RSE has a significant role in the curriculum provision. The Department has decided to issue a letter to schools in the New Year, as it is some time since the report was published on the ETI website and they will make schools aware of the good practice characteristics identified in the report.

Regarding the latter part of your question I can confirm that the Department has not given any consideration to a minimum RSE package with stringent standardised guidelines to be followed by all schools.

The delivery of RSE within schools needs to be taken forward in a way that recognises and respects the ethos of individual schools and that involves the whole school community (including parents) in planning, delivery and review. All schools should have in place a policy for the delivery of RSE in their school. Parents should be consulted about the policy and it should be endorsed by the Board of Governors of the school.

In addition, a key strength of the revised curriculum is the flexibility it provides for our teachers to make decisions on how best to interpret and combine minimum requirements to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils. This flexibility was introduced as a result of the feedback received during consultation with for example teachers, pupils, the business sector and parents.

Guidance on RSE is provided by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). This guidance makes schools aware of the wide range of resources available and provides a checklist to help schools determine which resources to use that are consistent with their school's morals and values framework. CCEA is currently taking forward work to revise RSE guidance and it is intended that new guidance will be available during 2014/15.

Relationship and Sex Education

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education to outline the reasons why Relationship and Sex Education is taught in Religious Education and not in subjects such as learning for life or biology.
(AQW 29195/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools are required to have in place a RSE policy which sets out how the school will address RSE within the curriculum. A school's policy should be subject to consultation with parents and it should be endorsed by the Board of Governors of the school.

The main Areas of Learning within the revised curriculum for the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) at primary level and the Personal Development strand of the Learning for Life and Work Area of Learning at post-primary level.

However, I am aware from a report published by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in January 2011 about RSE provision in post-primary schools, that a variety of delivery models are used by schools. These range from provision as a module within Personal Development, as a discrete topic or a cross-curricular approach. The report indicated that over 83% of schools use more than one delivery method. A copy of the ETI report is accessible at <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-post-primary/surveys-evaluations-post-primary-2011/report-of-an-evaluation-of-relationships-and-sexuality-education-in-post-primary-schools-2.pdf>.

If a cross-curricular approach to the delivery of RSE is being taken by a school, the revised curriculum includes a number of other Areas of Learning, such as Religious Education or Science, which could provide opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and skills in this area. However, as with all aspects of the revised curriculum, the specifics of what is taught and how it is taught is a matter for each teacher/school.

Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Signature Project

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail as of 1 December 2013 (i) the number of school teachers employed in post-primary schools under the signature project to provide numeracy support; (ii)

the number of school teachers employed in post-primary schools under the signature project to provide literacy support; (iii) the number of unfilled signature project posts; and to detail (iv) the number of primary school teachers employed under the signature project prior to the 1 December 2013.

(AQW 29198/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As of 1 December 2013, under the Delivering Social Change Improving Literacy and Numeracy Project, a total of 135.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers are employed in post-primary schools. These teachers have been employed either to provide direct support to pupils or to fill the post of a more experienced teacher released to provide the direct support. It is therefore difficult at this time to specify exactly the number of schools providing numeracy and/or literacy support as a number of schools are providing both.

As advised by the participating schools or the WELB for the centrally appointed teachers;

- (i) There are 72 FTE of teachers employed in post-primary schools to provide numeracy support.
- (ii) There are 54 FTE teachers employed in post-primary schools to provide literacy support.
- (iii) There are 45.2 FTE unfilled posts in the primary and post primary sectors as of 1 December 2013.
- (iv) There are 86 FTE teachers out of a total of 100.7 FTE teaching posts employed in primary schools.

Interviews took place in early December to appoint further teachers to the Signature Project.

North Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) all primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area identified as requiring new capital development; and those identified as being priorities.

(AQW 29199/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my statement to the Assembly in January 2013, I announced the following Primary Schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area to advance in planning:

- St Mary's Primary School/Glenravel Primary School;
- Braidside Integrated Primary School;
- Corran Integrated Primary School, Larne;
- Craigback Primary School/Mullabuoy Primary School/Listress Primary School.

I had also announced a proposal to meet the needs of children in the Islandmagee area however following discussions with the NEELB the project announced at that time has been withdrawn. The NEELB is considering an alternative solution in that area.

The Department continues to work with all the managing authorities on the strategic planning of the schools' estate, including the potential for future capital investment. There will always be greater demand for investment than funds available and at such time as any future capital announcement is made it will take account of strategic priorities identified across all sectors.

Work-Days Lost as a Result of Flu-Related Illnesses

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education how many work-days were lost as a result of flu-related illnesses amongst the teaching profession in each of the last three academic years.

(AQW 29216/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of work days lost as a result of flu-related illnesses amongst the teaching profession in each of the last three academic years is as follows:

- 2010/2011 – 13,398

- 2011/2012 – 11,143.5
- 2012/2013 – 14,945

Average Spend in Schools

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the average spend per (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary pupil in the (a) maintained; (b) controlled; (c) integrated; (d) Irish medium sectors, in each of the last six years.

(AQW 29348/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold information on average spending per pupil. Such information would require disaggregation of central costs – e.g. administration and services such as transport, meals, Curriculum Advisory and Peripatetic Service etc. - which are not disaggregated at school or phase levels. In addition, overall expenditure will include grant-aided recurrent funding (and other non-public funds including voluntary contributions etc.), as well as capital expenditure - which, by its nature, is not regular or consistently applied across schools from year-to-year.

Every grant-aided school covered by the Common Funding Scheme receives a fully delegated budget for its day-to-day recurrent funding needs, distributed under the current Common Funding Formula arrangements. A breakdown of the budget allocations for the requested groups is provided below:

Average CFF Budget Per Pupil funding - 2008/09 to 2013/14

Primary	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £
Controlled (1)	2,599	2,856	2,941	2,946	2,950	2,936
Maintained (2)	2,668	2,942	3,037	3,043	3,051	3,036
Integrated (3)	2,769	3,024	3,086	3,078	3,079	3,058
Irish-medium	3,041	3,371	3,489	3,514	3,585	3,616

Post-Primary	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £
Controlled (1)	3,901	4,010	4,076	4,060	4,042	4,020
Maintained (2)	4,078	4,206	4,275	4,254	4,230	4,211
Integrated (3)	4,268	4,344	4,394	4,367	4,347	4,336
Irish-medium	4,010	4,164	4,236	4,216	4,196	4,192

Data source: Common Funding Formula 2008/09 to 2013/14

Notes:

- (1) Excludes Controlled Integrated schools
- (2) Includes Catholic Maintained and Other Maintained, except Irish Medium
- (3) Includes Controlled Integrated and Grant-maintained Integrated schools

Average Spend on Home to School Transport

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the average spend on home to school transport per (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary pupil in the (a) maintained; (b) controlled; (c) integrated; (d) Irish medium sectors, in each of the last six years.

(AQW 29349/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The tables below show the average spend on Home to School Transport per (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary pupil in the maintained, controlled, integrated and Irish medium sectors, in each of the last four years. Data in the format requested is not available for the 2007/08 and 2008/09 years.

Primary

Year	Maintained	Controlled	Integrated	Irish Medium
2009/10	£783	£802	£737	£926
2010/11	£816	£810	£649	£862
2011/12	£745	£701	£651	£1,129
2012/13	£751	£696	£729	£1,227

Post-Primary

Year	Maintained	Controlled	Integrated	Irish Medium
2009/10	£667	£668	£646	£602
2010/11	£651	£654	£638	£828
2011/12	£639	£623	£616	£594
2012/13	£644	£644	£611	£603

NB. Data provided by the Education and Library Boards. Controlled Integrated schools are recorded under the Integrated heading, while Controlled Irish Medium (IM) schools are recorded under the Irish Medium heading. Figures for the Integrated sector include both Grant Maintained Integrated and Controlled Integrated schools. Some Boards record IM Units attached to Maintained schools under the Maintained heading, while others record such Units under IM.

Children Awaiting Assessment by an Educational Psychologist

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, during the period 1 September 2012 to 30 April 2013, what was the average waiting time between a pupil being referred to an educational psychologist and having their first appointment, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 29350/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have confirmed that the average waiting time between a pupil being referred to an educational psychologist and having their first appointment, during the period 1 September 2012 to 30 April 2013, is as follows:

BELB	33 days
NEELB	90 days
SEELB	278 days
SELB	60 days
WELB	75 days

These figures refer to Stage 3 (non-statutory assessments) as outlined in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP).

With regard to the waiting time for an assessment in terms of statutory requirements, at Stage 4 of the COP, the ELBs consider the need for a statutory assessment of special educational needs which will include an assessment by an educational psychologist. ELBs have 16 weeks from the date that the ELB notifies the parents that it is considering making an assessment or from the date that the

request to carry out an assessment is received by the ELB from the parent or the school to complete the assessment.

Average Spend per Child on Early Years Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how much on average was spent per child on early years services, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 29352/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold information on average spending per child as some funding (for example costs of central administration, capital) cannot be disaggregated to obtain an average amount spend per child on early years services.

In 2013/14 the Department has invested over £213 million² in a range of early years education and learning services. Further information on the range of early years education and learning services funded by the Department, including the number of children and families taking part, are detailed in the Learning to Learn framework available on the DE website.

Investment in the range of early years education and learning (excluding capital and costs such as central administrative expenditure which cannot be disaggregated by school sector) is detailed for each of the five years to 2012/13 in the following table.

Provision	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	2011/12 £m	2012/13 £m
Nursery Schools	17.067	17.614	17.940	18.287	18.268
Nursery Classes/Units within Primary Schools ¹	18.629	19.547	20.196	21.162	21.719
Voluntary/Private pre-school settings	10.267	10.418	13.032	14.057	14.818
Sure Start	17.561	20.666	21.935	21.600	22.352
Toybox	0.016	0.340	0.340	0.348	0.356
Early Years Fund	2.495	2.553	2.612	2.425	2.479
Foundation Stage ² (Yr 1 & 2)	103.96	113.108	117.788	118.731	120.744
Total	£169.995	£184.246	£193.843	£196.610	£200.736

- 2 Common Funding Formula (CFF) Budget - identifiable funding only - other funding for these year groups/pupils cannot be disaggregated from the schools' overall budget
- 3 Identifiable funding only – includes core per pupil AWP funding for all years, plus Foundation Stage funding within CFF for 2009/10 to 2012/13. There were separate earmarked funds for Making a Good Start and Foundation in the 2008/09 year only, subsequently incorporated into the CFF from 2009/10.

Lost of Defending Legal Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 25026/11-15, to provide details of each case the Department lost.

(AQW 29355/11-15)

- 2 All nursery schools who meet the Extended Schools eligibility criteria, which are indicators of social disadvantage, are eligible for additional funding to provide a range of activities outside of the normal school day which aim to respond to the needs of pupils, parents and their families as identified by school principals.

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the cases lost by the Department of Education between May 2007 and July 2013 are:

- Henry Bros (Magherafelt) Ltd, FB McKee & Co Ltd and Desmond Scott and Philip Ewing Trading as Woodvale Construction Co v Department of Education;
- Loreto Grammar School, Omagh v Department of Education;
- Colma McKee on behalf of the Board of Governors of Coláiste Feirste v Department of Education; and
- Lynda O'Connor, Richard Kehoe and Catherine McLucas v Department of Education.

Education and Library Boards: Legal Action Against Health and Social Care Trusts

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 28762/11-15, on how many occasions each Education and Library Board has taken legal action against a Health and Social Care Trust in respect of these circumstances, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29364/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that no legal action has been taken over the last three years against a Health and Social Care Trust.

Over-Subscribed Nursery Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education whether extra capacity is available for over-subscribed nursery schools and units in the North Down Borough Council area.

(AQW 29371/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: For admission to pre-school in September 2013, 99.8% of children, whose parents engaged with the pre-school admissions process to the end, obtained a funded pre-school place. There were sufficient pre-school places in North Down to meet overall demand.

If the Managing Authority of an oversubscribed nursery school or unit wishes permanently to increase its capacity, it can bring forward a development proposal to request an increase to the number of places available in the setting. Decisions on Development Proposals take into account the current and projected future demand for pre-school provision in the area, including provision available in other pre-school settings.

The Learning to Learn framework includes an action to introduce temporary flexibility in class size for nursery schools and nursery units up to a maximum class size of 30 in certain circumstances. I am introducing temporary flexibility in class size to help address demand within an area where statutory settings, which could accommodate extra places, wish to do so. All requests will be considered on the basis of overall capacity in the area. Officials are currently working with Education and Library Board staff to develop a system for enabling Nursery Schools and Nursery Units to apply for temporary flexibility in class size for the September 2014 intake.

Teaching of Pupils from the Republic of Ireland

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils residing in the Republic of Ireland attend schools in Northern Ireland; and what arrangements his Department has in place to monitor and recoup any costs associated with these pupils.

(AQW 29386/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of pupils residing in the South attending schools in the North is shown below.

School type	Total pupils
Primary (Years 1-7 only)	132

School type	Total pupils
Post Primary	275
Total	407

Source: School census 2012/13

Note:

1. In addition to the figures above there are also less than 5 pupils attending nursery/reception classes in primary schools who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.

A number of children resident in the South attend primary and post primary schools and pre-school providers in the North and vice versa. This is reflective of the way people in border areas live and avail of services including education.

There is an understanding with the Department in the South where we meet the costs of educating children from the South attending schools in the North, and they meet the costs of educating children from the North attending schools in the South.

Bodies Responsible for Providing Support to Schools: Transformation

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education which (i) statutory; and (ii) sectoral bodies are responsible for providing support to (a) Irish Medium; (ii) nursery; (iii) Catholic Maintained; and (iv) Grammar schools that wish to explore transformation.

(AQW 29389/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Support to any grant-aided school (with the exception of special schools) wishing to explore transformation, and those schools that have already transformed, is available from a range of organisations. The statutory bodies which can provide support include the Education and Library Boards. Each Education and Library Board has arrangements in place to support schools that have transformed or wish to transform.

The Transferors Representative Council (TRC) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) can also provide advice to schools that wish to undertake, or have already undertaken, the transformation process.

Sectoral bodies which can provide support to any grant-aided school (with the exception of special schools) that wish to undertake, or have already undertaken, the transformation process include the Integrated Education Fund (IEF), and the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). Transforming schools can apply to the IEF for a grant to help with the additional costs of the transformation process. NICIE can provide support through the provision of training, and has developed a support programme which guides schools through the planning and implementation processes to help the school to achieve full integration.

Once a school has transformed, the Department of Education can provide support through the allocation of additional resources to assist with the transformation process. This funding is available to schools during the first five years of transformation. Funding of £185k has been made available for 2013/14.

The Department may also reimburse a school's Boards of Governors for the fees charged by the Electoral Reform Services in connection with holding the transformation ballot of parents.

Full details of the advice and support available to schools is contained with the Department's document entitled "Transformation – An Information Pack for Schools".

Bodies Responsible for Providing Support to Schools: Transformation

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education which (i) statutory; and (ii) sectoral bodies are responsible for providing support to (a) Irish Medium; (ii) nursery; (iii) Catholic Maintained; and (iv) Grammar schools that have undertaken transformation.

(AQW 29390/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Support to any grant-aided school (with the exception of special schools) wishing to explore transformation, and those schools that have already transformed, is available from a range of organisations. The statutory bodies which can provide support include the Education and Library Boards. Each Education and Library Board has arrangements in place to support schools that have transformed or wish to transform.

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Full details of the advice and support available to schools is contained with the Department's document entitled "Transformation – An Information Pack for Schools".

Bodies Responsible for Providing Support to Schools: Transformation

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to outline the support available to schools from the relevant statutory and sectoral bodies once they have transformed.

(AQW 29391/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Support to any grant-aided school (with the exception of special schools) wishing to explore transformation, and those schools that have already transformed, is available from a range of organisations. The statutory bodies which can provide support include the Education and Library Boards. Each Education and Library Board has arrangements in place to support schools that have transformed or wish to transform.

The Transferors Representative Council (TRC) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) can also provide advice to schools that wish to undertake, or have already undertaken, the transformation process.

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The Department may also reimburse a school's Boards of Governors for the fees charged by the Electoral Reform Services in connection with holding the transformation ballot of parents.

Full details of the advice and support available to schools is contained with the Department's document entitled "Transformation – An Information Pack for Schools".

Pupils Attending Schools in each Education Sector

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of Catholic and Protestant pupils at (i) controlled; (ii) Catholic maintained; (iii) other maintained; and (iv) voluntary grammar schools.

(AQW 29393/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The most up-to-date validated figures for pupil's religious information relate to the 2012/13 school year, these are detailed in the table below. Updated 2013/14 figures will be available following the completion of the annual school census which is currently being undertaken.

Community background of pupils in primary schools by management type -2012/13

Management type	School type	Protestant	Catholic	Other
Controlled	Primary	70.1%	6.2%	23.7%
	Prep dept	65.5%	6.8%	27.7%
	Total	70.1%	6.2%	23.7%
Voluntary	Prep dept	44.7%	11.0%	44.3%
Catholic Maintained	Primary	0.8%	96.9%	2.3%
Other Maintained	Primary	10.6%	82.0%	7.4%
Controlled Integrated	Primary	44.0%	28.4%	27.6%
Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI)	Primary	32.6%	42.9%	24.5%
Total		35.3%	50.7%	13.9%

Community background of pupils in post-primary schools by management type - 2012/13

Management type	School type	Protestant	Catholic	Other
Controlled	Secondary	81.9%	2.4%	15.7%
	Grammar	76.8%	8.1%	15.1%
	Total	80.2%	4.3%	15.5%
Voluntary	Grammar	28.8%	60.9%	10.2%
Catholic Maintained	Secondary	0.9%	97.8%	1.3%
Other Maintained	Secondary	0.0%	91.9%	8.1%
Controlled Integrated	Secondary	66.8%	15.6%	17.6%

Management type	School type	Protestant	Catholic	Other
Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI)	Secondary	42.4%	41.6%	16.0%
Total		38.4%	38.4%	9.9%

Source: NI school census

Note:

1. Figures for primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 - 7 classes.
2. The other category includes 'other Christian', 'non Christian' and 'no religion/religion not recorded'.

Teaching of Pupils from the Republic of Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what financial support the Republic of Ireland Government provides for the teaching of pupils from their jurisdiction in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 29438/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the member to the answer I provided to his question, AQW 13582/11-15, published in the Official report on 20 July 2013. The arrangements have not changed.

Report on the Extent of Cross-Border Education

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education when his Department will release the report on the extent of cross-border education and its associated costs.

(AQW 29439/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The purpose of the survey commissioned by the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was to gauge attitudes towards, and future demand for, cross-border education and to identify any obstacles that may be faced by parents and pupils in the border region.

As the survey was commissioned by the NSMC, and as yet, it has not had the opportunity to consider the results, it is intended that a report of the outcomes will only be made public once the Council has completed its considerations and authorised publication.

Shared Education Project in Moy, County Tyrone

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Shared Education Project in Moy, County Tyrone.

(AQW 29453/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the SELB and CCMS, as the school managing authorities, are currently working on the details for a proposed Shared Education Project in Moy.

Once my Department receives the details of the proposal it will consider the next steps.

North Coast Educational Campus, Coleraine

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed North Coast Educational Campus, Coleraine.

(AQW 29472/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the first instance it will be for the NEELB as the managing authority and the two integrated schools, to determine and agree the best way forward including any proposals to co-locate schools and share facilities.

I am aware that the concept of a campus for the North Coast is being considered. Department officials have met with some of those involved and been appraised of their proposals. It will be for the NEELB,

as the planning authority for the area, working in conjunction with the two integrated schools to determine the next steps in developing this, or any other area solution for the North Coast area.

Education and Library Boards: Full Time Staff

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of full time equivalent staff employed by each of the Education and Library Boards as of 1 December 2013.

(AQW 29473/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of people employed in the Education and Library Boards as of 1 December 2013 is as follows:

	Non teaching staff (FTE)
BELB	3344.03
WELB	1853
NEELB	3875.4
SEELB	3385.06
SELB	4518.24

Notes:

- Figures include Headquarter staff, school based non-teaching staff, out centre and youth club staff. Teaching staff are not included.
- WELB figure is rounded up to nearest whole number.
- SEELB figure excludes all casual staff who are employed on a nil hours basis.

Education and Library Boards: Full-Time Staff

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of full time equivalent staff employed by each of the Education and Library Boards in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 29474/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of full time equivalent staff employed in the Education and Library Boards in each of the last 5 years is as follows:

	As at 1/12/08	As at 1/12/09	As at 1/12/10	As at 1/12/11	As at 1/12/12
BELB	3079.14	3001.59	3080.32	3066.65	3143.61
WELB	1883	1875	1860	1846	1820
NEELB	3850.2	3778.4	3782.7	3786.6	3845.9
SEELB	3273.78	3265.01	3256.11	3227.72	3246.10
SELB	4579.49	4472.82	4411.83	4369.26	4399.63

Notes:

- Figures include Headquarter staff, school based non-teaching staff, out centre and youth club staff. Teaching staff are not included.
- WELB figures are rounded up to nearest whole number.
- SEELB total excludes all casual staff who are employed on a nil hours basis.

Education and Library Boards: Staffing Levels

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether he intends to allow the Education and Library Boards to increase their staffing levels.

(AQW 29475/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the Education and Library Boards are generally in a state that is unsustainable. They remain in this state in the protracted absence of ESA. I therefore continue to press urgently for progress on the Education Bill.

In the meantime, my Department is currently considering proposals for a modest increase in staff in a number of priority areas.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Education Bill; and the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 29476/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Bill completed its Committee Stage on 8 April, 2013. The depleted state of existing structures means that it is now very urgent that the Executive agrees the Bill's progress to Consideration Stage. The establishment of the ESA can then follow at the earliest opportunity after the legislative stages of the Education Bill have been completed.

Proposed Way Forward on the Education Bill

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) whether his Department has drafted a paper on a proposed way forward on the Education Bill, and (ii) if so, the options contained within it.

(AQW 29477/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are a number of amendments to the Bill which I intend to move at consideration stage, subject to the prior agreement of my Executive colleagues. I hope that the Executive will agree these amendments in the very near future.

Country Background Report: OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to place, in the Assembly Library, a copy of the submission by his Department entitled the Country Background Report prepared for the OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education Northern Ireland, United Kingdom referred in para page 2 of the Report.

(AQW 29488/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A copy of the Country Background Report had been placed in the Assembly Library. The Report is also available from the Department's website at <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/curriculum-and-learningt-new/curriculum-and-assessment-2/assessment.htm>

Generalizability Study on Levels of Progression

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education (i) when his Department tasked CCEA with conducting a Generalizability Study on Levels of Progression; and (ii) if such a study has not been conducted, to explain why.

(AQW 29489/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has not tasked CCEA with conducting a Generalizability Study on Levels of Progression. There are no extant reports which are specific Generalizability Studies of the Levels of Progression. If a Generalizability Study was to be commissioned by the Department, it is not clear how the relevance of such a study to the nature and purpose of the Levels of Progression and assessment of the cross-curricular skills would be determined and defined.

The primary purpose of the Levels of Progression is to support learning and teaching in the classroom by providing a common framework for the ongoing, formative assessment of pupil progress and to articulate clear expectations for student achievement at the end of the Key Stages.

To this end, the assessment arrangements are based on ongoing teacher observation and assessment. Teachers form rounded, holistic judgements about the Level that a pupil has attained, based on the pupil's performance as a whole, across a range of work. This form of assessment can potentially have a high degree of validity as teachers are able to obtain an in-depth picture of pupil performance through their daily observations in the classroom.

The quality assurance process of internal standardisation and external moderation is intended to strengthen the reliability of teacher assessments and comparability of results throughout the school system. This is accompanied by the provision of training, exemplification of standards and exemplar tasks to promote confidence amongst schools in the standards being applied.

Generalizability Study on Levels of Progression

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to publish any extant reports on the generalizability of the levels of progression provided to his Department by CCEA.

(AQW 29490/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has not tasked CCEA with conducting a Generalizability Study on Levels of Progression. There are no extant reports which are specific Generalizability Studies of the Levels of Progression. If a Generalizability Study was to be commissioned by the Department, it is not clear how the relevance of such a study to the nature and purpose of the Levels of Progression and assessment of the cross-curricular skills would be determined and defined.

The primary purpose of the Levels of Progression is to support learning and teaching in the classroom by providing a common framework for the ongoing, formative assessment of pupil progress and to articulate clear expectations for student achievement at the end of the Key Stages.

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The quality assurance process of internal standardisation and external moderation is intended to strengthen the reliability of teacher assessments and comparability of results throughout the school system. This is accompanied by the provision of training, exemplification of standards and exemplar tasks to promote confidence amongst schools in the standards being applied.

Department for Employment and Learning

Steps 2 Success

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline (i) the delivery partners for Steps2Success by contract area; and (ii) why locally based companies are not widely represented.

(AQW 28384/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):

- (i) The procurement process for the delivery of the Steps 2 Success employment programme has been carried out by the Department for Employment & Learning under the guidance of the Central Procurement Directorate of the Department of Finance and Personnel. Following the evaluation of responses to Stage 1 of the two stage procurement process for Steps 2 Success the following organisations have been selected to bring forward bids to Stage 2:

Contract Area 1: Andersonstown, Bangor, North Belfast, Falls, Holywood Road, Knockbreda, Lisburn, Newtownards, Shaftesbury Square, Shankill.

Name of Organisations

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ■ Avanta Enterprise Ltd | ■ Pertemps People Development Group |
| ■ EOS Works Ltd | ■ Reed in Partnership |
| ■ Ingeus UK Ltd | ■ Sencia Ltd |

Contract Area 2: Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Foyle, Larne, Limavady, Lisnagelvin, Newtownabbey, Strabane.

Name of Organisations

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ■ Avanta Enterprise Ltd | ■ Pertemps People Development Group |
| ■ EOS Works Ltd | ■ Reed in Partnership |
| ■ Ingeus UK Ltd | ■ Sencia Ltd |

Contract Area 3: Armagh, Ballynahinch, Banbridge, Cookstown, Downpatrick, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Kilkeel, Lurgan, Magherafelt, Newcastle, Newry, Omagh, Portadown

Name of Organisations

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ■ Avanta Enterprise Ltd | ■ G4S |
| ■ Reed in Partnership | ■ Maximus Employment & Training Ltd |
| ■ Sencia Ltd | ■ South West College |

- (ii) All bids received were assessed by a panel of senior staff in the Department under the direction of the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). At Stage 1 bidding organisations were not required to submit information on members of their supply chain. The supply chain delivery partners will not be known until the conclusion of Stage 2 of the procurement process. CPD on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning let all bidding organisations know the results of Stage 1 on Monday 18 November 2013. The results were subsequently published on the Department for Employment & Learning website on 29 November.

Since the procurement exercise is ongoing it may prejudice the outcome of the competition if further information is released at this time.

Accessing Information

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how his Department informs young people with a disability and their families, how they can access information regarding guidance and support available to them.

(AQW 29019/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) aims to ensure that clients with a disability can access information to the Department's key programmes and services as follows:

Careers Service

The Careers Service provides access to impartial guidance and support to all including those with a disability and their families through a network of professional qualified careers advisers who are based in JobCentres, Jobs and Benefit Offices and Careers Offices throughout Northern Ireland.

To ensure that pupils in education have access to appropriate careers guidance, the Careers Service has Partnership Agreements in place with 98% of post primary schools including special schools. Careers advisers attend Transition Plan meetings for year 10 pupils with a disability and their parents.

These meetings enable the young person and their parents/guardians to access information and guidance regarding the options and support available to them on leaving school.

To improve access the Careers Service has also established working relationships with statutory, voluntary and community sector bodies across Northern Ireland who have a shared interest in supporting clients vulnerable to social exclusion.

The Careers Service has developed “A guide for Parents – How to help your child with their future careers plans”, to assist parents/guardians to support their children in future planning and to provide information on the different aspects of careers information, advice and guidance. Careers advisers also attend parents’ events to provide careers information advice and guidance.

Young people with a disability can also contact the Careers Service via a single contact telephone number or through the Careers portal on Nidirect.

Disability Employment Service (DES)

Young people and their families can access information on DES services and programmes through the Jobs & Benefits office/JobCentre network and local disability organisations who deliver on behalf of my Department.

DES staff are keen to deliver information on its services on request and have attended events such as the NAS Adult and Parent group this year to inform parents and young people with disabilities. DES’ Occupational Psychology Service staff have also assisted some discrete learning students by facilitating visits to Jobs & Benefits offices in advance of leaving college, and have also engaged with Education Board Transition Officers in Western Education Board to provide information on DES programmes and services.

Pathways to Success

Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF)

CIF is one of the employment initiatives developed under the Executive’s ‘Pathways to Success’ strategy for young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Individual CIF projects use a range of methods to provide young people, including those with disabilities, with information on their activities including the distribution of leaflets, advertising in public areas and through public bodies, social media, web sites, recruitment events, liaison with other community groups and cold calling at young people’s homes.

Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS)

The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) was extended to all areas of Northern Ireland in July 2013.

LEMIS is a community-based employment-focused initiative aimed at those furthest from the labour market. LEMIS Mentors meet clients with a common employability barrier in their local area. Benefit recipients on Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance and Severe Disablement Allowance are included in the priority client group.

Community Family Support Programme (CFSP)

The Community Family Support Programme (CFSP) is an initiative designed to help families make life changing decisions to enhance their prospects and support them to become full participants in society.

Professional support workers engage and consult with parents of children and young people to promote early intervention and high quality parenting and to identify solutions to address their specific needs. This includes help for young people that may have a disability and their families to access a range of support and specialist provision.

Training for Success (including Programme Led Apprenticeship)

My Department provides Pre-Entry Training Support referral for school-leavers with a disability who indicate a preference for Training for Success. Clients are referred, after parental/ guardian consent, by my Department's careers advisers to contracted specialist support providers specialising in disability and learning support. This ensures that support needs in training are identified and put in place as soon as possible after commencement of training to ensure they are given every opportunity to overcome difficulties.

Specialist support providers such as Disability Action and Sensory Learning Support etc are contracted by my Department to work in conjunction with Training Suppliers delivering these programmes

Further Education

My Department has helped fund two online tools which are designed to help provide information and guidance to existing and potential students with a disability, to encourage them to access and benefit from further education (FE).

The online tools are:

- an information resource hub on the CollegesNI website to signpost services for existing and potential learners, to improve access to information about college provision, services and the availability of learning support services; and
- access guides entitled "DisabledGo" for students with disabilities which provide information on campus layout and on hearing systems, lighting levels and signage. The guides help disabled learners, visitors and staff to access college premises and make best use of facilities.

FE colleges provide advice and guidance to all students enrolling with a learning difficulty or disability on the support and assistance available to them through their student services network.

Higher Education

"Access to Success aims to widen participation in higher education by students from under-represented groups, including disabled persons, through a number of projects which include an awareness raising campaign to promote the benefits of higher education and a campaign to raise aspiration and educational attainment. The strategy also aims to expand the outreach activities of higher education providers to promote higher education as 'a real possibility' to young people with disabilities and learning difficulties, their parents and advocates.

To assist persons with a disability or learning difficulty to access Higher Education and fulfil their potential, my Department makes available funding through Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) to help pay the extra costs which may be incurred in attending a course of study, as a direct result of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. DSA can help with the cost of major items of specialist equipment, travel and other costs. My Department provides information on the support available through an annually produced "Guide to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in Higher Education".

In addition, my Department funds a register of freelance professional and non-professional support providers in each of the two Northern Ireland universities who are recruited and trained to assist students with disabilities. The support needs of each student are assessed and they are "matched" with a support provider(s). Disabled students can avail of a range of support providers including dyslexic coach, note-taker, proof-reader, typist, campus assistant, library assistant and/or sign language interpreter. The role of the support provider is to provide one-to-one support to the student and also to ensure that the student receives all the additional assistance he/she needs.

In addition to specific programmes and services information my Department uses the NI direct website www.nidirect.gov.uk to provide information on the full range of services, information and support provided by my Department including how to access these services.

My Department also has a range of freely available promotional literature detailing its services and appropriate contacts. This is distributed through the 35 local Jobs & Benefits offices and JobCentres and to various voluntary and statutory organisations through Northern Ireland.

Cookstown Campus of South West Regional College: Courses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 27902/11-15, to detail (i) the titles of the courses delivered at the Cookstown campus of South West Regional College which were included in the audit; (ii) any additional funding allocated to the courses; and (iii) the numbers enrolled in each course in each of the last two years.

(AQW 29051/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) As my Department did not hold the specific information relating to the titles of the individual courses provided under the audit, officials sought the information required from South West College (SWC).

As a result of the information provided, my Department has determined that, at the point when the audit was undertaken, SWC was delivering four courses for students with a learning difficulty and/or disability aged 19 or over, not six as previously advised as part of the audit.

These courses were as follows:

- NOCN Level 1 Certificate In Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-UP) (QCF)/On Board PLP (Full-time)
- NOCN Level 1 Certificate In Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-UP) (QCF) (Part-time)
- CCEA Level 1 Award in Creative Craft (QCF)/ON Board PLP
- Recreational Cookery/On Board PLP

Whilst SWC did run a further two unaccredited courses during this period, this provision was not primarily delivered for students with a learning difficulty and/or disability aged 19 or over. I apologise for any confusion this may have caused. These two courses were:

- Fabric Crafts
- Recreational IT For Beginners

These two courses were offered as discrete provision in conjunction with the Beacon Centre, and were eligible for supplementary funding from the Department's Additional Support Fund.

My officials instructed SWC to carry out a new audit of provision covering the 2012/13 academic year, in order to provide the Department with a complete list of provision for students with a learning difficulty and/or disability, across all campuses. This information is attached at Annex A which has been placed in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>. The information provided is for the entire 2012/13 academic year, and not solely at the point of the audit (April 2013).

- (ii) The Additional Support Fund (ASF) is provided to further education colleges to help them to meet their obligations under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO) to provide access to those wishing to avail of FE provision, but who have a learning difficulty or disability. The level of support is determined on an individual basis, based on the needs of the student and not the nature of the disability.

SWC received £250,049 from the Additional Support Fund to help to deliver these classes for the period covered by the audit of provision (2012/13). It is not possible to break this figure down on a campus by campus basis.

- (iii) In 2011/12, SWC has indicated that they provided two courses at the Cookstown Campus for students with a learning difficulty and/or disability aged 19 or over. The course titles and enrolment figures are set out in the table below.

In addition, the table also provides details on the numbers of enrolments on the four courses identified under part (i).

2011/12	No of enrolments
Asdan Entry Level Certificate in Personal and Social Development - Year 1	22
NOCN Entry Level Award In Progression (Entry 3) (QCF)	6
2012/13	
NOCN Level 1 Certificate In Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-UP) (QCF)/On Board PLP (Full-time)	7
NOCN Level 1 Certificate In Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-UP) (QCF) (Part-time)	28
CCEA Level 1 Award in Creative Craft (QCF)/ON Board PLP	8
Recreational Cookery/On Board PLP	14

Enrolment information supplied by SWC.

Knowledge Economy Index Report

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the third Knowledge Economy Index Report, and its findings which state that the local knowledge economy, in key areas such as software, aerospace and biotech, is growing faster than in the rest of the UK and that jobs in the knowledge economy are paying 25 percent more than the average wage
(AQW 29052/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Knowledge Economy is an important and growing component of the Northern Ireland economy which represents research intensive sectors where new ideas, new products and new processes are key determinants of competitiveness.

The report provides an ambitious vision for the Northern Ireland economy in 2030 and it will be essential that business and government work together in partnership to realise this vision. The report demonstrates that good progress has been made over the last year with the evidence showing that growth has been achieved in fourteen out of the twenty one indicators that make up the Index. However, whilst our performance over the last year has improved, Northern Ireland is ranked tenth out of the twelve UK regions which indicates the challenge we face if our economy is to grow and match the best performing regions in the UK.

It is clear that skills, employability and innovative capacity will be essential if we are to grow our knowledge economy and to close the gap with the best performing regions in the UK. The Department's Skills Strategy will be essential to realising this ambition as it identifies skills as a crucial ingredient in both rebalancing and rebuilding our economy. At the heart of the Strategy is the desire to up-skill the existing workforce and to increase the number of people with higher level skills within the workforce.

The higher education sector makes a key contribution to the achievement of economic prosperity in Northern Ireland. It does so in part by providing a supply of highly qualified graduates across a range of disciplines with the skills and attributes sought by employers. It is also widely recognised that higher skills generate higher returns to individuals in terms of employment and wages.

The Department's Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland – 'Graduating to Success', aims to create a higher education sector which is more responsive to needs of our economy and sets out the

importance of ensuring that higher education learners undertake higher level courses in economically relevant subjects.

To support growth in our local economy my Department has committed to increase the number of directly funded PhD places. Under “Graduating to Success” we have set a target of doubling the number of postgraduate awards to 1,000 by 2020. This will further strengthen Northern Ireland's research and development skills base and the introduction of these places will have a vital role to play in our economic competitiveness. These new places will be focussed on areas of economic relevance to Northern Ireland as determined with reference to the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, DETI and MATRIX.

Graduating to Success also feeds into the implementation of the overarching Skills Strategy and reinforces the need to increase the proportion of those qualifying from our Higher Education Institutions with graduate and post graduate level courses in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects.

I have also increased the funding available to the universities for economically relevant Masters course which has enabled the universities to increase recruitment in areas such as graduate conversion IT software development courses. I have also introduced a new higher education research funding model which rewards world-leading and internationally excellent research whilst providing a premium for research in STEM and priority skills areas.

University Students Enrolled in UK

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many local students attended universities in other parts of the United Kingdom in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29087/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at universities in other parts of the United Kingdom in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below:

Academic Year	England	Scotland	Wales	Total
2009/10	11,225	4,605	515	16,345
2010/11	11,690	4,520	515	16,725
2011/12	12,500	4,440	570	17,510

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. The latest available data are for the 2011/12 academic year.
2. Enrolments include undergraduate and post graduate students and fulltime and part time students.
3. Figures for NI domiciled first year enrolments at the Open University have been excluded from the above table. Although the Open University is defined as an English Institution it is likely that any NI domiciled enrolments will not be based in England.
4. For information the number of first year Northern Ireland domiciled student enrolments at the Open University is provided in the table below: -

Academic Year	NI Domiciled enrolments at Open University
2009/10	4,625
2010/11	4,865
2011/12	4,820

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

South East Regional College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people are currently enrolled in courses at the South East Regional College.

(AQW 29133/11-15)

Dr Farry: The latest available validated and published data held by DEL relate to the 2012/13 academic year. The College itself has provided DEL with an in-year total of 12,130 people enrolled in courses at the South Eastern Regional College thus far in the 2013/14 academic year (source: South Eastern Regional College Management Information System).

South East Regional College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the current budget for the South East Regional College.

(AQW 29135/11-15)

Dr Farry: The further education recurrent block grant allocation for South Eastern Regional College for the 2013/14 academic year is £24,626,910. The college will also receive £5.9million, ring fenced to meet its obligations under a Public Private Partnership contract agreement, for accommodation at its Lisburn, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch and Newcastle campuses. In addition, £9.5million has been made available sector-wide for specific purposes including widening participation in further education and the promotion of innovation. This amount is allocated through demand-led ear-marked funds, and as such cannot be disaggregated to college level at this stage in the academic year.

South East Regional College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many staff are employed by the South East Regional College.

(AQW 29140/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further education colleges are employing authorities in their own right and are responsible for all matters relating to staff. My Department does not hold the information on the number of staff employed by individual further education colleges.

Therefore, I have asked the Principal and Chief Executive of South Eastern Regional College to respond to the Member directly on this matter.

South East Regional College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many courses are on offer at the South East Regional College.

(AQW 29142/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the information requested by the Member, as information relating to the number of courses on offer is a matter for individual colleges.

I have asked the Director of South East Regional College to respond to the Member directly on this matter.

Programme Led Apprenticeships

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the reason why Programme Led Apprenticeships are only available to Level 2 qualification.

(AQW 29219/11-15)

Dr Farry: Programme-Led Apprenticeships were introduced in 2009 in response to the difficulties being experienced by young people in securing employment to complete their apprenticeship through ApprenticeshipsNI as a result of the economic downturn.

With the award of the Training for Success contracts in June 2013, the Programme-Led Apprenticeships programme was closed to new entrants.

In cases where all components of the Level 2 framework were achieved, and where the participant was still under the guaranteed training entitlement, the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme facilitated the commencement of Level 3 qualifications.

The new Training for Success programme also allows for Level 3 provision.

A priority for my Department is to progress programme participants into

full-time employment and, where possible, the employer-led ApprenticeshipsNI provision. Progression may also be in the form of further or higher education.

Funded Level 2 and Level 3 Apprenticeships

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the trades in which apprentices can carry out a funded (i) Level 2; and (ii) Level 3 apprenticeship.
(AQW 29221/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's ApprenticeshipsNI programme funds the "off-the-job" training element of an apprenticeship aligned to over 140 apprenticeship frameworks at Levels 2 and 3. Table 1 (overleaf) provides a full breakdown of funded frameworks.

As the member will be aware, in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Table 1 ApprenticeshipsNI
Apprenticeship Frameworks Level 2 and level 3

Group One	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Accounting	Yes	Yes
Advice and Guidance Support	Yes	No
Aviation Operations on the Ground	Yes	No
Bookkeeping	Yes	Yes
Business and Administration	Yes	Yes
Cabin Crew	Yes	No
Cleaning Support Services	Yes	No
Contact Centre Operations	Yes	Yes
Customer Service	Yes	Yes
Driving Goods Vehicles	Yes	Yes
Facilities Management	No	Yes
Hospitality	Yes	Yes
Housing	Yes	Yes
Marketing	Yes	Yes
Payroll	Yes	Yes

Group One	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
PCV Driving Bus and Coach	Yes	No
Property Services	Yes	Yes
Providing Financial Services	Yes	Yes
Providing Mortgage Advice	No	Yes
Retail	Yes	Yes
Sales and Telesales	Yes	Yes
Supply Chain Management	Yes	Yes
Surveying	No	Yes
Traffic Office	Yes	Yes
Travel Services	Yes	Yes
Vehicle Sales	Yes	Yes
Youth Work	Yes	Yes

Group Two	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Active Leisure & Learning	Yes	Yes
Amenity Horticulture	Yes	Yes
Children's Care Learning and Development	Yes	Yes
Food and Drink	Yes	Yes
IT User	Yes	Yes
Logistics Operations	No	Yes
Team Leading / Management	Yes	Yes
Warehousing and Storage	Yes	No

Group Three	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Beauty Therapy	Yes	Yes
Creative and Digital Media	No	Yes
Dental Nursing	No	Yes
Fashion and Textiles	No	Yes
Floristry	Yes	Yes
Glass Industry / Glass Industry Occupations	Yes	Yes

Group Three	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Hairdressing	Yes	Yes
Health and Social Care	Yes	Yes
Nail Services	Yes	Yes
Pharmacy Services	Yes	Yes
Polymer Processing and Signmaking / Polymer Processing	Yes	Yes
Printing Industry / Print Production	Yes	Yes
Rail Services	Yes	No
Set Crafts	No	Yes
Sign making	No	Yes
Spa Therapy	No	Yes

Group Four	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Animal Care	Yes	Yes
Catering and Professional Chefs	Yes	Yes
Environmental Conservation	Yes	Yes
Equine Industry	Yes	Yes
Game and Wildlife Management	Yes	Yes
IT and Telecoms Professional	Yes	Yes
Laboratory and Science Technicians	Yes	Yes
Security Systems	Yes	Yes
Trees and Timber	Yes	Yes
Vehicle Parts	Yes	Yes
Veterinary Nursing	No	Yes

Group Five	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Agriculture	Yes	Yes
Bus and Coach Engineering and Maintenance	Yes	Yes
Construction	Yes	Yes
Electrical and Electronic Servicing	Yes	Yes
Fencing	Yes	No
Furniture Production	Yes	Yes

Group Five	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Landbased Service Engineering	Yes	Yes
Vehicle Body and Paint	Yes	Yes
Vehicle Fitting	Yes	Yes
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	Yes	Yes

Group Six	Framework available	
	Level 2	Level 3
Building Management Systems	No	Yes
Gas Utilisation, Installation and Maintenance	No	Yes
Electrical Power Engineering	Yes	Yes
Electrotechnical	No	Yes
Engineering	Yes	Yes
Extractives and Mineral Processing	Yes	Yes
Farriery	No	Yes
Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	Yes	Yes
MES Plumbing	Yes	Yes
Rail Transport Engineering	Yes	Yes
Water Utility Operations	Yes	Yes
Wind Turbine Operations and Maintenance	No	Yes

Youth Employment Scheme in North Antrim

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many people, aged between 18 and 24, have obtained permanent employment as a result of the Youth Employment Scheme in North Antrim.

(AQW 29242/11-15)

Dr Farry: A total of 118 young people have availed of a placement through the Youth Employment Scheme within the North Antrim constituency, the area served by Ballymena and Ballymoney Jobs & Benefits offices, and 46 of these young people have entered permanent employment.

Management and Leadership Development Programme Initiatives

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the Management and Leadership Development Programme Initiatives in the North Antrim constituency.

(AQW 29243/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department offers a suite of leadership and management interventions across Northern Ireland, which aim to improve the skills of both companies and individual managers. This suite comprises the Management Analysis and Planning (MAP) Programme, the Management and Leadership Development Programme (MLDP), and the INTRO Graduate management development programme – 30

different interventions in all. Since April 2013 these interventions have been fully funded for interested companies and participants.

During the last three years, in the North Antrim constituency area 15 companies have taken up the MAP programme; 89 individual managers have participated in MLDP; and 17 graduates have participated on the INTRO Graduate Management Development Programme. A total of £165,118 in funding has been provided to date. In addition, focused leadership and management roadshow events were held in Ballymena and Bushmills, providing details of available leadership and management support as well as providing leadership themed talks by leading UK experts.

Number of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training broken down by constituency.

(AQW 29291/11-15)

Dr Farry: Northern Ireland does not have a comprehensive data source on those young people Not in Employment, Full time Education or Training (NEET). Estimates are derived from a sample survey for Northern Ireland as part of the overall Labour Force Survey (LFS), and it is not possible to disaggregate the figures further. Figures for Quarter 3 (July-September) 2013 estimate the number of young people aged 16-24 who are NEET to be 48,000 or 22.1% of the population in that age group.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Students

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths students, broken down by university.

(AQW 29323/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details (a) the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths PHD student enrolments and (b) the overall number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths student enrolments, broken down by university.

	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Stranmillis University College	Total
Ph.D enrolments on Narrow STEM	654	329	0	983
Overall enrolments on Narrow STEM	5,290	5489	143	10,922

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. The latest available data on enrolments are for academic year 2011/12.
2. Narrow STEM subjects include Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science and Engineering & Technology.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Students

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths PHD students, broken down by university.

(AQW 29324/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details (a) the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths PHD student enrolments and (b) the overall number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths student enrolments, broken down by university.

	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Stranmillis University College	Total
Ph.D enrolments on Narrow STEM	654	329	0	983
Overall enrolments on Narrow STEM	5,290	5489	143	10,922

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. The latest available data on enrolments are for academic year 2011/12.
2. Narrow STEM subjects include Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science and Engineering & Technology.

Teacher Training at Queen's University, Belfast

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a religious breakdown of the students in teacher training at Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQW 29334/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details the number of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled in teacher training at Queen's University, Belfast broken down by religion.

Religion	Enrolments on Teacher Training at Queen's University, Belfast
Protestant	70
Catholic	80
Other/Not Known	15
Total	165

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
2. The latest available data are for 2011/12.
3. Information on religion is only collected for NI domiciled students studying at NI Higher Education Institutions and therefore the above tables do not include students from outside NI.
4. Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and therefore can have a high non-response rate.

Armed Forces Veterans: Apprenticeships Northern Ireland Programme

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of Armed Forces Veterans who have progressed into employment through the Apprenticeships Northern Ireland programme, broken down by gender.

(AQW 29354/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is the responsibility of employers to recruit apprentices in line with their business needs and so it is employers that hold information in relation to the previous employment of new recruits.

My Department funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship and so holds information on the apprentice's current employer. My Department does not hold information on the apprentice's employment history.

Belfast Metropolitan College Facility at Girdwood, North Belfast

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the timescale for the completion and opening of the new Belfast Metropolitan College facility at Girdwood, North Belfast.
(AQW 29395/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Girdwood Community Hub in North Belfast is a Belfast City Council project which is being supported with European PEACE III funding. Belfast Metropolitan College is not involved in the construction stage of the project but, on its completion, plans to lease part of the facility for the delivery of further education. I understand that some preliminary design work has been completed but the detailed timetable for the delivery of the facility is the responsibility of the Belfast City Council.

University of Ulster Senior Common Room

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the decision by the University of Ulster to close the senior common room to university students and staff; (ii) to provide details of all incoming and outgoing correspondence on this issue; and (iii) whether he will seek to reverse the decision by the University.
(AQW 29506/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department provides funding to the Higher Education Institutions for teaching and learning and research purposes. The University of Ulster is responsible for its own policies and procedures, including how it manages accommodation on its campuses. The closure of the area occupied by the Senior Common Room is a matter for the University and it is not within my remit to intervene.

My Department has received and responded to two pieces of correspondence in relation to this issue.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Warm Homes Discount Scheme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the Warm Home Discount Scheme, available in England, for electricity is not available in Northern Ireland; and what action he will take to extend eligibility locally.
(AQW 28791/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The Warm Homes Discount Scheme is a four year scheme operating in Great Britain only and is covered by legislation which does not apply in Northern Ireland.

The introduction of such a scheme is akin to a social tariff as energy companies in Northern Ireland would almost certainly be entitled to pass the cost of such a scheme on to other customers (as they are in Great Britain). As such, the full implications of introducing such a scheme in Northern Ireland would need to be endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Aside from requiring legislation, careful consideration would also have to be given to the proportion of customers to benefit from such a scheme and which customers would pay more as a result. There may also be issues around administration costs and data protection that would need to be explored.

2008 All Island Grid Study

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 28220/11-15, since it appears the 2008 All Island Grid Study underestimated the level of small scale renewable generation, which resulted in the 11kV distribution network being unable to cope, (i) whether she will continue to base policy on the 2008 study; (ii) what fresh investigative work has been carried out; and (iii) whether continuing to base connection upgrade costs on the small generator is a viable option.
(AQW 28897/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The All Island Grid Study envisaged that the majority of renewable generation to meet the 40% target would come from large scale onshore wind. This still remains the case despite the increase in small scale renewables. However, since the publication of the Strategic Energy Framework (SEF) in 2010, there has been considerable progress in renewable electricity deployment and a number of developments have taken place which impact on the original assumptions. I have therefore recently approved a review of the costs to consumers and benefits arising from the SEF target of 40% electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020. This work will feed into the planned mid term review of the SEF due to start in 2014-15.
- (ii) The Utility Regulator-led Renewables Grid Liaison Group (RGLG), which includes representation from the Department, NIE and the renewables industry, has requested that NIE explores possible technology options for increasing the grid's ability to accommodate small scale renewable generators without substantial grid investment. NIE has set up a group including representatives from relevant stakeholders to consider and report to the RGLG.
- (iii) The current connection policy is semi-shallow. That is to say generators pay for any work required on the voltage at which they are connecting, plus, if necessary, one voltage above. Any change to this policy would necessitate all customers paying higher bills and so subsidising small scale renewable generators. I understand that the Regulator has no plans to revise its policy.

Trading Standards: Illegally Imported Cigarettes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the role that Trading Standards' officials have in visiting and inspecting tobacconists for illegally imported cigarettes.
(AQW 28898/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Trading Standards Service has no statutory responsibility, nor any specified enforcement role in visiting and inspecting tobacconists for illegally imported cigarettes.

Trading Standards Officials: Illegally Imported Cigarettes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 27105/11-15, to detail the location and date of all inspections by Trading Standards' officials looking for illegally imported cigarettes in the last twelve months.
(AQW 28899/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Trading Standards Service has carried out no inspections looking for illegally imported cigarettes in the past twelve months.

Strategic Energy Framework

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of any changes that need to be made to the Strategic Energy Framework in order to achieve the 40 per cent renewable energy target.
(AQW 29043/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Strategic Energy Framework (SEF) was published in 2010 and its implementation is monitored on an ongoing basis. It is important that regular reviews are undertaken of key policies and I have therefore recently approved work which will provide an updated analysis of the costs to the consumer and benefits arising from the 40% target. This work will feed into the planned mid-term review of the SEF due to start in 2014-2015.

Invest NI: Rockabill Shellfish Ltd

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Invest NI has provided Rockabill Shellfish Ltd advice or financial support; and if so to provide details of this advice or support.
(AQW 29109/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has not provided any financial support or advice to Rockabill Shellfish Limited, which is a Republic of Ireland based fish processing company operating out of Balbriggan in County Dublin and Skibbereen in County Cork.

Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many entries her Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 29160/11-15)

Mrs Foster: None and nil.

Causeway Coast and Glens Council Grouping

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she can take to prevent the brand name of "Glens" being removed from the domain name of the Causeway Coast and Glens council grouping.

(AQW 29313/11-15)

Mrs Foster: NITB continues to promote, market and develop the tourism product within each of the nine tourism destinations across Northern Ireland including the Causeway Coast and Glens destination.

The Department of the Environment has responsibility for introducing the Local Government Bill into the Assembly.

Delivery of Superfast Broadband

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to (i) outline what steps her Department has taken towards securing funding from the UK Government following its recent announcement in the Autumn Statement of the launch of a £10 million fund to assist in the delivery of superfast broadband to 'the most difficult to reach areas of the UK', and (ii) provide an update on the £250 million allocated at the Spending Round 2013 to extend superfast broadband to 95% of all UK premises by 2017.

(AQW 29462/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The £10 million fund from the UK Government is directed at suppliers and will be used to market-test solutions to providing superfast broadband services to those areas where the delivery of such services are most commercially challenging. The processes and criteria for the Fund are currently being developed by Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) but it is understood that funding will be made available to successful projects following a competitive process under which all suppliers with an innovative solution, across the UK, will be eligible to apply.

Details around the £250 million fund announced in June 2013 are currently being finalised and DCMS is expected to make a further announcement in the near future. In the meantime, my officials are formulating a project aimed at accessing a share of this funding in order to further extend the reach of superfast broadband services into the most challenging areas of Northern Ireland. In doing so, they are working closely with DCMS colleagues to ensure that essential issues such as State Aid will be met.

Department of the Environment

Private Hire Taxis: Breaches of Regulations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27215/11-15, whether any Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers, who were gathering video evidence on private hire taxis to date, have been subject to any physical or verbal abuse, threats or assaults.

(AQW 28151/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): To date there has been no instance where an enforcement officer gathering video evidence on private hire taxis has been subject to any physical or verbal abuse, threats or assaults.

However, in the course of normal duties enforcement officers are often subject to verbal abuse and unfortunately there have been a few occasions where officers have been physically abused, threatened or assaulted. Thankfully, these incidents are relatively rare and where officers feel threatened they will complete a 'near miss' form in accordance with Health and Safety procedures. In respect of physical abuse and assaults these incidents will be reported to the PSNI with a view to prosecution. In all cases operational risk assessments will be reviewed and amended as required.

Wind Turbines: Agricultural Land in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current planning applications for (i) single; and (ii) multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in South Antrim.

(AQW 28488/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The table attached at Annex 1 details 26 current planning applications for single wind turbines and 1 current planning application for a wind farm on agricultural land within the South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency. I have also placed a copy of this table in the Assembly Library

The information was taken from the latest available renewable energy information, fully validated by the Department's statisticians, as of 30th September 2013.

Construction of Single Dwellings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether construction of single dwellings is counted and included in housebuilding statistics; and to detail the number of single dwelling buildings which have been built in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28926/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Each year the Department publishes Housing Land Availability Summary Reports which indicate the number of housing completions in settlements (as defined in Area Plans) over a specified period, and housing land availability at a given point in time. Dwellings in rural areas are not included in the reports.

Table 1 below details the total number of house completions in Northern Ireland settlements in each year from 2007-08 to 2011-12.

Table 1 Total dwelling completions in settlements in Northern Ireland.

Year¹	Total Completions²
2007-08	8708
2008-09	4682
2009-10	5095
2010-11	2374
2011-12	2372

1. 2011-12 is the latest Housing Land Availability Summary report available
2. Does not include dwellings built in open countryside.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many Areas of Special Scientific Interest have been designated since January 2013.

(AQW 28935/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since January 2013 the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has designated 11 Areas of Special Scientific Interest.

Belfast City Airport Taxi Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the current position at Belfast City Airport in relation to taxi services; and whether procurement protocol has been followed and best practice applied.

(AQW 28956/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I understand that Belfast City Airport has recently changed its contracted taxi company from one which used public hire vehicles to one which uses mainly private hire vehicles. Therefore under the current legislation, passengers have to make provision for the taxi booking at an operating centre prior to engaging a taxi from outside the airport.

The Department has no involvement regarding the procurement of contracted taxi services and therefore it is not in a position to comment on whether proper protocols and best practice has been applied in respect of Belfast City Airport. Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment how many entries his Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 28962/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Special Adviser has not received any gifts or hospitality since her appointment.

Endangered Wildlife Species

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has undertaken, or plans to undertake, any studies into endangered wildlife species.

(AQW 28972/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department has a long track record of undertaking studies or evidence gathering on endangered wildlife species.

Officials routinely gather data on a broad range of wildlife species. Such evidence can form part of one off studies; be part of longer term, ongoing, monitoring activities e.g. wildfowl or seal surveillance; be information gained from other science experts outside the Department or form part of specially commissioned research projects. The Department also has strategic partnerships which facilitate the involvement of the citizen with recording of species.

Since the mid-80s, the focus has been wildlife species that are considered a conservation priority. Such species include those protected under domestic legislation e.g. Wildlife Order, or for which we have an international responsibility e.g. species in the Annexes of the Habitats Directive. The recent Article 17 report is a particular focus for future evidence gathering that is needed, as well of information on species to inform selection and designation of Marine Conservation Zones. New studies are proposed on an ongoing basis and commissioned subject to priority and resource availability.

Domestic legislation, Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order, and the European Habitats Directive, provide a statutory authority for the Department to be involved in such activities, including the funding of projects. Notably with the Habitats Directive, there is an expectation that the member state "encourages" relevant research.

Listed Buildings in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the listed buildings in South Antrim.
(AQW 28977/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Based upon the 1974 ward boundaries, which is how the Department holds such records, the total number of listed buildings in the South Antrim constituency is 317. This constituency includes all of the electoral wards within the Antrim District Council area; 2 in the Lisburn City Council area; 9 in the Newtownabbey Borough Council area, and; 1 in the Belfast City Council area.

It should be noted that South Antrim is being reviewed under the Second Survey process, and these figures may change again, when all records have been finalised.

To provide the detail of all of these listed buildings by hard copy would be unwieldy; however, the information that you have sought may be accessed electronically at the following link

www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/other-index/content-databases/content-databases-build.htm.

Once you have accepted the terms and conditions of the site, a search may be carried out by the various Council areas – in this case Antrim, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Belfast.

You will be aware, however, that there have been boundary changes since 1974; as a result the figures should not be taken as definitive, in relation to the current boundaries. For that reason I have appended, for your information, a table which provides a breakdown of the number of the listed buildings within each ward of the Council Areas.

You may also wish to note that all of these Councils are statutory consultees in the listing process. As a result, and since the introduction of the legislation in the early 1970's, they will have been provided with a copy of each listing in their area.

Numbers of listed buildings in each ward of the Council Areas

Hb20 - Antrim	
Toome	25
Drumanaway	1
Cranfield	2
Randalstown	76
Tardree	0
Parkgate	16
Balloo	1
Massereene	28
Parkhall	6
Stiles	3
Ballycraigy	0
Templepatrick	47
Ballyrobin	21
Aldergrove	13
Crumlin	12

HB21 - Newtownabbey	
Mallusk	3
Doagh	9
Ballynure	3
Ballyeaston	7
Ballyclare	3
Jordanstown	3
Mossley	0
Carnmoney	0
Ballyhenry	0
HB19 - Lisburn	
Glenavy	30
Tullyrusk	5
HB26 - Belfast	
Ligoneil	3

Application to Bore a Test Hole: Tamboran Resources

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether an application to bore a test hole has been received, via the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for Tamboran Resources.

(AQW 28985/11-15)

Mr Durkan: No such notification has been received to date.

Ministerial Meetings and Correspondence

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28015/11-15, to list the bodies from whom he received correspondence; and with whom and when he had the meetings.

(AQW 28990/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The table attached at Annex A lists the bodies I have received correspondence from or met with in respect of the carrier bag levy since taking up office on 16 July 2013. The table also indicates the date of each of the three meetings.

Annex A

Ministerial Meetings and Correspondence since 16 July 2013

	Body / Organisation		
Correspondence	PAFA (Packaging & Films Association) North Coast Energy Saving Co-operative (trading as "FutureProof") The Lough Neagh Partnership		
Meetings	Environment Committee (Chair)	Northern Ireland Retail Consortium	ASDA
	28 August 2013	29 August 2013	15 October 2013

National Parks

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has identified any areas which could be potential National Parks.

(AQW 29013/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My predecessor, Alex Attwood, convened a panel of experts to give an opinion on which areas of Northern Ireland would be most suitable for designation as national parks. The three areas that the panel identified were the Mourne, the Antrim Causeway Coast and Glens and the Fermanagh Lakes and Mountains.

While I am aware of the benefits to be derived from National Parks, I am also aware of opposition and the concerns of landowners over what designation will mean for them. Given the level of this opposition, I therefore am of the view that now is not the correct time to proceed with national parks.

Public Hire Taxis in Belfast: Passengers with a Disability

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment what number and percentage of Public Hire Taxis in Belfast have been found to be inadequately fitted-out to carry passengers with a disability; and what feedback he has received on the treatment of, or refusal to carry, such passengers.

(AQW 29058/11-15)

Mr Durkan: During the last 12 months, roadside inspections by Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers have found no incidents of non compliance with the regulations. However, there is currently an investigation underway arising from a recent complaint of some taxi drivers failing to properly secure wheelchairs when picking up passengers at Belfast City Hospital.

Ravenhill Rugby Grounds: Taxi Operators

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment on how many occasions the CEO of the Driver and Vehicle Agency and senior officials have met with each of the two largest private taxi providers and company owners or staff since 23 August 2013 in relation to Ravenhill Rugby Grounds; and to provide dates, attendees, agenda, times and venues of these meetings.

(AQW 29062/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Chief Executive of the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) has not met with the taxi operators in relation to Ravenhill.

I can confirm that the Agency's Director of Licensing, Director of Enforcement and Head of Enforcement met with fonaCAB representatives on 27 September 2013 in DVA's Corporation Street offices. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss matters relating to fonaCAB's provision of taxis at Ravenhill Rugby Ground. This followed complaints received by Belfast Public Hire representatives.

In addition, a further meeting with fonaCAB representatives was held on 21 October 2013 in DVA's Corporation Street offices with the DVA's Director of Enforcement and Taxi Operator Compliance Manager. The sole purpose of this meeting was to communicate the Department's final determination of the legal position as regards the provision of private hire taxis at Ravenhill. No agenda was prepared in advance. The document discussed at the meeting has previously been provided in response to AQW27856/11-15.

Wind Farms

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many wind farms have been granted planning permission in East Antrim, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 29076/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As of 28th November 2013, my Department has approved one application for the installation of 2 wind turbines at Whitehead Golf Club on 19th March 2009.

Wind Farms

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many wind farm applications in East Antrim are currently being considered by the Planning Service.

(AQW 29077/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As of 28th November 2013, my Department is currently considering 3 applications for wind farms in East Antrim as detailed in the table below.

Planning Reference	Proposal	Location
F/2013/0085/F	Construction of wind farm comprising 5 wind turbines (126m in height) and ancillary development	lands approx. 700m south of no. 35 Mullaghsandall Road, between Mullaghsandall Road and Starbog Road, Kilwaughter, Larne
F/2013/0101/F	Construction of wind farm comprising 9 wind turbines (120.5m in height) and ancillary development	Lands east of Feystown Road, Glenarm
V/2013/0051/F	Erection of 2 No wind turbines (45m in height)	390m East of 61 Seskin Road Ballyclare

Wind Farms

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many individual turbines are located in wind farms in East Antrim that have (i) been granted planning permission; and (ii) applied for planning permission.

(AQW 29078/11-15)

Mr Durkan: An application for 2 wind turbines (15m high) has been approved at Whitehead Golf Club.

Three wind farm applications are also currently under consideration by the Department which propose 16 turbines in total in East Antrim. These are detailed below.

Planning Reference	No. of turbines	Location
F/2013/0085/F	5 wind turbines (126m in height)	lands between Mullaghsandall Road and Starbog Road, Kilwaughter, Larne
F/2013/0101/F	9 wind turbines (120.5m in height)	Lands east of Feystown Road, Glenarm
V/2013/0051/F	2 No wind turbines (45m in height)	390m East of 61 Seskin Road Ballyclare

Wind Turbines: East Antrim

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many individual wind turbines have been granted planning permission in East Antrim, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 29079/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The table attached at Annex 1 details 42 planning applications for single wind turbines that have been granted planning permission in the last 5 years.

The information was taken from the latest available renewable energy information, fully validated by the Department's statisticians, as of 28th November 2013.

ID	Districts	Constituency	Date Recvd	renewable_ pub	Location	Decision Date	decision_ pending
F/2008/0229/F	Larne	East Antrim	03-Jul-2008	Single wind turbine	27 Starbog Road, Larne (45m South of Starbog Road).	21-Jan-2009	Permission Granted
F/2009/0010/F	Larne	East Antrim	16-Jan-2009	Single wind turbine	28m East of 275 Middle Road, Islandmagee, Larne.	22-Feb-2010	Permission Granted
F/2009/0117/F	Larne	East Antrim	29-Apr-2009	Single wind turbine	209m West of 219 Middle Road, Islandmagee, Larne	12-Feb-2010	Permission Granted
F/2009/0379/F	Larne	East Antrim	22-Dec-2009	Single wind turbine	60m east of 209 Middle Road, Islandmagee, Larne	16-Apr-2010	Permission Granted
F/2010/0190/F	Larne	East Antrim	04-Jun-2010	Single wind turbine	Site 253m North West of 55 Carnalbanagh Road, Glenarm, Ballymena	04-Aug-2011	Permission Granted
F/2010/0208/F	Larne	East Antrim	16-Jun-2010	Single wind turbine	Site 187m south east of 30 Loughdoo Road Glenarm Larne	06-Jul-2012	Permission Granted
F/2010/0228/F	Larne	East Antrim	30-Jun-2010	Single wind turbine	9 Starbog Road, Kilwaughter, Larne	14-Aug-2013	Permission Granted
F/2010/0231/F	Larne	East Antrim	01-Jul-2010	Single wind turbine	310m (approx) South East of 49 Deerpark Road, Glenarm	17-Nov-2011	Permission Granted
F/2010/0340/F	Larne	East Antrim	18-Oct-2010	Single wind turbine	400M SE of 49 Deerpark Road Glenarm Ballymena BT44 ODW	07-Dec-2011	Permission Granted
F/2011/0015/F	Larne	East Antrim	12-Jan-2011	Single wind turbine	233 Metres North of 47 Manse Road Ballycarry	17-Feb-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0024/F	Larne	East Antrim	21-Jan-2011	Single wind turbine	390 Metres West of 91 Shanes Hill Road Larne BT40 2TQ	15-Jul-2011	Permission Granted

ID	Districts	Constituency	Date Recvd	renewable_ pub	Location	Decision Date	decision_ pending
F/2011/0028/F	Larne	East Antrim	27-Jan-2011	Single wind turbine	Approx_ x000D_200 Metres south East of 62 Mullaghsandal Road Larne BT40 2ly	22-May-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0044/F	Larne	East Antrim	15-Feb-2011	Single wind turbine	100m SW of 8 Sallagh Road Larne BT40 2NE	24-Apr-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0073/F	Larne	East Antrim	14-Mar-2011	Single wind turbine	563m South of 68 Ballyvaddy Road Carnlough	17-Aug-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0099/F	Larne	East Antrim	08-Apr-2011	Single wind turbine	250m north west of 160 Ballyboley Road Larne	01-Nov-2011	Permission Granted
F/2011/0103/F	Larne	East Antrim	11-Apr-2011	Single wind turbine	370m North East of 32 Carneal Road Glenoe BT40 3LR	23-Feb-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0107/F	Larne	East Antrim	21-Apr-2011	Single wind turbine	Loughside Quarry 146 Belfast Road Larne BT40 2PN	16-Mar-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0126/F	Larne	East Antrim	19-May-2011	Single wind turbine	274m South West of 3 Stewartstown Drive Larne	25-May-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0167/F	Larne	East Antrim	20-Jul-2011	Single wind turbine	325m South of 109 Carrickfergus Road Larne BT40 3JX	26-Mar-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0203/F	Larne	East Antrim	29-Sep-2011	Single wind turbine	Approx 190m North East of 22 Drumnadonaghy Road,Larne	20-Apr-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0211/F	Larne	East Antrim	11-Oct-2011	Single wind turbine	Site approximately 160m North West of 147 Carrickfergus Road Larne	15-Aug-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0224/F	Larne	East Antrim	04-Nov-2011	Single wind turbine	495m South of 34 Ballvallah Road Raloo Larne BT40 3NA	16-Jan-2013	Permission Granted

ID	Districts	Constituency	Date Recvd	renewable_ pub	Location	Decision Date	decision_ pending
F/2011/0232/F	Larne	East Antrim	16-Nov-2011	Single wind turbine	Approx 680m North East of 85 Ballyrickard Road Larne	21-May-2012	Permission Granted
F/2011/0261/F	Larne	East Antrim	13-Dec-2011	Single wind turbine	110 Larne Road Ballycarry BT38 9JN	11-Oct-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0010/F	Larne	East Antrim	12-Jan-2012	Single wind turbine	320m WSW of 401 Middle Road Islandmagee Larne BT40 3TG	17-Sep-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0052/F	Larne	East Antrim	13-Mar-2012	Single wind turbine	Site located approximately 246m south east of 49 Deerpark Road Glenarm	11-Oct-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0056/F	Larne	East Antrim	21-Mar-2012	Single wind turbine	200m SE of 23 Browndod Road Larne BT40 3JS	28-Sep-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0080/F	Larne	East Antrim	30-Apr-2012	Single wind turbine	526m North West of 91 Shanes Hill Road Larne	11-Oct-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0097/F	Larne	East Antrim	28-May-2012	Single wind turbine	Approx 420m NW of 8 Sallagh Road Larne	17-Jan-2013	Permission Granted
F/2012/0098/F	Larne	East Antrim	31-May-2012	Single wind turbine	514m NW of 20 Drumnadonaghy Road Larne	11-Oct-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0107/F	Larne	East Antrim	01-Jun-2012	Single wind turbine	Approximately 197m North East of number 87 Ballyvallagh Road Ballyclare	17-Sep-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0172/F	Larne	East Antrim	15-Aug-2012	Single wind turbine	150m North West of 33 Craiganee Road Larne	10-Dec-2012	Permission Granted
F/2012/0184/F	Larne	East Antrim	05-Sep-2012	Single wind turbine	95 North West of 84 Ballyvaddy Road Carnlough	21-Feb-2013	Permission Granted
F/2012/0259/F	Larne	East Antrim	09-Nov-2012	Single wind turbine	Approx 180m SW of 64 Castletown Road Ballynure Co.Antrim	17-Apr-2013	Permission Granted

ID	Districts	Constituency	Date Recvd	renewable_ pub	Location	Decision Date	decision_ pending
V/2008/0287/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	18-Nov-2008	Single wind turbine	Ulidia Intergrated College, 112 Victoria Road, Carrickfergus.	22-Jan-2009	Permission Granted
V/2009/0079/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	15-Apr-2009	Single wind turbine	Tesco Carrickfergus Castle, Minorca Place, Carrickfergus	05-Aug-2009	Permission Granted
V/2009/0084/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	29-Apr-2009	Single wind turbine	109m South of 57 Knockagh Road, Carrickfergus	09-Apr-2010	Permission Granted
V/2009/0238/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	18-Nov-2009	Single wind turbine	Carrickfergus Grammar School, 120 North Road, Carrickfergus	08-Jan-2010	Permission Granted
V/2011/0080/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	02-Jun-2011	Single wind turbine	429m North West of 43 Loughmourne Road Loughmourne Carrickfergus BT38 9AW	10-Aug-2012	Permission Granted
V/2011/0092/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	01-Jul-2011	Single wind turbine	438m North North East of 78A Paisley Road Carrickfergus	06-Jul-2012	Permission Granted
V/2011/0105/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	01-Aug-2011	Single wind turbine	211m North of 39 Cairn Road Carrickfergus BT38 9AP	04-Apr-2012	Permission Granted
V/2011/0169/F	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	23-Dec-2011	Single wind turbine	230m's North of 30 Paisleys Road Carrickfergus Co Antrim	11-Sep-2012	Permission Granted

Wind Turbine Applications

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many individual wind turbine applications in East Antrim are currently being considered by Planning Service.

(AQW 29080/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The table attached at Annex 1 details 30 current planning applications for single wind turbines within the East Antrim Parliamentary Constituency.

The information was taken from the latest available renewable energy information, fully validated by the Department's statisticians, as of 31st October 2013.

AQW 29080/11-15**Annex 1**

Pending Single Wind Turbines in East Antrim					
ID	PlanningArea	Districts	Constituency	Date_Rec'd	Location
F/2011/0042/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	14-Feb-2011	675 Metres South South West of Junction of Gobbins Brae and Gobbins Road Islandmagee Larne
F/2011/0175/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	11-Aug-2011	280m North East of 275 Middle Road Islandmagee Larne BT40 3TG
F/2012/0133/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	02-Jul-2012	130m South West of 30 Cairncastle Road Ballygally Larne BT40 2RB
F/2012/0159/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	06-Aug-2012	290m South East of 34 Crosshill Road Larne BT45 4EB
F/2012/0234/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	15-Oct-2012	331m SW of No.29 Mounthill Road Larne
F/2013/0010/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	17-Jan-2013	240m South East of 166 Ballysnod Road Larne
F/2013/0087/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	19-Apr-2013	Approx 267m NW of 22 Drumnadonaghy Road Larne
F/2013/0088/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	19-Apr-2013	Approx 281m SW of 3 Mullaghsandall Road Larne
F/2013/0095/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	25-Apr-2013	250m East of 48 Craiganee Road Magheramore Larne BT40 3JE
F/2013/0111/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	15-May-2013	240m South West of 5 Aughaboy Road Glenarm
F/2013/0118/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	22-May-2013	Approx 283m NW of 81 Ballyhampton Road Larne
F/2013/0120/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	22-May-2013	Approx. 253m SW of 18 Mullaghsandall Larne

Pending Single Wind Turbines in East Antrim					
ID	PlanningArea	Districts	Constituency	Date_Rec'd	Location
F/2013/0145/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	17-Jun-2013	Immediately south of unit 9 (Freight Direct) Port of Larne Business Park.
F/2013/0153/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	01-Jul-2013	Approx. 300m NE of 275 Middle Road Islandmagee Larne BT40 3TG
F/2013/0163/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	30-Jul-2013	Lands 380m North West of 30 Hannas Road Larne
F/2013/0164/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	31-Jul-2013	Approx 553m South of 68 Ballyvaddy Road Carnlough
F/2013/0187/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	16-Sep-2013	100m North West of 27 Newlands Road Larne BT403LN
F/2013/0193/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	23-Sep-2013	305m north east of 137 Low Road Island Magee
F/2013/0202/F	South Antrim	Larne	East Antrim	11-Oct-2013	Site 253m North West of 55 Carnalbanagh Road Glenarm
V/2009/0258/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	10-Dec-2009	260m North West of 32 Trooperslane, Carrickfergus
V/2010/0184/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	06-Sep-2010	83m North West of 36 Marshallstown Road, Carrickfergus, Co Antrim, BT38 9DE
V/2010/0201/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	22-Sep-2010	85m North of 55 Belfast Road, Whitehead
V/2011/0148/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	15-Nov-2011	Lands 225m South West of 55 Knockagh Road Newtownabbey Co Antrim BT36 5BP
V/2011/0157/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	08-Dec-2011	289m North of 1 New Line Carrickfergus BT38 9DL
V/2012/0139/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	29-Aug-2012	Approx 400m South West of 29 Loughmourne Road Carrickfergus

Pending Single Wind Turbines in East Antrim					
ID	PlanningArea	Districts	Constituency	Date_Rec'd	Location
V/2012/0161/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	15-Oct-2012	200m North West of 12 Watchill Road Ballyclare
V/2013/0004/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	10-Jan-2013	Lands approx. 550m South East of Kilroot Business Park Carrickfergus
V/2013/0006/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	03-Jan-2013	Lands 332 metres South of 60 Belfast Road, Whitehead
V/2013/0125/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	27-Aug-2013	420m North East of 155 Belttoy Road Ballycarry
V/2013/0136/F	South Antrim	Carrickfergus	East Antrim	07-Oct-2013	270m SW of 79 Manse Road, Ballycarry

Environmental Crime

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the remit given to the former Director of the Welsh Environment Agency in preparation of his Expert Review Report on environmental crime.

(AQW 29113/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The remit of Mr Mills Report is the Terms of Reference announced by my predecessor on 16 July 2013, as shown below:

This review will support the DoE's on-going work to create a waste sector in Northern Ireland that complies with the law, protects the environment and underpins resource efficiency by conducting a review into:

- what transpired in relation to the waste facility at the Campsie site and to identify any failures that might have occurred in the regulation of this site, in respect of any sectors of central Government;
- the external factors leading to the extensive illegal waste dumping at the Campsie site;
- the lessons this incident provides for the future development and administration of waste management, resource efficiency and enforcement programmes.

Tree and Hedge Planting

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what is the policy in maintaining green sites in the Public Domain; (ii) what is the policy for further tree and hedge planting in Public Domain green sites; and (iii) what is the policy for planting deciduous and coniferous trees.

(AQW 29114/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Planning has no direct powers over the maintenance of green sites in the public domain; however, the planning system has powers to protect trees and open spaces and also considers tree and hedge planting, including the appropriate species, as part of the assessment of individual planning applications.

The requirement for the protection of open space is set out in Planning Policy Statement 8 – Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (PPS 8). Policy OS1 of PPS 8 protects open spaces, regardless of their condition, and only permits their development if it results in substantial community benefits that significantly outweigh the loss of the public space. Furthermore, Policy OS 2 – ‘Public Open Space in New Residential Developments’ necessitates that public open spaces are provided as an integral

part of housing developments of over 25 units or over 1 hectare in size and these are subject to management agreements in perpetuity (this provision requirement does not extend to apartments or developments that are designed to integrate with existing public open spaces).

In relation to further tree and hedge planting these are matters which are considered as part of the individual planning applications which are submitted. Many applications may need to be accompanied by a landscaping plan and conditions will be attached to decision notices as appropriate. To assist in the management of planning applications at treed sites, the Department has produced supplementary guidance entitled, 'Trees and Development – A Guide to Best Practice'. It promotes the benefits of trees within public spaces and offers guidance for case officers assessing planning proposals on 'caring for trees at development sites'. In addition 'Creating Places: Achieving quality in Residential Environments' also provides advice for developers and development management officers on the selection of tree species, the incorporation of new planting in developments, aftercare and providing sufficient space for trees during their life cycle.

Planning is also responsible for the protection of individual trees and groups of trees that are of special value in terms of amenity, history or rarity, which may or may not be under threat through the designation of Tree Preservation Orders. Applications for consent to do works to, or cut down, protected trees are subject to scrutiny by the Department before being granted or refused.

Wind Turbines

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment to publish a map showing the location of (i) individual wind turbines; and (ii) wind farms that have been granted planning permission, or are currently being considered by Planning Service, in East Antrim.

(AQW 29117/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I attach, for information, map extracts showing the location of (i) wind turbines; and (ii) wind farms that have been granted planning permission, or are currently being considered, in East Antrim. I have also placed a copy of this map in the Assembly Library.

You may wish to note that a map detailing this information for the whole of Northern Ireland is available to view on the Planning Portal at www.planningni.gov.uk, along with other useful information and statistics on renewable energy planning applications. Wind Farms

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is aware of proposals to construct a large scale wind farm in the Doravil area of County Tyrone; and whether his Department has taken cognisance of (i) the environmentally sensitive nature of this part of the Sperrins region; (ii) the potential negative impact such a proposal could have on tourism in this area; (iii) the negative impact that this proposal could have on sites of archaeological significance; and (iv) local opposition to this proposal.

(AQW 29121/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of proposals for a company to construct a large wind farm in the Doraville area of County Tyrone but my Department has not yet received a formal planning application for such development. I am also aware the site is located within the Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Should the application subsequently be received, it will be subject to the full assessment under relevant planning policies and guidance, including the impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area, and the potential impacts on tourism and archaeology. I am aware that there is considerable opposition locally to such a potential development. An application of this nature will be required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Taxi Operator Licences: Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of Taxi Operator licences in use in the Foyle constituency; (ii) the number of taxi drivers registered with each operator; and (iii) the length of the term of each license.

(AQW 29122/11-15)

Mr Durkan: It is not possible to provide information from the Taxi licensing IT system by constituency; however, information has been provided for operator licences issued with the BT47 and BT48 postcode.

As at 9 December 2013, the Department has 941 licensed taxi operators within the postcode areas of BT47 and BT48.

Of the 94 operators, 19 hold 1 year licences (284 drivers), 36 hold 3 year licences (332 drivers) and 39 hold 5 year licences (540 drivers).

A detailed breakdown of the number of drivers affiliated to operator's licences is attached at Annex A.

Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation.

Annex A

Breakdown of Drivers per Operator

1 Year Licences

Number of drivers on Operator's Licence	Number of Operators	Total drivers
1	9	9
11	1	11
16	1	16
19	2	38
24	1	24
25	1	25
31	1	31
32	1	32
41	1	41
57	1	57
Total	19	284

3 Year Licences

Number of drivers on Operator's Licence	Number of Operators	Total drivers
1	29	29
3	1	3
4	1	4
11	1	11
16	1	16
53	1	53

Number of drivers on Operator's Licence	Number of Operators	Total drivers
73	1	73
143	1	143
Total	36	332

5 Year Licences

Number of drivers on Operator's Licence	Number of Operators	Total drivers
1	35	35
3	1	3
4	1	4
217	1	217
281	1	281
Total	39	540

Planning Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Planning Service has set any time limits or targets for obtaining responses to planning applications from statutory agencies.

(AQW 29129/11-15)

Mr Durkan: DOE, as the Planning Authority, will consult with a number of agencies and organisations to obtain comments on a development proposal in relation to the consultee's area of expertise.

At this time only the relevant District Council and the Health and Safety Executive are Statutory Consultees. The need to consult other consultees is at the discretion of the planning authority, depending on the nature and scale of the application. Nevertheless, there are a number of standard organisations who are consulted on a regular basis such as Roads Service and Environmental Health.

To manage the consultation process the Department has Service Level Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with the agencies most frequently consulted. These agreements set out the basis on which DOE Planning and the consultee will deliver services to each other and defines performance targets. Although the agreements are not legally binding, both parties agree to act in accordance with the agreement.

Their overall aim is to improve the efficiency of the planning process and provide greater certainty about timescale, particularly for applicants for planning permission in the context of achieving the Programme of Government Public Service Agreement targets.

With regard to responding to planning applications, the agreed performance target with most, is that they will return 70% of all planning application consultations within 15 working days.

In the future as part of the implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 identified, in addition to transferring the bulk of planning powers to councils in 2015, I will provide greater clarity and certainty for the consultation process. For the first time, identified consultees will be statutorily required to provide a substantive response to a consultation request from a planning authority within a specified timeframe and to report on their performance in meeting their duty to respond.

All future consultation responses will have to be “substantive” providing sufficient information to allow the requesting planning authority to determine the application. A holding response would not be regarded as meeting the requirements of the duty to respond.

Details of proposed timeframes, criteria as to what would constitute a substantive response and reporting requirements will be set out in subordinate legislation which will be the subject of public consultation commencing in Spring 2014.

Planning Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to introduce a 28 day consultation response deadline for planning applications.

(AQW 29131/11-15)

Mr Durkan: To manage the consultation process the Department has agreed targets for consultation response times with those bodies most frequently consulted. These performance targets provide the basis on which DOE Planning and the consultee will deliver services. Although the targets are not legally binding, both parties agree to act in accordance with them.

The overall aim is to improve the efficiency of the planning process and provide greater certainty about timescales.

With regard to planning application consultations, the agreed performance target with most consultees, is that they will return 70% of all application consultations within 15 working days.

In the future as part of the implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, in addition to transferring the bulk of planning powers to councils in 2015, I will provide greater clarity and certainty for the consultation process. For the first time, identified consultees will be statutorily required to provide a substantive response to a consultation request from a planning authority within a specified timeframe and to report on their performance in meeting their duty to respond.

All future consultation responses will have to be “substantive” providing sufficient information to allow the requesting planning authority to determine the application. A holding response would not be regarded as meeting the requirements of the duty to respond.

Details of proposed timeframes are currently being developed as are criteria for a substantive response and reporting requirements on consultees. These will be set out in subordinate legislation which will be the subject of public consultation commencing in Spring 2014. Consequently, it would not be appropriate at this stage to commit to any particular deadline.

Total Amount of Waste Generated each Year

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail any targets his Department has in place for the total amount of waste generated each year.

(AQW 29162/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are currently no EU targets for waste prevention or waste arisings and the Department similarly has no targets for these areas. However the amount of municipal waste arising has fallen steadily since 2006/07 with an average annual decrease of 2.5%. In 2012/13 the level was 14.1% below the 2006/07 level. The recently published Waste Management Strategy sets out challenging targets relating to recycling and landfill diversion as required by the EU Waste Framework Directive and Landfill Directive respectively.

For me, waste prevention is a critical objective in terms of protecting the environment, strengthening our economy and in tackling waste crime. The Department has recently completed a consultation exercise on the development of a Waste Prevention Programme. The aim of the Waste Prevention Programme will be to maintain the downward trend in waste arisings. Specific objectives proposed include:

- Decoupling economic growth from the environmental impacts associated with waste generation.

- Encouraging people to use resources efficiently and generate less waste.
- Establishing improved resource efficiency and waste prevention as an integral part of business management and project planning.

Household waste arisings will continue to be monitored to ensure that activities within the Waste Prevention Programme are on course to comply with its aims and objectives. The European Commission intends to publish a report on waste prevention towards the end of 2014 that may introduce measures and objectives for waste prevention and decoupling. In the interim, and informed by this process, I intend to bring forward a waste prevention strategy and am currently considering options.

Waste Measurement

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how his Department measures the total amount of waste generated ; and (ii) whether his Department measures the total amount of waste that was (a) landfilled; (b) recycled; and (c) incinerated each year; and (iii) to detail the total amount of disposed waste by each method in the last twelve months.

(AQW 29163/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department primarily uses legislation to require certain operators handling waste to measure or calculate the waste they manage and report this to the Department. At the moment, this does not cover all wastes generated as certain waste activities are exempt from supplying this information.

There is a requirement for all operators in Northern Ireland actively landfilling waste to submit a summary report to the Department concerning the amount of waste landfilled but there is no such requirement for all those who recycle and / or incinerate waste. The most recently available tonnage for all landfilled waste in NI is for the period 2012/13 which is 1,111,833 tonnes. Following consideration of the Mills Report, I will ask DOE to look at options to improve information collection processes.

Stockholm Convention: Executive's Policy on Incineration

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department is adhering to the Stockholm Convention in the Executive's policy on incineration.

(AQW 29165/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Section 4, "Other Recovery", of the new Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy states that 'The Department supports efficient energy recovery from residual waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy which can deliver environmental benefits, reduce carbon impacts and provide economic opportunities.'

Further, 'In supporting efficient energy recovery the Department acknowledges that technology solutions include mechanical biological treatment {MBT} of waste which can produce a fuel (sometimes referred to as refuse derived fuel {RDF} which may provide energy from waste through subsequent thermal treatment, for example, in a cement kiln, incinerator or gasifier'.

As a party to the Stockholm Convention, the UK developed a National Implementation Plan in 2007. This has now been revised to include an account of how the Convention is being implemented across all the UK jurisdictions, including Northern Ireland, and outlines next steps for managing the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) specified in the Stockholm Convention.

The requirements of the Convention are implemented by EC Regulation 850/2004 on Persistent Organic Pollutants (as amended), which in turn is implemented in UK law by the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulations (2007).

The UK POPs Regulations were amended in 2010 to include further substances of concern. The Regulations have the following functions:

- To ban or restrict the production, use and sale of listed POPs (such as those which were previously used as fire suppressants, biocides or product additives);

- To require efforts to minimise the unintentional formation of POPs (for example, dioxins which might arise as by-products of combustion processes);
- To describe how stockpiles of POPs (or waste contaminated with POPs) must be dealt with.

The Department of the Environment is the competent authority for EC POPs regulation in Northern Ireland, and NIEA compiles emissions' data for Northern Ireland and submits it to the UK Pollutant Release and Transfer Register.

The key mechanisms through which the Department ensures that energy from waste plants in Northern Ireland, whether they are incinerators or other forms of thermal treatment, adhere fully to the Stockholm Convention are its planning, permitting and monitoring regimes. In common with all other UK jurisdictions, the Northern Ireland regulatory regimes take full account of the requirements of the Stockholm Convention in their implementation of the relevant EU Directives.

Nomination Process for Membership of Statutory Transition Committees

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his statement on the 28 August 2013, in which he raised concerns regarding the nomination process for membership of Statutory Transition Committees, whether (i) he asked his officials to draft amended regulations; (ii) whether amended regulations were drawn up; and (iii) whether the membership of any Statutory Transition Committee changed following his intervention.

(AQW 29182/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Pursuant to my statement on 28th August 2013, I had a number of discussions with my officials who investigated amending the Local Government (Statutory Transition Committees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013. I had intended that, as some councils had failed to use a fair and equitable nomination process, the Regulations should be amended to specify the nomination process that should be used. However, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, which provided for the establishment of the Statutory Transition Committees, did not provide the vires to allow me to amend the Regulations in the way I wished. Consequently, amended Regulations were not drafted.

Whilst I intervened with a number of councils about non-compliance with the Department's guidance on the establishment and operation of their Statutory Transition Committees, regrettably the Councils mentioned in my statement did not revisit elected member nominations to their Statutory Transition Committees. I am therefore disappointed by the inactions of Ballymoney, Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn and Strabane councils. I believe these councils acted unfairly and have not complied with the original intentions of the Assembly.

I am committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity will be a key feature in the new councils and the sharing of positions of responsibility across the political parties represented on councils will be a cornerstone of the new arrangements. The Local Government Bill that I introduced into the Assembly on 23rd September 2013, and which is currently at Committee Stage, provides that councils will be able to select from either the d'Hondt or Sainte-Laguë divisor methods or Single Transferrable Voting to achieve this aim. The Bill also specifies the precise application of each of the alternative methods.

Road Tax Discs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of any implications for local jobs in relation to the announcement of the phasing out of vehicle exercise duty discs.

(AQW 29189/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Vehicle licensing is an excepted matter which is carried out in Northern Ireland by the Driver and Vehicle Agency within my Department, under the terms of an agreement with the Department for Transport, represented by its Agency, DVLA in Swansea. The decision to abolish tax discs is a matter for the Department for Transport and this change will apply across the UK.

The production of a tax disc is a minor and largely automated part of the process of licensing a vehicle. It is highly unlikely, therefore, that the abolition of the tax disc on its own will have any impact on staffing levels in DVA.

Planning Applications: Processessing Time

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail how many planning applications took (i) more than 6 months; (ii) more than 12 months; or (iii) more than 2 years to process, in each of the last 5 years. **(AQW 29196/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The information requested is set out in the table below.

The number of decided¹ planning applications between 2008/09 and 30th June 2013², that took (i) 6-12 months, (ii) 1-2 years and (iii) 2+ years³ to process the decision⁴

	2008-09			2009-10			2010-11			2011-12			2012-13			Q1 2013-14 ²		
	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs
Antrim	120	56	14	53	45	17	35	44	33	64	24	17	41	18	9	10	10	1
Ards	218	139	38	166	100	62	172	64	56	220	73	30	159	83	39	25	14	10
Armagh	151	122	117	109	74	68	203	69	89	266	160	91	137	96	72	43	17	15
Ballymena	169	83	22	107	82	33	98	52	45	116	56	26	71	40	20	19	11	3
Ballymoney	94	49	21	42	31	24	60	19	27	54	26	10	53	25	10	10	12	3
Banbridge	199	215	54	76	53	60	108	67	50	165	41	9	98	27	6	11	2	3
Belfast	498	278	73	256	195	68	208	100	60	370	137	31	286	136	57	42	22	10
Carrick-fergus	57	32	16	24	24	10	22	8	3	37	9	7	16	9	2	9	0	2
Castlereagh	95	39	22	40	46	22	84	28	15	80	21	15	58	29	14	14	8	5
Coleraine	250	156	37	96	63	35	98	49	37	79	35	14	70	57	13	11	9	13
Cookstown	214	67	25	102	69	42	86	49	64	99	43	20	81	43	15	16	10	3
Craigavon	186	142	40	113	80	48	102	47	59	191	74	55	71	58	24	14	6	4
Derry	141	94	54	131	73	46	109	70	34	149	70	41	89	87	33	18	6	5
Down	244	175	34	186	120	71	138	62	60	420	107	76	221	128	29	46	22	13
Dungannon	212	104	24	100	69	32	126	46	37	111	31	61	76	40	11	20	14	1
Fermanagh	283	131	52	194	106	86	85	60	191	85	34	50	86	47	24	7	3	3
Larne	97	56	16	39	40	25	45	23	28	76	28	5	47	19	8	10	3	2
Limavady	102	47	16	38	30	26	54	44	31	83	60	23	51	23	22	2	0	1
Lisburn	457	238	64	231	138	106	179	93	62	342	116	54	235	204	64	50	23	13
Magherafelt	232	133	82	99	97	59	71	58	84	96	18	15	86	37	5	8	10	1
Moyle	82	63	42	63	41	33	71	43	24	50	34	12	47	25	20	7	8	4
Newry And Mourne	421	367	170	291	141	273	267	162	198	347	276	204	251	198	144	42	24	15
Newtown-abbey	122	69	14	95	88	41	88	34	32	113	23	13	93	30	15	12	6	7
North Down	279	111	25	83	72	30	67	28	20	82	19	7	71	26	14	25	3	3

	2008-09			2009-10			2010-11			2011-12			2012-13			Q1 2013-14		
	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2+ yrs
Omagh	262	134	51	156	95	67	122	51	101	147	51	94	108	68	24	22	10	7
Strabane	97	36	15	63	32	22	44	39	49	60	37	24	52	41	9	6	7	1
Total	5,282	3,136	1,138	2,953	2,004	1,406	2,742	1,409	1,489	3,902	1,603	1,004	2,654	1,594	703	499	260	148

Notes:

- 1 Decided applications do not include withdrawn applications.
- 2 Q1 of 2013/14 is currently our most recently published information.
- 3 The processing time categories were calculated using the processing time information, in days, as follows:
 - 6-12 mths: Processing time > 120 & <= 240
 - 1-2 yrs: Processing time > 240 & <= 480
 - 2 yrs+: Processing time > 480
- 4 A small number of applications have been excluded from the analysis as processing time information was not available.

Bus Operator Licensing Proposals

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the extent of the consultation with community transport providers and user groups on the bus operator licensing proposals.
(AQW 29227/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since my Department began a review of bus operator licensing in 2009 officials have undertaken extensive engagement with the community transport sector. This has included collective and individual meetings with the eleven Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTP) and also with the Community Transport Association (CTANI). A full public consultation exercise was carried out in late 2010 and this included public meetings throughout Northern Ireland.

The consultation process resulted in no clear consensus on the way forward and at the Environment Committee's request the Department began a series of focused stakeholder engagements.

In 2011 Minister Attwood set up a Bus Forum where all stakeholders including the RCTP's, CTA, the Consumer Council, Youthnet, the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC), commercial bus operators, Education & Library Boards and Health Trusts have representation.

In 2012, in an effort to move the process forward, my officials produced a discussion document (colloquially known as 'the strawman') which was presented to the Bus Forum. The members of the Forum engaged with their own organisations and reported back their findings both to the Bus Forum and to separate meetings which were held with officials. This has resulted in a number of changes to the initial document in response to this engagement, including with the community transport providers and with other organisations such as NICVA. At this stage, these are still draft proposals and no final decision has been taken.

I am aware that some community transport providers have concerns surrounding the proposals for a new licensing scheme; my officials will continue to engage with the community transport providers and users to develop a licensing scheme which will allow for a vibrant and innovative community transport sector to flourish. Most recently, my officials met with representatives of most of the RCTPs on 9 December and a number of actions were agreed as needing follow up before further engagement. Officials have requested further meetings with CTANI also.

Arrangements for Single Tier Licensing

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) under what title or statement was the petition from Belfast Taxi (CIC) Association submitted to the consultation on the Arrangements for Single Tier Licensing; (ii) whether the petition pertained to the consultation as a whole or just the question referring to taxibuses; (iii) whether the same weight was given to each signature on that petition as to each individual full consultation response; and (iv) whether he will publish the consultation project plan, stakeholder list and scoring and coding system adopted to weigh the responses.

(AQW 29274/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) The title of the statement was “single tier licensing reply”.
- (ii) The statement said that “we the undersigned believe that in order to protect our Taxi Bus service, that the implementation of the proposed single tier licensing should be deferred until such times as the Act is ready to be implemented in full”. Since the consultation stated clearly that “it is not to consider the broader policy of single tier licensing, on which decisions have been made following the 2011 consultation” and the petition did not relate to any of the questions on the single tier letter, it was not included in the summary of responses. Instead Minister Attwood was informed of the petition and the number of names included. He subsequently met with Belfast CIC to discuss their concerns. Their views, shared by the Environment Committee and other stakeholders, led to Minister Attwood postponing single tier licensing until it could be implemented in full under the Taxis Act in September 2014.
- (iii) Each response received to the letter was given the same weight when compiling the synopsis. As explained in part (ii) above, the Department did not include the petition in the responses.
- (iv) The single tier letter was issued to all taxi driver licence holders, all taxi vehicle owners and all taxi operators. Since the responses were not weighted, no coding system was used. There was no formal project plan for the consultation exercise, and it would not be common practice of the Department to have a formal project plan for such exercises; but key dates for issue and closing of the consultation, the compilation of the responses and their submission to the Minister and the Environment Committee were agreed and monitored.

Private and Public Hire Taxis

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what is the average age of (a) Belfast Public Hire; and (b) private hire taxi vehicles; (ii) what plans he has for improving the (a) quality and safety of taxis; and (b) customer service standards to be adopted by drivers; and (iii) how he will deliver on these standards.

(AQW 29275/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The average age of Belfast Public Hire taxi vehicles is 11.91 years* and the average age of Private Hire taxi vehicles is 5.13 years*.

Full implementation of the taxi reform programme will improve standards within the industry and reduce the use of illegal taxis. The introduction of taxi operator licensing in September 2012 already requires all taxis to be listed on a valid and current taxi operator’s licence. This reform made a vital link of responsibility, for the first time, between customers, drivers/vehicles and operators. It is the Department’s intention to introduce the remaining strands of the programme by September 2014.

Single tier taxi licensing will remove the distinction between Public Hire and Private Hire taxis, permitting both to pick-up passengers without a pre-booking. Consumer and disability groups and the majority of those already consulted are in favour of this system which will give consumers greater choice as to which taxi they use.

The introduction of taximeters and printers to all taxis as well as the introduction of a regulated maximum fare is supported by the Consumer Council, the PSNI and the taxi industry generally. It will reduce instances of over-charging and thereby promote and enhance consumer safety and confidence.

A proposed new higher standard wheelchair accessible vehicle specification will be subject to consultation early in 2014. I believe this impact on the industry is necessary to ensure wheelchair users have confidence in both the safety and comfort of vehicles licensed to carry them, and to remove the situation where users are travelling in vehicles whose safety equipment has not been tested by DVA. The proposed regulations will also prevent taxis not tested as wheelchair accessible from advertising themselves as such, providing further reassurance to wheelchair users.

The introduction of a taxi driver test for new drivers and periodic training for all taxi drivers is widely welcomed by consumer and disability groups and will improve standards in the industry, increasing road safety, providing additional assurance to passengers and raising the reputation of the industry as a provider of a quality service.

The role of my Department is to set the minimum standards and requirements which the industry must adhere to and it is the responsibility of operators and the wider industry to deliver on these standards. Once implemented, all of the reforms under the Taxis Act (NI) 2008 will be kept under review.

*These figures are not validated DOE Official Statistics. The average age of vehicle has been calculated using the date the vehicle was first registered wherever that registration may have occurred.

Listed Buildings in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the listed buildings in North Down.
(AQW 29284/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Based upon the 1974 ward boundaries - which is how the department holds such records - the total number of listed buildings in the North Down Borough Council (NDBC) area is 287. The North Down constituency also includes two electoral wards of Ards Borough Council in Donaghadee, which contain a further 58 listed buildings (highlighted in bold in the attached table). This gives a total of 345 listed buildings in your constituency. It should be noted that North Down is being reviewed currently under the second survey process, and this figure may change again, when all records have been reviewed.

To provide the detail of all of these listed buildings by hard copy would be unwieldy; however, the information that you have sought may be accessed electronically at the following link www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/other-index/content-databases/content-databases-build.htm

Once you have accepted the terms and conditions of the site, a search may be carried out by Council area – in this case Ards and North Down.

You will be aware, however, that there have been boundary changes since 1974, and as a result the figures should not be taken as definitive, in relation to the current boundaries. For that reason I have appended, for your information, a table which shows the number of the listed buildings within each ward of the North Down and Ards Borough Council (NDBC) Areas.

You may also wish to note that NDBC - which is a statutory consultee in the listing process - has been provided with a copy of each listing in its area, since the introduction of the legislation in the early 1970's.

Number of Listed buildings in the North Down and Ards District Council Areas

HB23 - North Down		
1	Groomsport	16
2	Churchill	1
3	Ballyholme	4
4	Ballymagee	2
5	Bangor Harbour	26

HB24 - Ards		
1	Portaferry	73
2	Kircubbin	22
3	Ballyhalbert	5
4	Grey Abbey	63
5	Carrowdore	6

HB23 - North Down		
6	Conlig	5
7	Bangor Castle	26
8	Whitehill	0
9	Rathgael	0
10	Clandeboyne	23
11	Silverstream	0
12	Spring Hill	1
13	Bryansburn	1
14	Princetown	15
15	Crawfordsburn	30
16	Craigavad	21
17	Loughview	7
18	Cultra	29
19	Hollywood Demesne	11
20	Hollywood Priory	69
	Total	287

HB24 - Ards		
6	Donaghadee North	26
7	Donaghadee South	32
8	Loughries	10
9	Movilla	5
10	Glen	3
11	Scrabo	16
12	Ulsterville	0
13	Central	42
14	Comber North	0
15	Comber South	32
16	Ballygowan	13
17	Killinchy	31
	Total	379

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27856/11-15 to provide copies of the notes taken, and the subsequent reports compiled, by the six Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers on duty at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds, Mount Merrion Avenue entrance on 23 August 2013; and if it is not possible to release these documents to clarify whether they are held in storage, or have been destroyed.

(AQW 29292/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The information you have requested was recently the subject of a Freedom of Information request received by the Driver and Vehicle Agency. In response the Agency deemed that exemption Section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the formulation or development of government policy, applied. I am therefore unable to provide copies of the notes and subsequent reports that you have requested.

However, the information you have sought was used to determine the Department's interpretation of the legal position as regards the provision of taxis at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds. A copy of which was issued in response to AQW 27856/11-15.

I can confirm that the information gathered on 23 August 2013 at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds has not been destroyed and will be kept in accordance with the Agency's disposal schedule.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department hold records on (i) taxi drivers who are given fixed penalty notices for breaching regulations; and (ii) convictions relevant to drivers' trade, including motoring offences, drugs offences, and any violence-related crime.

(AQW 29293/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I can confirm that the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) holds records on taxi drivers who are given fixed penalties by DVA Enforcement Officers.

Details of all other convictions are obtained through an “enhanced disclosure certificate” provided by Access NI, which includes information on spent and current convictions.

Councils: Judicial Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28380/11-15, whether he will undertake to obtain the requested information from the three councils who failed to respond.

(AQW 29294/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The following information has been obtained from those three councils.

During 2011/12 and 2012/13 neither Newry & Mourne District Council nor North Down Borough Council applied for any judicial reviews.

Armagh City & District Council reported no cases in 2011/12. However, during 2012/13 it applied for one case, which the judge decided to split into two issues. Costs to date have been c£10,000.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Enforcement Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment how much it cost, including overtime, to have six Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers on duty to monitor the services of private hire taxis at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds on 23 August 2013.

(AQW 29295/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The total cost of six enforcement officers in carrying out a compliance operation at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds on 23 August 2013 was £694.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department will maintain control of local government spending during the transition period of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 29316/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are controls in place to ensure that local government does not over-stretch in terms of borrowings. In line with Section 13 (1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, “a council shall determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow.” A council may not borrow money if doing so would result in a breach of the limit determined by it under Section 13. This is examined each year by the Local Government Auditor as part of the audit process.

In terms of the expenditure of current councils in the run up to April 2015, I have issued a direction and guidance on expenditure controls for Statutory Transition Committees. This gives Statutory Transition Committees the power to examine and approve three year capital plans and revenue expenditure forecasts in their constituent councils.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, taken together with the Departmental direction, provides that councils must seek the consent of the relevant Statutory Transition Committee before:

- making a disposal of land where consideration exceeds £100,000;
- entering into a capital contract where consideration exceeds £250,000; or
- entering into a non capital contract where consideration exceeds £100,000.

This is to ensure that the current 26 councils cannot enter into new contracts that will have an impact on the finances of the newly created councils without first seeking permission from the Statutory Transition Committee. This power will also be applied to the new councils during the period when they will be operating in shadow mode from end May 2014 – March 2015.

Commercial and Domestic Rate-Payers

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment what measures are in place to ensure that commercial and domestic rate-payers are not adversely affected by the transition period of the Review of Public Administration; and that projected savings are used to reduce the rates burden.

(AQW 29317/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Earlier this year the Executive agreed to provide councils with a reform funding package of £17.8 million over the 2013 to 2015 period, with a commitment of up to £30 million for rates convergence beyond 2015.

The £30 million will be made available for managing rate convergence as a consequence of councils merging and other boundary changes arising from implementation of the local government reform.

DFP and DOE continue to work on the design of a transitional rate relief scheme within the agreed cost envelope of £30m. The relief scheme will help manage rates convergence by protecting those ratepayers otherwise facing sudden and excessive increases as a direct consequence of councils merging or due to other boundary changes.

Review of Public Administration: Cost

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment what the cost will be of implementing the Review of Public Administration; and from where will this funding originate.

(AQW 29318/11-15)

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 Transition Costs Paper is currently being finalised.

Earlier this year the Executive agreed to provide councils with a reform funding package of £17.8 million over the 2013 to 2015 period, with a further commitment of up to £30 million for rates convergence beyond 2015.

My Department has no further monies available from within its own budget. Any additional costs will have to be met by local government, offset against the longer term savings that will result from reform.

Clough Castle: Regulations

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28210/11-15, whether the regulations are applicable at Clough Castle; and are being fully adhered to on an all year round basis in relation to the usage of the flagpole that is provided by his Department within the grounds of the castle.

(AQW 29359/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Clough Castle is not among the Government Buildings specified for the flying of the Union Flag on set days within the Regulations brought in under the Flags (Northern Ireland) Order 2000. Though the Regulations permit the Union flag to be flown 'in the same manner on the same day at any other government building', the Departmental Solicitor has advised that Clough Castle, being unoccupied, does not constitute a 'Government Building' under the terms of the Order, so the Regulations do not apply to it.

Clough Castle was gifted to the National Trust which then leased it to the Ministry of Finance in 1969 and agreed to the erection of a flagpole in 1971 to prevent the long-standing, dangerous and

damaging practice of erecting a flag atop the stone tower of the Castle itself. Responsibility for Historic Monuments in State Care subsequently transferred to the Department of the Environment.

The flag at Clough Castle is not flown by the Department; nor did the Department provide the current flagpole in the Castle grounds. This was erected without permission in July of this year by persons unknown, replacing a shorter pole erected by the Department in 2008 when a pole erected in 1987 snapped off after it was vandalised.

The Department has tried unsuccessfully to limit the period of flag-flying at Clough Castle to two weeks in July. The local Loyal Orange Lodge has agreed to seek to limit the flag-flying period to July and August, however elements in the local community have proved very difficult to regulate, have broken in to the site and have threatened contractors engaged to carry out works at the Castle by the Department.

Minerals Planning Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28465/11-15, whether his definition of an extant planning permission includes minerals planning applications which have been approved and where extraction or processing are currently taking place.

(AQW 29402/11-15)

Mr Durkan: An extant planning permission is any planning permission which is still in existence. That is, any approved development commenced on or before the expiration of the time frame given in Article 34 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and is within its conditioned time limits.

Illegal Waste at Mobuoy Road: Tarry Waste Site

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28465/11-15, (i) whether the location of the known tarry waste site at a sand pit on Mabuoy Road forms part of the illegal landfilling site; and (ii) whether the known tarry waste site at the closed landfill forms part of the illegal landfill site.

(AQW 29403/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Two of the tarry waste deposits identified in the past were marked as being located within the overall area which is the subject of the Operation Sycamore investigation at Mobuoy - one on the east side of Mobuoy Road and the other on the west. During the extensive survey work that was carried out during the investigation no areas of tarry waste were encountered.

Belfast Taxi Licence Plates

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the area covered by the Belfast taxi licence plate.

(AQW 29435/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The By Laws relating to Motor Hackney Carriages standing or plying for hire within the County Borough of Belfast were made by Belfast City Council on 4 June 1951. The By Laws set down the "prescribed limits" for standing or plying for hire as an area within the boundaries of a circle the radius of which shall be five miles from Castle Junction in the City of Belfast.

Requirements of the Habitats Directive

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28983/11-15, whether his answer confirms his Department's full compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

(AQW 29456/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As detailed in my answer to your previous question (AQW 28983/11-15) a full review of all extant planning permissions was not carried out at the time of designation. The Habitats Regulations require competent authorities to review all permissions 'as soon as reasonably practicable'. This is an ongoing process. Where there are amendments or modifications to planning applications approved before designation of the River Faughan and tributaries SAC the project in its entirety is reassessed. In order to maintain and enhance Northern Ireland's natural heritage my Department's priority at this time

is to complete the designation of sites which are nationally or internationally important for their bio or geo diversity. The Department has complied with all aspects of the Habitats Directive.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Service Posts in the Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why AQW 27954/11-15 remains unanswered. (AQW 28834/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): AQW 27954/11-15 was answered 29 November 2013.

Levy on Bottled Mineral Water

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any consideration he has given to the introduction of a levy on the production or sale of bottled mineral water. (AQW 28866/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I have not given any consideration to the introduction of a levy on the production or sale of bottled mineral water.

Average Salary in Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the average salary in Northern Ireland compared to the (i) Republic of Ireland; and (ii) UK. (AQW 28919/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The average (mean) gross annual pay for all employee jobs in Northern Ireland compared to (i) the Republic of Ireland and (ii) the UK is provided in Table 1 overleaf.

The NI and UK figures are from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Data for the Republic of Ireland is sourced to the Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS), carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Both ASHE and EHECS are based on a sample of employee jobs and the reported estimates therefore have an associated degree of sampling error.

Table 1: Mean Gross Annual Pay¹ for all employee jobs², 2012

	Mean
Northern Ireland	£21,836
United Kingdom	£26,664
Republic of Ireland	€36,079

Sources: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (NI & UK)
Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (CSO)

Notes:

- 1 Gross annual pay covers remuneration in cash paid directly by the employer, before tax deductions and social security contributions payable by wage earners and retained by the employer. All bonuses (such as overtime, holiday pay, profit sharing, commission, etc) regardless of whether they are regularly paid are included.
- 2 Employees (full time and part time) on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

Rate Debt

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how the shortfall resulting from the write off of rates debt is made up; and whether, in setting the regional rate, there is a margin for bad debt.

(AQW 28958/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Rate debt occurs when ratepayers, for whatever reason, fail to pay their rates bills. With regard to write-off, this is taken into account in setting the Regional Rate and in the Penny Product calculations for District Councils.

Equality and Diversity Branch Corporate Human Resources

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the criteria used by the Equality and Diversity Branch Corporate Human Resources when considering which job advertisements require welcome statements.

(AQW 29029/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Equality and Diversity Branch add welcoming statements to job advertisements where reviews into the community background and gender profiles of the Civil Service reveal one or more groups are under-represented compared to the NI workforce. The processes used to assess fair participation and to determine when to use welcoming statements are complicated. However, in general, action is taken where the difference between the profile of the Civil Service and the NI workforce is more than 5%. In relation to gender, action is also taken where no persons of one gender are currently employed. The reports of the last reviews into the composition of the Civil Service (the 2010 Article 55 and Gender Reviews) include detailed explanations of the processes used and copies of both have been placed in the Assembly library.

Further reviews are being carried out and the results will be published next year.

Number of Solicitors have left the Profession

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many solicitors have left the profession in each of the last five years.

(AQW 29067/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel understands that the Law Society does not specifically keep statistics on the numbers of solicitors leaving the profession in any given year. The table below, based on figures obtained from the Society, outlines the number of practising certificates in force compared to the number of solicitors admitted to the roll in any given year. It can act as a guide, but cannot be considered as a completely accurate reflection as there may be other reasons for practising certificates not being issued in a given year (for example, maternity leave).

Year	Practising Certificates Issued	Solicitors admitted to the Roll
2008	2,487	170
2009	2,500	171
2010	2,559	254
2011	2,626	220
2012	2,688	198

Number of Solicitors Registered to Practice

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of solicitors registered to practice in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 29068/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel has obtained the figures below from the Law Society of Northern Ireland. In each of the last 10 years, the number of solicitors holding practising certificates is as follows:

■ 2003 – 2,001	■ 2008 – 2,487
■ 2004 – 2,110	■ 2009 – 2,500
■ 2005 – 2,160	■ 2010 – 2,559
■ 2006 – 2,298	■ 2011 – 2,626
■ 2007 – 2,358	■ 2012 – 2,688

Economically Inactive

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people in each constituency are economically inactive.

(AQW 29103/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Estimates of the numbers of economically inactive persons in each Northern Ireland (NI) Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) are sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) Local Area Database, with the most recent data available for January – December 2012. These estimates are based on the residency of an individual.

Please note that LFS estimates at PCA level are based on relatively small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability than for NI level results.

The requested breakdown of economic inactivity by PCA is shown in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1: Number of Economically Inactive Persons (aged 16-64) by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA), January - December 2012

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Economic Inactivity	
	Number	% of 16-64 Population in each PCA
Belfast East	14,000	26.3%
Belfast North	16,000	30.0%
Belfast South	24,000	30.9%
Belfast West	16,000	37.3%
East Antrim	12,000	21.2%
East Londonderry	20,000	33.0%
Fermanagh South Tyrone	20,000	27.6%
Foyle	20,000	28.9%
Lagan Valley	17,000	23.2%
Mid Ulster	17,000	28.2%
Newry & Armagh	18,000	27.7%
North Antrim	19,000	26.5%
North Down	12,000	21.6%
South Antrim	14,000	19.3%

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Economic Inactivity	
	Number	% of 16-64 Population in each PCA
South Down	21,000	29.3%
Strangford	18,000	30.1%
Upper Bann	23,000	29.5%
West Tyrone	16,000	28.4%
Total	319,000	27.6%

Source: Labour Force Survey, Local Area Database 2012

Stormont Estate: Car Parking

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why parking is prohibited on both sides of the access road from the Massey Avenue entrance into the Stormont Estate; and on whose direction this has arisen.

(AQW 29104/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I refer the Member to AQW 25669/11-15 which was answered on 24 September 2013.

Equal Pay Settlement

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when staff from the PSNI and NIO, who were not part of the equal pay settlement, will be informed of the action he intends to take to resolve the issue.

(AQW 29111/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I am currently carefully considering the matter and I will update staff in due course.

Equal Pay Settlement for PSNI, Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Office Staff

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the equal pay settlement for PSNI, Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Office staff; and for a timescale to fully implement this settlement.

(AQW 29119/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I am currently carefully considering the matter and I will update staff in due course when I have made my decision.

Number of Unemployed People in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people are currently unemployed in the North Down area.

(AQW 29132/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland (NI) Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and estimates of unemployment, at sub-NI geographies, are not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around such estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The table attached is sourced instead to the claimant count measure of unemployment. This shows the number of persons claiming unemployment related benefits at October 2013 in the North Down Parliamentary Constituency Area and this figure as a percentage of the resident working age population.

Table 1 – Claimant Count at October 2013

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Claimants	
	Number	% of working age population
North Down	2,027	3.6

Barnett Formula Consequentials

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the Barnett Formula Consequentials which result from the Chancellor's autumn statement.

(AQW 29158/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: As a result of the UK Chancellor's Autumn Statement Northern Ireland received an additional £0.3 million / £45.0 million / £51.9 million Resource DEL in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. In addition, Northern Ireland received £10.4 million / £28.5 million Capital DEL in 2014-15 and 2015-16. Of these Capital allocations, £3.3 million and £22.3 million are ring-fenced for Financial Transactions Capital.

Free School Meals Policy

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much of the £136 million Barnett Consequentials is linked directly to the UK Government's Free School Meals policy.

(AQW 29183/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: As a result of the Free School Meals policy announcement in Whitehall Northern Ireland received a Barnett share of £38.4 million. Importantly, this allocation is unhypothecated, which means it is for the Executive to decide how this funding should be spent in line with local needs and priorities.

Chancellor's Autumn Statement: Barnett Consequentials

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide a breakdown of the £136 million Barnett Consequentials, resulting from the Autumn Statement.

(AQW 29184/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The £136 million Barnett Consequentials comprised net additions in Resource DEL, Capital DEL and Financial Transactions Capital DEL. In terms of Resource DEL there were net additions of £0.3 million in 2013-14; 45.0 million in 2014-15; and £51.9 million in 2015-16. For Capital DEL the increases were £7.1 million in 2014-15 and £6.1 million in 2015-16, whilst for Financial Transaction Capital the additions were £3.3 million and £22.3 million over the next two years.

Crucially, these consequentials are unhypothecated, which means it is for the Executive to decide how this funding should be spent in line with local needs and priorities.

Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2013

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the implications of the Autumn Statement.

(AQW 29201/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Autumn Statement has many positives for Northern Ireland, not least the £136 million increase in the Northern Ireland Executive's Budget over the next two years. This increase, of course, reflects the out-workings of the Barnett Formula and again demonstrates how this can work for Northern Ireland when Health and Education is protected from spending reductions in England.

There were also a number of specific decisions taken by the Chancellor, which will have a positive impact for many people in Northern Ireland. These included an increase of £2.95 per week in the state pension from April 2014; cancellation of next year's planned fuel duty rise; a new married couples

tax allowance, which will benefit some 130,000 couples in Northern Ireland; and abolition of National Insurance contributions for those aged under 21, which could save local businesses some £10 million.

Gross Value Added: British Government Borrowing

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide the proportion of Gross Value Added which is accounted for by British Government Borrowing for the most recent five years that data is available

(AQW 29225/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: UK General Government gross debt as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - the standard measure of economic output at a national level – is provided in the table below:

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
UK General Government Gross Debt as % of UK GDP	51.1%	67.1%	78.4%	84.3%	88.7%

Source: Eurostat

Departmental Offices

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many offices are available in the North Antrim constituency; and to detail the square footage of 'Grade A' office space.

(AQW 29240/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: DFP has seven offices in the North Antrim constituency totalling 171,157 square feet. DFP does not categorise its office accommodation by means of Grade A, B or C.

Vacant Departmental Properties

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of departmentally owned properties which are either vacant or under utilised; and (ii) to outline any plans to dispose of them.

(AQW 29262/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There are currently eight properties vacant and one underutilised within DFP Properties Division Estate.

- Two are for sale on the open market;
- Three are in the process of being disposed of;
- One is being refurbished to accommodate staff which will allow us to surrender leased buildings;
- One is currently under review as the Department may seek planning permission for change of use to increase potential yield; and
- One will be demolished.

Welfare Reforms Implementation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the outworking of the penalty imposed by Her Majesty's Government, given the failure to implement welfare reforms by the 1 January 2014.

(AQW 29479/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Without any progress on the Welfare Reform Bill in this financial year, the Executive will be faced with penalties of £15 million. The Executive will need to consider, as part of its January monitoring round, the impact of these penalties on the 2013-14 financial position.

Should the delay in implementing welfare reforms stretch beyond this financial year, then the Executive will need to consider the implications of this in future years.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Offenders: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Learning Difficulties

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department works with other jurisdictions to find suitable facilities for offenders with complex needs such as alcoholism, substance abuse and learning difficulties once they leave prison.

(AQW 28056/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Arrangements are not in place for my Department to work with other jurisdictions to find suitable facilities for offenders with complex needs such as alcoholism, substance abuse and learning difficulties once they leave prison. Rather arrangements are in place between the South East Health and Social Care Trust and the other HSC Trusts to ensure that all relevant information is shared when a prisoner is discharged into the community.

The Department of Justice works closely with a range of agencies, in a number of other jurisdictions, in designing and developing interventions to ensure a co-ordinated approach to dealing with offenders with complex needs and inform the implementation of best practice programmes.

Regional Eye Clinic

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the Regional Eye Clinic communicates (i) appointment details; and (ii) outcomes of appointments, with patients who have a visual impairment.

(AQW 28951/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Ophthalmology service in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust provides a number of services to patients with a visual impairment within the Belfast Trust area and Northern Ireland.

The majority of appointments for Ophthalmology within the Belfast Trust area are communicated to patients via appointment letters. The Trust acknowledges that these may be difficult to read for those with visual impairment as the font size and layout is limited on its Patient Administration System (PAS). The Trust is currently looking at ways to address this problem through the work of its Disability sub group on Accessible Information & Communications. Appointments are also communicated via SMS and voicemail.

The outcomes of any outpatient appointment are discussed with the patient in detail at the time of their appointment and then communicated via letter to their GP shortly after.

Any outreach Ophthalmology clinics which are held in other areas of Northern Ireland are managed locally by the relevant Health and Social Care Trust.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Community Organisations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list all the community organisations in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area that received funding from his Department in the last twelve months.

(AQW 28969/11-15)

Mr Poots: The voluntary and community organisations in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area that received funding in the last twelve months are listed below. Funding was provided by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency.

Funding provided by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ Aaron House Day Care | ■ MENCAP |
| ■ Accept Care | ■ Mend |
| ■ Action Cancer | ■ Mindwise |
| ■ Action for Children | ■ Mytime Active |
| ■ Action Mental Health | ■ National Autistic Society Northern Ireland |
| ■ Action on Hearing Loss | ■ Newtownards Contact Centre |
| ■ Age NI | ■ Newtownards Stroke Club |
| ■ Alzheimer Society | ■ Nexus |
| ■ ARC (TILLI) Project | ■ NI Chest Heart & Stroke |
| ■ Ardglass Community Playgroup | ■ NI Institute for the Disabled |
| ■ Ards Gateway Club | ■ NIACRO |
| ■ Ards Arthritis Care | ■ NIAMH |
| ■ Ascertainment | ■ NI Community Addiction Services Ltd |
| ■ Autism Initiatives | ■ Oaklee |
| ■ Aware Defeat Depression (ADD) | ■ Orchard Grove |
| ■ Bangor Senior Gateway Club | ■ Outreach-3way |
| ■ Barnardos | ■ Pathfinders |
| ■ Beacon | ■ Patrician Youth Centre |
| ■ Belfast Central Mission | ■ Positive Futures |
| ■ British Red Cross | ■ Praxis Care Group |
| ■ Cause (NI) Ltd | ■ Priory (Watton) Limited |
| ■ Cedar Foundation | ■ Prospects |
| ■ Christine Mc Sherry, Art Therapist | ■ RNIB |
| ■ Citizens Advice Bureau | ■ Saturday Fellowship |
| ■ Colin Community Counselling | ■ St Luke's Family Centre |
| ■ Core Respite Services | ■ St Luke's Parish Playgroup |
| ■ Croft Community | ■ St Patrick's Senior Citizens Fellowship |
| ■ Cruse Bereavement Care | ■ Stepping Stones |
| ■ Disabilities Trust | ■ Stroke Association NI Supporting People |
| ■ Donaghadee Arthritis Care | ■ Sure Start with Action for Children |
| ■ Lisburn Carers Forum | ■ Teenage Kicks |
| ■ Lisburn City Council Police & Community Safety Partnership | ■ The Beeches Resource Centre |
| ■ Lisburn Disabled Christian Fellowship | ■ The Link Family & Community Centre |
| ■ Lisburn Downtown Centre | ■ The P.A.C.T Service |
| ■ Lisburn Senior Gateway Club | ■ Thorndale Family Centre (Salvation Army) |
| ■ Lisburn YMCA | ■ Volunteer Now |
| ■ Mainstay DRP | ■ Voypic |
| ■ Marie Curie | ■ Wider Vision Women's Aid |

Funding provided by Public Health Agency

- Ards Development Bureau and Network
- County Down Rural Community Network
- Flying Horse Ward Community Forum
- Kilcooley Forum
- Kiro Centre, Newcastle
- North Down Community Network
- Resurgam Community Trust

Dementia

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to improve the rates of dementia diagnosis.

(AQW 28988/11-15)

Mr Poots: The regional dementia strategy, which I published in November 2011, addresses the importance of early diagnosis, and includes an action for the HSC Board in collaboration with the Public Health Agency and HSC Trusts to draw up criteria and clear protocols for referral from GP practices to memory services. This will assist in the assessment and diagnosis of dementia. Work is underway to complete this action, as part of the wider implementation of the strategy.

The Alzheimer's Society study entitled 'Mapping the Dementia Gap' shows that Northern Ireland has a diagnosis rate of 63% (11'800 people) which is just marginally below Scotland (64.4%) and well above the UK average of 46%. This is based on the number of people on GP dementia registers.

Broken down by area, the Belfast HSC Trust rates are highest in UK.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that it is aware of the gap in diagnosis rates across Northern Ireland and has been taking steps to address this. Services are being developed to include pre-diagnostic counselling, comprehensive assessment, post diagnostic counselling, support and education in the area of dementia. Increasing the timely diagnosis of dementia requires multi-agency partnership working and the Trust is making significant progress in this area. As a result of these measures, the Trust has indicated that it has the largest increase in diagnosis rate across Northern Ireland and it remains committed to further improvement.

Dementia

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the differential between the rate of dementia diagnosis in the Belfast and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts in 2012-13.

(AQW 28989/11-15)

Mr Poots: The regional dementia strategy, which I published in November 2011, addresses the importance of early diagnosis, and includes an action for the HSC Board in collaboration with the Public Health Agency and HSC Trusts to draw up criteria and clear protocols for referral from GP practices to memory services. This will assist in the assessment and diagnosis of dementia. Work is underway to complete this action, as part of the wider implementation of the strategy.

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these measures, the Trust has indicated that it has the largest increase in diagnosis rate across Northern Ireland and it remains committed to further improvement.

Health Service Staff: Signs of Human Trafficking

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken in the Health Service to train staff to spot signs of human trafficking.

(AQW 28997/11-15)

Mr Poots: A range of measures are in place to train and support staff working in the Health Service to recognise the signs of Human Trafficking.

In February 2011 the DHSSPS, with the Police Service of Northern Ireland issued Guidance on “Working arrangements for the Welfare and Safeguarding of Child Victims/Suspected victims of Human Trafficking.”

In October 2012 the DHSSPS and the Department of Justice jointly issued Guidance on “Working arrangements for the Welfare and Protection of Adult Victims of Human Trafficking”.

Further Guidance “Pathway for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of separated children” was launched in November 2013. Following the launch the Health and Social Care Board is leading on a training needs analysis. This will form the basis for specific training to be provided by HSCTs to staff in relation to this area of practice for 2014/15.

In addition, awareness training and/or specialist training is provided for social workers as appropriate in relation to their duties.

Learning Disability - Life Transitions

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department is working with the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education to identify and respond to specific barriers faced by young people with a learning disability at key life transitions during school, training and employment and day centre opportunities.

(AQW 29018/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department and the HSC continues to work closely with the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department of Education, and their agencies, to assist young people with a learning disability during transition from children's to adult services and, on leaving school, to have access to the fullest possible range of day opportunities and support in appropriate settings.

To assist young people with a learning disability in overcoming barriers encountered during such transitions, each Health and Social Care Trust has designated individuals/teams who collaborate with other Departments/Agencies, allied health professionals and the voluntary and community sector, to assist the young person and their family in planning ahead. These plans should take into account the aspirations and aptitudes of the young person and seek to assist their progression into meaningful day opportunities - involving further education, training, supported employment, social and leisure activities, along with appropriate care and support.

The need for inter-departmental and inter-agency working was highlighted in the Bamford Equal Lives Report and many actions and strategies stemming from that, including the Regional Day Opportunities Model, recently consulted on by the HSC Board. It is also represented in the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership in which key agencies work together to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children. One of their sub-groups focuses on Transitions of children and young people with disabilities into adulthood.

A&E Ambulances

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the cost of new ambulances in the last five years; and (ii) the mileage on each vehicle, broken down by units of 10,000 miles.

(AQW 29023/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The capital spend on new A&E Ambulances in the last 5 years was £11.745m.
- (i) The mileage for the A&E Ambulance Vehicles broken down by units of 10,000 miles are set out below:

Miles	A&E Ambulance
0-9,999	7
10,000-19,999	12
20,000-29,999	9
30,000-39,999	4
40,000-49,999	8
50,000-59,999	7
60,000-69,999	6
70,000-79,999	7
80,000-89,999	9
90,000-99,999	5
100,000-109,999	3
110,000-119,999	6
120,000-129,999	3
130,000-139,999	2
140,000-149,999	0
150,000-159,999	7
160,000-169,999	3
170,000-179,999	3
180,000-189,999	7
190,000-199,999	5
200,000-209,999	3
Grand Total	116

IVF Treatment

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 27786/11-15, whether he intends to increase the number of treatments for IVF patients.

(AQW 29030/11-15)

Mr Poots: In February 2013, NICE published Clinical Guideline CG156 on Fertility, which updates and replaces CG11. The applicability of this Guideline to Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland has recently been considered and endorsed by my Department, and it is now the responsibility of the HSC Board to implement the guidance.

The HSC Board will now take the necessary steps to prepare a Draft Service Notification (formerly known as “commissioning plan or Board response”), which will set out its approach to implementing the guidance in the context of currently available resources and other HSC priorities.

Protect Life Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact that the Protect Life Strategy has had on suicide rates and on the care for a person at risk of suicide.
(AQW 29048/11-15)

Mr Poots: International evidence indicates that efforts to reduce national suicide trends need to be sustained and long term. Over the seven year period leading up to the publication of the Protect Life Strategy in late 2006, the Northern Ireland suicide rate almost doubled. Since then the rate has remained high with an average of 277 recorded deaths each year since 2007. Undoubtedly, lives have been saved through Protect Life services, but it is not possible to estimate how many. The Northern Ireland Audit Office has acknowledged that the relative impact of the Protect Life strategy on suicide is difficult to estimate. This difficulty is due to the fact that suicide is primarily a societal issue and is, therefore, influenced by a very wide range of interacting factors. This fact is recognised in other jurisdictions, some of which do not set reduction targets as part of their suicide prevention strategies.

A wide range of measures have been implemented through Protect Life to care for a person at risk of suicide. These include: training courses on suicide prevention and mental health awareness for health and social care staff; the emergency department Card Before You Leave scheme; the Shine project in the Western HSC Trust area which takes self-harm referrals from emergency departments and provides counselling services; community-led suicide prevention and bereavement support services; and the Lifeline 24/7 crisis response helpline.

Missed GP Appointments

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the estimated annual cost to the public purse of missed GP appointments.
(AQW 29050/11-15)

Mr Poots: General Practitioners (GPs) are independent contractors who contract with the Health and Social Care Board to provide Primary Medical Services to their patients. As independent contractors, GPs are responsible for the day to day management of their practice, including patient appointment arrangements, therefore information on missed appointments is not collated centrally and therefore could only be available at disproportionate cost.

Funding for Advocacy Services

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the funding made available to voluntary sector organisations, specifically for the delivery of advocacy services, since June 2012.
(AQW 29054/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not held in the format requested.

Active Tremor

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28326/11-15, why the Public Health Agency feel that active tremor would not benefit from a public awareness campaign.

(AQW 29071/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Public Health Agency that there is no published evidence that a public awareness campaign assists in the management of this condition.

Health Care Settings: Latex Gloves

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that UK independent advisory bodies have recommended that health care settings replace latex gloves with synthetic alternatives, whether he has any plans to follow these recommendations.

(AQW 29072/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand the Royal College of Physicians and NHS Plus published guidelines on managing latex allergies in the workplace in 2008. The report made a number of recommendations including the use of powder free low protein latex gloves as an alternative to powdered latex gloves.

HSC Trusts have informed my Department that they have, in the main, replaced latex gloves with alternative synthetic gloves. Some HSC Trusts indicated that high quality latex gloves are used in a small number of specialist areas for reasons of dexterity, but this is risk managed.

Latex Allergy Settlements in England

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware of latex allergy settlements in England; and what funds are available for such settlements locally.

(AQW 29073/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am aware that there have been latex allergy settlements in England although I am not aware of the individual cases.

There are currently no funds set aside for such settlements locally. In the event of a liability arising the cost would be met from within the overall funding available to my Department.

Health Service Employees: Latex Allergy

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware of type one latex allergy and its affects on Health Service employees.

(AQW 29074/11-15)

Mr Poots: HSC Trusts have confirmed that they are very aware of Type 1 Latex Allergy and any potential risk to employees associated with this is proactively assessed and managed.

Latex Allergy Management

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many of the recommendations from the evidence based guidelines for the occupational aspects of latex allergy management, produced by NHS Plus Occupational Health Clinical Effectiveness Unit and the Royal College of Physicians in 2008, have been implemented locally.

(AQW 29075/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts have informed my Department that they have implemented the recommendations in the guidelines on the management of latex allergies published by the Royal College of Physicians and NHS Plus in 2008.

South West Acute Hospital- Car Parking

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the full cost of purchasing and installing the systems for car park charging at the South West Acute Hospital; (ii) the projected running and maintenance costs of the system for each of the next five years; and (iii) the projected income that will be generated from the system in each of the next five years.

(AQW 29081/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project. The costs of purchasing and installing the systems were part of the overall cost to the contractor of providing the hospital.
- (ii) The running and maintenance costs for the car park charging systems form part of a total overall unitary PFI charge to the Trust and are not accounted for separately.
- (iii) The projected income from 1 April 2014 and over each of the next five years is £320k per annum.

Firefighters Based at Bangor Fire Station

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many fire fighters are based at Bangor Fire Station.

(AQW 29086/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of firefighters based at Bangor Fire Station at 5 December 2013 is as follows:

Wholetime (Fulltime)	Number
Watch Commander	4
Crew Commander	4
Firefighter	20
Total	28

Retained (Part time)	Number
Watch Commander	1
Crew Commander	2
Firefighter	9
Total	12

Expenditure on Agency Staff

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust of using agency staff in 2012/13.

(AQW 29088/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department monitors all of the Health and Social Care Trusts' expenditure on agency staff on a bi-annual basis and the reports are published on the Departmental internet site at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hrd/workforce_planning/wpu-monitoring.htm

Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many entries his Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 29107/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Special Adviser has not made any entries in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

GP Telephone Numbers

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the number of GP practices still using 0844, or other high cost, telephone numbers; and what actions he has taken following the debate on this matter in the Assembly on the 29 May 2012.

(AQW 29110/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are currently only 20 GP practices across Northern Ireland using 0844 numbers, which is less than 6% of all practices; by end of 2014 this will reduce to 10 GP practices, less than 3%. The 20 practices are tied into contracts with the Service Provider and there is no legal power to instruct practices to stop using 0844 numbers.

In June 2013 my Department arranged with the Service Provider to offer those practices a separate geographical number which would run alongside their 0844 number which patients could use. To date 10 practices have installed a separate geographical line; 2 have indicated that they are willing to install a separate geographical line; and a further 4 practices are currently exploring the possibility of substituting their 0844 number with a geographical number, using the same service provider.

Of the 20 that currently have a 0844 number, 10 contracts will expire in 2014, 6 in 2015 and 4 in 2016.

My Department will continue to monitor the use of 0844 numbers to ensure that practices do not renew or extend their 0844 contracts.

Staff Employed

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) hospital registrars; (ii) GP registrars; (iii) hospital consultants; and (iv) GPs currently employed through public funding; and the number employed during each of the last two years.

(AQW 29134/11-15)

Mr Poots: The numbers requested (headcount and whole-time equivalent [WTE] where possible) are shown in the table below.

	HSC Trust only -Specialty Registrars		GP Trainees	HSC Trust only - Consultants		GPs (principal and salaried)
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	Headcount	WTE	Headcount
2012	1240	1218.0	231	1439	1368.9	1170
2013	1207	1183.6	231	1484	1411.1	1171

Sources: Human Resource Management System, Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) and Business Services Organisation (BSO).

Notes

1. Figures for HSC Trust Consultants and Registrars are as at 31st March in the years referred to. NIMDTA have provided GP Trainee numbers as at 1st September each year and include staff on maternity leave. BSO figures on GPs are as at November.
2. GP Trainees receive training posts first within HSC Trusts in a hospital environment, and then within GP practices. Their training in registrar posts takes three years.
3. The request for 'hospital registrars' and 'hospital consultants' has been interpreted as those working within HSC Trusts only. Note, however, that some of these staff may be providing services within the community.
4. Figures for Specialty Registrars include Locum Appointments for Training and Locum Appointments for Service working at registrar level.

Number of Patients Seen by a GP

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average number of patients seen by a GP on a daily basis in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 29136/11-15)

Mr Poots: The data requested is not available. General Practitioners (GPs) are independent contractors who contract with the Health and Social Care Board to provide Primary Medical Services to their patients. As independent contractors, GPs are responsible for the day to day management of their practice, including patient appointment arrangements; therefore information on the number of patients seen each day is not collated centrally and could only be made available at disproportionate cost.

Proportion of Primary Care Funding

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the proportion of Primary Care funding as a share of Health Service expenditure compared with the other regions of the UK.

(AQW 29137/11-15)

Mr Poots: Expenditure by the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency on the four strands of primary care (comprising General Medical Services, General Dental Services, General Ophthalmic Services and Pharmaceutical Services) amounted to £805m in 2012/13.

This represented 22.5% of health-related expenditure in 2012/13 (ie excluding capital expenditure, expenditure by the NI Fire and Rescue Service and spending on personal social services).

Expenditure data for primary care services in the other UK regions is not available on a consistent basis. Therefore a comparable figure is not available.

Number of Specialist Nurses Undergoing Training

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of specialist nurses undergoing training in the current financial year and each of the last three years; and the funding committed to support that specialist training.

(AQW 29138/11-15)

Mr Poots: Detailed Information on the number of specialist nurses undergoing training could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Since 2009/10 to date over 840 places have been provided on specialist nursing and midwifery post-registration education specialist practice programmes and post graduate qualifications, covering a wide range of areas including, but not limited to, asthma, allergy, addiction, Parkinson's disease care, Paediatric Thoracic Practice and cardiology.

The Department spends in the region of £7.6m annually on postgraduate nurse training. This figure includes specialist nursing and midwifery training.

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the statutory function of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority as a prescribed body under whistleblowing legislation.

(AQW 29141/11-15)

Mr Poots: Prescribed persons are responsible for investigating allegations that fall under their jurisdiction, and for protecting the whistleblower and their interests while conducting an investigation. The RQIA is prescribed as having a role in relation to matters relating to the quality, safety, and availability of health and social care services provided by statutory, independent, community and voluntary providers in Northern Ireland.

Dementia Strategy Implementation Group

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Dementia Strategy Implementation Group and the progress of the current action plan.

(AQW 29143/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency jointly lead a regional group, which includes people with dementia and their carers, to oversee the implementation of the Dementia Strategy and its recommendations across Northern Ireland. The group has drawn up an Action Plan which is used to report progress in the implementation of the strategy to the Department.

The Action Plan contains 44 initiatives which are being progressed under various headings such as Reducing the Risk or Delaying the Onset of Dementia, Raising Awareness, Promoting Early Assessment and Diagnosis, Supporting People with Dementia and Supporting Carers.

My Department received an update report in June 2013 which detailed significant progress on a majority of the actions. A further update on progress is expected this month.

South West Acute Hospital's Emergency Department

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans to downgrade the Accident and Emergency department at the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 29144/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no plans to downgrade the South West Acute Hospital's emergency department.

Internet Safety for Children

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department and its arm's-length bodies are taking to protect children from abuse through the internet.

(AQW 29146/11-15)

Mr Poots: At Departmental level, a senior official sits on the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) Executive Board. The overall mission of the UKCCIS is to coordinate the efforts of Government, industry and others to keep children safe online. My Department also sponsors the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI). As a strategic priority, the SBNI has agreed to develop a co-ordinated strategy and working model to help children at risk of: becoming criminalised through online activity; bullying through cyber activity; and sexual abuse through sexting and online exploitation. To date the SBNI has undertaken a number of initiatives in this area including: a presentation to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure (CAL) in relation to the Investigation into Gaps in Child Protection and Safeguarding across the CAL remit; the funding of training for all SBNI member agencies in the use of the UK Safer Internet Centre risk assessment; and the commissioning of the National Children's Bureau to research e-safety messages available in Northern Ireland to young people, parents and practitioners with which to inform delivery of the SBNI's Strategic Priority, this will be launched in January 2014.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) continues to prioritise the protection of children through the commissioning of services to protect children from all forms of abuse. The HSCB is supported by all five HSC Trusts which have developed a number of initiatives to protect children from abuse through the Internet. Those initiatives include specific training for Trust staff, including Looked After Children Teams, Residential Staff, and Foster Carers; the agreement of an individual safe caring plan for each Looked After Child at the beginning of their placement which includes safe practices for computer usage; the placing of restrictions on IT equipment provided to Looked After Children to prevent the access of inappropriate material; and the development of leaflets advising children on how to keep safe online.

Detections of the Human Papilloma Virus

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of detections of the Human Papilloma Virus over each of the last ten years; and whether his Department is aware of any subsequent deaths as a consequence of the disease.

(AQW 29170/11-15)

Mr Poots: The purpose of the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme is to prevent cases of and deaths from cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide. HPV causes 99% per cent of invasive cervical cancer. HPV is a virus that is spread through sexual activity.

This programme, which offers vaccination to all girls when they are 12-13 years old, was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2008 by the then Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, following a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). JCVI is an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered. It is expected that the HPV immunisation programme will significantly reduce the incidence of cervical cancer in Northern Ireland in future years.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the government agency responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work and that they are acceptably safe. All vaccination programmes in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the UK are subject to ongoing safety monitoring through the Yellow Card system. This ensures that even if there is merely a suspicion that a vaccine or a combination of vaccines has caused an adverse reaction, patients and health professionals are asked to send a Yellow Card to the MHRA. Yellow Card reports received by MHRA on suspected adverse reactions are evaluated, together with additional sources of information such as clinical trial data, medical literature or data from international medicines regulators, in order to identify previously unidentified safety issues or side effects. The MHRA takes action whenever necessary to ensure that vaccines are used in a way that minimises risk while maximising patient benefit. I am not aware of any concerns regarding the HPV vaccines.

HPV vaccines are not used to treat the human papillomavirus; they are a preventative measure. HPV vaccines are highly effective at preventing the infection of the HPV types covered by the vaccines but to be fully effective a girl needs to receive three separate injections over a 6-month period as recommended by JCVI and the vaccine manufacturers.

I am not in a position to provide a detailed breakdown of the cost of the HPV vaccination programme since it was introduced, due to a commercial confidentiality clause in the contract for the supply of the vaccine Cervarix which was used across the UK when the HPV vaccination programme was introduced, however I can advise that the programme currently costs approximately £900k per annum. The broad breakdown of this figure is approximately £590k for the vaccine and £340k for administration of the vaccine by school health teams.

Human papillomavirus is not routinely tested for in Northern Ireland. There are approximately 100 types of human papillomavirus, of which about 40 infect the genital tract. Although most infections are asymptomatic and self-limiting, genital infection by HPV is associated with genital warts and anogenital cancers in both men and women. HPV types are classified as either high-risk or low-risk, depending on their association with the development of cancer. Most HPV infections in young women are temporary

and have little long-term significance. Seventy percent of infections are gone in one year and ninety percent in two years. However, when the infection persists in 5% to 10% of infected women there is high risk of developing precancerous lesions of the cervix, which can progress to invasive cervical cancer. This process usually takes 10 to 15 years, providing many opportunities for detection and treatment of the pre-cancerous lesion. In January 2013 HPV Testing was incorporated within the NI Cervical Screening Programme. Cervical smears which contain borderline or low-grade abnormalities are tested for high-risk HPV strains and, if a test is positive, the woman is referred to colposcopy. Women with borderline or mildly abnormal smears that are HPV-negative are able to return to routine recall for cervical screening straight away instead of having a number of follow-up smears.

Human papillomavirus is not a disease; it is a micro-organism which causes a range of diseases. The HPV vaccine that is currently used in the UK – Gardasil – was designed by the manufacturer to prevent not only cervical cancer but also genital warts.

Because HPV is transmitted through sexual contact, girls are offered vaccination at age 12/13, before the vast majority of them become sexually active. Cervical cancer is most commonly diagnosed between the ages of 25 and 50. As the immunisation programme was introduced in 2008 it will be several decades yet before the full impact of the programme can be known, however it is expected that in due course HPV vaccination will prevent up to 70% of invasive cervical cancers.

Table A, below, shows the number of cases of cervical cancer in the period 2007 to 2011 in Northern Ireland.

Table A

Year	Cervix (C53) Cancer	
	Cases Diagnosed	Deaths*
2007	89	16
2008	127	28
2009	119	21
2010	89	25
2011	105	23

Sources: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

*Based on year death was registered.

Table B, below, shows the number of anogenital warts cases recorded in Northern Ireland in the three years from 2010/11 to 2012/13. All cases of anogenital warts are caused by HPV.

Table B

Description	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Anogenital warts - first attack	2,210	2,271	2,124

Human Papilloma Virus

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of the Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine since its adoption, including purchasing and administration costs.
(AQW 29171/11-15)

Mr Poots: The purpose of the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme is to prevent cases of and deaths from cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in

women worldwide. HPV causes 99% per cent of invasive cervical cancer. HPV is a virus that is spread through sexual activity.

This programme, which offers vaccination to all girls when they are 12-13 years old, was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2008 by the then Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, following a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). JCVI is an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered. It is expected that the HPV immunisation programme will significantly reduce the incidence of cervical cancer in Northern Ireland in future years.

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HPV vaccines are not used to treat the human papillomavirus; they are a preventative measure. HPV vaccines are highly effective at preventing the infection of the HPV types covered by the vaccines but to be fully effective a girl needs to receive three separate injections over a 6-month period as recommended by JCVI and the vaccine manufacturers.

I am not in a position to provide a detailed breakdown of the cost of the HPV vaccination programme since it was introduced, due to a commercial confidentiality clause in the contract for the supply of the vaccine Cervarix which was used across the UK when the HPV vaccination programme was introduced, however I can advise that the programme currently costs approximately £900k per annum. The broad breakdown of this figure is approximately £590k for the vaccine and £340k for administration of the vaccine by school health teams.

Human papillomavirus is not routinely tested for in Northern Ireland. There are approximately 100 types of human papillomavirus, of which about 40 infect the genital tract. Although most infections are asymptomatic and self-limiting, genital infection by HPV is associated with genital warts and anogenital cancers in both men and women. HPV types are classified as either high-risk or low-risk, depending on their association with the development of cancer. Most HPV infections in young women are temporary and have little long-term significance. Seventy percent of infections are gone in one year and ninety percent in two years. However, when the infection persists in 5% to 10% of infected women there is high risk of developing precancerous lesions of the cervix, which can progress to invasive cervical cancer. This process usually takes 10 to 15 years, providing many opportunities for detection and treatment of the pre-cancerous lesion. In January 2013 HPV Testing was incorporated within the NI Cervical Screening Programme. Cervical smears which contain borderline or low-grade abnormalities are tested for high-risk HPV strains and, if a test is positive, the woman is referred to colposcopy. Women with borderline or mildly abnormal smears that are HPV-negative are able to return to routine recall for cervical screening straight away instead of having a number of follow-up smears.

Human papillomavirus is not a disease; it is a micro-organism which causes a range of diseases. The HPV vaccine that is currently used in the UK – Gardasil – was designed by the manufacturer to prevent not only cervical cancer but also genital warts.

Because HPV is transmitted through sexual contact, girls are offered vaccination at age 12/13, before the vast majority of them become sexually active. Cervical cancer is most commonly diagnosed between the ages of 25 and 50. As the immunisation programme was introduced in 2008 it will be

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Human Papilloma Virus

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why people requiring treatment for the Human Papilloma Virus are recommended to receive 3 separate doses of the Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine.

(AQW 29172/11-15)

Mr Poots: The purpose of the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme is to prevent cases of and deaths from cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide. HPV causes 99% per cent of invasive cervical cancer. HPV is a virus that is spread through sexual activity.

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Human Papilloma Virus

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on what evidence, research and tests the Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine was adopted for use; and whether his Department is aware of any side effects associated with the vaccine.

(AQW 29173/11-15)

Mr Poots: The purpose of the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme is to prevent cases of and deaths from cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide. HPV causes 99% per cent of invasive cervical cancer. HPV is a virus that is spread through sexual activity.

This programme, which offers vaccination to all girls when they are 12-13 years old, was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2008 by the then Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, following a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). JCVI is an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered. It is expected that the HPV immunisation programme will significantly reduce the incidence of cervical cancer in Northern Ireland in future years.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the government agency responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work and that they are acceptably safe. All vaccination programmes in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the UK are subject to ongoing safety monitoring through the Yellow Card system. This ensures that even if there is merely a suspicion that a vaccine or a combination of vaccines has caused an adverse reaction, patients and health professionals are asked to send a Yellow Card to the MHRA. Yellow Card reports received by MHRA on suspected adverse reactions are evaluated, together with additional sources of information such as clinical trial data, medical literature or data from international medicines regulators, in order to identify previously unidentified safety issues or side effects. The MHRA takes action whenever necessary to ensure that vaccines are used in a way that minimises risk while maximising patient benefit. I am not aware of any concerns regarding the HPV vaccines.

HPV vaccines are not used to treat the human papillomavirus; they are a preventative measure. HPV vaccines are highly effective at preventing the infection of the HPV types covered by the vaccines but to be fully effective a girl needs to receive three separate injections over a 6-month period as recommended by JCVI and the vaccine manufacturers.

I am not in a position to provide a detailed breakdown of the cost of the HPV vaccination programme since it was introduced, due to a commercial confidentiality clause in the contract for the supply of the vaccine Cervarix which was used across the UK when the HPV vaccination programme was introduced,

however I can advise that the programme currently costs approximately £900k per annum. The broad breakdown of this figure is approximately £590k for the vaccine and £340k for administration of the vaccine by school health teams.

Human papillomavirus is not routinely tested for in Northern Ireland. There are approximately 100 types of human papillomavirus, of which about 40 infect the genital tract. Although most infections are asymptomatic and self-limiting, genital infection by HPV is associated with genital warts and anogenital cancers in both men and women. HPV types are classified as either high-risk or low-risk, depending on their association with the development of cancer. Most HPV infections in young women are temporary and have little long-term significance. Seventy percent of infections are gone in one year and ninety percent in two years. However, when the infection persists in 5% to 10% of infected women there is high risk of developing precancerous lesions of the cervix, which can progress to invasive cervical cancer. This process usually takes 10 to 15 years, providing many opportunities for detection and treatment of the pre-cancerous lesion. In January 2013 HPV Testing was incorporated within the NI Cervical Screening Programme. Cervical smears which contain borderline or low-grade abnormalities are tested for high-risk HPV strains and, if a test is positive, the woman is referred to colposcopy. Women with borderline or mildly abnormal smears that are HPV-negative are able to return to routine recall for cervical screening straight away instead of having a number of follow-up smears.

Human papillomavirus is not a disease; it is a micro-organism which causes a range of diseases. The HPV vaccine that is currently used in the UK – Gardasil – was designed by the manufacturer to prevent not only cervical cancer but also genital warts.

Because HPV is transmitted through sexual contact, girls are offered vaccination at age 12/13, before the vast majority of them become sexually active. Cervical cancer is most commonly diagnosed between the ages of 25 and 50. As the immunisation programme was introduced in 2008 it will be several decades yet before the full impact of the programme can be known, however it is expected that in due course HPV vaccination will prevent up to 70% of invasive cervical cancers.

Table A, below, shows the number of cases of cervical cancer in the period 2007 to 2011 in Northern Ireland.

Table A

Year	Cervix (C53) Cancer	
	Cases Diagnosed	Deaths*
2007	89	16
2008	127	28
2009	119	21
2010	89	25
2011	105	23

Sources: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

*Based on year death was registered.

Table B, below, shows the number of anogenital warts cases recorded in Northern Ireland in the three years from 2010/11 to 2012/13. All cases of anogenital warts are caused by HPV.

Table B

Description	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Anogenital warts - first attack	2,210	2,271	2,124

Chair of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the process for the appointment of a Chair of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) when an appointment will be made; (iii) the total number of applicants for the post; (iv) how many individuals were interviewed; and (v) who made up the interview panel.

(AQW 29186/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department's established Public Appointments process which complies with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland was the methodology applied to this competition. The appointment opportunity was advertised in the three regional newspapers, and in addition advertised on the Department's and OFMDFM websites and circulated to those individuals and organisations registered on the Departmental Mailing List as interested in all DHSSPS public appointments. A re-advertisement was also placed due to the low number of initial applications received

Appointment will be made once the appointment process has been completed. Ten applications were received. Four applicants having met the criteria were invited for interview. The interview panel comprised of Dr Andrew McCormick (DHSSPS Permanent Secretary, Panel Chair), Mrs Kathryn Riddle (Panel Member) and Mrs Anne Rowe (Independent Assessor, allocated by CPA NI).

Hospital Social Workers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of social workers employed by, or based in, each acute hospital.

(AQW 29197/11-15)

Mr Poots: The numbers (headcount and whole-time equivalent [WTE]) of hospital social workers based in each acute hospital are shown in the table below.

Hospital	Headcount	WTE
Altnagelvin	16	13.65
Antrim	15	12.75
Belfast City Hospital	2	2.00
Causeway	8	7.06
Craigavon Area	16	14.16
Daisy Hill	12	10.08
Downe	3	2.00
Lagan Valley	4	3.00
Mater	30	28.76
Musgrave Park	10	7.71
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	10	8.93
Royal Jubilee Maternity	1	1.00
Royal Victoria	32	28.75
South West Acute	3	2.60
Ulster	23	18.00

Source: HSC Trusts

Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability Consultation

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he would finance the day care model referred to in the Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability consultation.

(AQW 29208/11-15)

Mr Poots: Once the Regional Day Opportunities Model is agreed and any recommended amendments are made, each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts will benchmark their current services against this regional model.

It is fully recognised that, given demographic pressures on learning disability services and the improvements to services which the Model will require, there will be an additional need for both revenue and capital.

The vision set out in the Bamford Review and confirmed in Transforming Your Care is to enable people with Learning Disabilities to lead full and meaningful lives in their own communities.

The Model recommends that future services should be delivered on a joint cross-departmental and inter-agency basis, recognising that day opportunities are not solely a responsibility of Health and Social Care. Consequently, as with the general response to Bamford, some of the costs in making a reality of the Model will be shared with other Government Departments who may also bid for further resources.

Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability Consultation

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he has taken to ensure that the Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability consultation consults with service users and carers.

(AQW 29209/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board utilised a best practice approach to ensure that service users and carers are fully consulted on the Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability. A number of processes were undertaken. As the first stage in the consultation, and to ensure a truly independent response, an event was arranged and led by Compass Advocacy Network (CAN) on behalf of the HSC Board. This took place in September 2013 and involved over 100 people, including many with learning disabilities, from across Northern Ireland. CAN is a user-led charity managed by and for people with learning disabilities and has significant experience in facilitating user participation events.

The HSC Board wrote to every known relevant organisation on its database advising of the consultation and inviting responses. They also wrote to all user/carer groups within the five HSC Trusts inviting them to take part in the consultation and providing a range of options on how to do so. A range of documents including an 'Easy Read' version of the consultation were developed and designed by people with Learning Disabilities. Advertisements were placed in regional newspapers to publicise the consultation process and further notices were placed in regional and local newspapers to invite people to the local public meetings held in each Trust area. A variety of social media were also used to promote awareness of the consultation and invite responses.

By 12 December, thirteen local public meetings were held which have been well attended by people with a learning disability and their carers. The original final date for submission of responses has been extended by 4 weeks until the 10 January 2014.

Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability Consultation

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what arrangements the Health and Social Care Board made to ensure that all service users and carers were aware of the recommendations outlined in the Regional Learning Disability Day Opportunities Model in advance of the public consultation meetings.

(AQW 29210/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board utilised a best practice approach to ensure that service users and carers are fully consulted on the Regional Day Opportunities Model for Adults with a Learning Disability. A number of processes were undertaken. As the first stage in the consultation, and to ensure a truly independent response, an event was arranged and led by Compass Advocacy Network (CAN) on behalf of the HSC Board. This took place in September 2013 and involved over 100 people, including many with learning disabilities, from across Northern Ireland. CAN is a user-led charity managed by and for people with learning disabilities and has significant experience in facilitating user participation events.

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Female Genital Mutilation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department is aware of any cases of female genital mutilation; and whether victims have been treated in hospital.
(AQW 29213/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on cases of Female Genital Mutilation is not currently collected by my Department or the Health and Social Care Board. The Northern Ireland Maternity System is currently undergoing an update and information on women presenting to maternity services who have undergone Female Genital Mutilation will be collected in future.

Average Ambulance Response Times

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the average ambulance response times for the (i) Creggan; (ii) Creggan South; and (iii) City Walls electoral wards.
(AQW 29238/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department's current performance indicator for ambulance response times is that 72.5% of all Category A (life-threatening) calls are responded to within eight minutes, with no less than 67.5% in any Local Commissioning Group (LCG). Performance against this indicator is detailed in the table below for each month since April 2013.

Percentage of Category A (Life threatening) Calls Responded to Within Eight Minutes (April – October 2013).

LCG	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013
Belfast LCG	75.7%	83.0%	85.0%	83.9%	83.4%	85.9%	84.9%
Northern LCG	58.0%	58.8%	61.5%	56.6%	62.1%	62.6%	65.0%
South Eastern LCG	57.2%	66.3%	68.4%	64.1%	65.1%	61.4%	68.2%
Southern LCG	60.3%	62.6%	63.3%	65.7%	64.4%	63.9%	65.7%
Western LCG	64.0%	66.8%	66.4%	65.9%	66.1%	72.1%	71.5%

LCG	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013
Northern Ireland	63.8%	68.7%	69.8%	68.4%	69.3%	70.8%	72.1%

Registered Carers in North Antrim

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of registered carers who are over the age of 60, in the North Antrim constituency.

(AQW 29252/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

People Diagnosed with Autism in North Antrim

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what resources have been invested to support people diagnosed with autism and their families in the North Antrim constituency, in each of the last three years; and to outline his Department's policies for assisting these families and the charities that support them.

(AQW 29253/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not available for the North Antrim constituency; however investment in autism specific services in the NHSCT is outlined in the table below:

Year	Children's services (£)	Adult services (£)
2011	294,866	
2012	340,977	139,857
2013	340,977	170,357

Given that autism is a spectrum disorder, support services for individuals and their families are based on assessed need. In addition to the health and social care services available to the local population, the Northern HSC Trust provide both Children's and Adult's ASD services which operates across the entire Trust area.

These are multidisciplinary autism teams which are made up from a number of different professions. Additional support is available to the teams through education and voluntary sector providers in accordance with an individual's needs.

Hospital Consultants Due to Retire

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hospital consultants are due to retire over the next two years; and how many of these will be replaced.

(AQW 29270/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no mandatory retirement age for consultants and they are only required to give three months notice of their intention to retire. It is not possible therefore to estimate how many hospital consultants are due to retire over the next two years. Any posts vacated by consultants who retire are normally replaced.

Vacant Consultant Posts in the Health Service

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many vacant consultant posts there are in the Health Service; and why these posts are vacant.

(AQW 29271/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vacancies in HSC organisations are collected biannually and detailed in the Department's HSC Vacancy Survey Reports for March and September each year. The most recent report covers vacancies as at 31st March 2013 and is available at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/vacancy_survey_march_2013_web-2.pdf. The full position of vacancies as at 30th September 2013 is not yet available. This report will be published in early 2014. Vacancies are defined as posts that HSC organisations are actively recruiting to. A post does not have to be unoccupied in order to be counted as a vacancy.

As at 31st March 2013, there were 72 (69.7 whole-time equivalent) permanent consultant vacancies being recruited to and 27 (27.0 WTE) temporary consultant vacancies. These vacancies occur as part of normal turnover of staff due to retirement, transfers, resignation or can be newly created posts. Trust will usually take steps to fill vacancies substantively in the first instance. Where a post remains unfilled for a period of time, doctors may be employed on a locum basis to cover the requirements of the post in order to meet service needs.

Vacant Consultant Posts in the Health Service

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any consultant posts remain vacant because of cost saving in Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 29273/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts have informed my Department that no consultant posts remain vacant because of cost savings.

Mental Health Issues

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures he has taken to address the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

(AQW 29308/11-15)

Mr Poots: In October 2011, I launched the Public Health Agency's "Under the Surface" public information campaign which aimed to de-stigmatise mental illness and raise awareness of the early warning signs and symptoms. The Agency has just launched a new campaign which continues the emphasis on encouraging people to discuss their feelings, builds on the previous approach to stigma reduction, and focuses on recovery.

Other action taken forward by the Public Health Agency to improve awareness of mental health issues, reduce stigma associated with mental illness, and encourage help-seeking behaviour includes: local seminars and educational workshops; mental health awareness training; the hosting of websites providing advice and information; and work with the media to encourage more positive reporting on the issue. The reduction of stigma associated with mental illness will be a priority in the new Suicide Prevention and Positive Mental Health Strategy currently being developed.

My Department is also continuing work on the draft Mental Capacity Bill. The approach of the Bill means that mental capacity and mental health legislation will, for the first time in any jurisdiction, be encompassed into a single piece of legislation. This will reduce the stigma associated with separate mental health legislation which was a key recommendation of the Bamford Review. It remains my intention that the Bill will be enacted within the current mandate of the Assembly.

Mental Health Services for Young People

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what mental health services exist for young people; and specifically in the South Down area.

(AQW 29309/11-15)

Mr Poots: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Northern Ireland are provided through a stepped care model, based on the clinical needs of the individual.

CAMHS for the northern part of the South Down constituency area are provided by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, on behalf of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust from a

local community based team in the Lagan Valley Hospital site. This team also provides outreach to Downpatrick. CAMHS for the southern part of the South Down constituency area are provided by the Southern Trust in local community based teams in Newry and Portadown. CAMHS consist of multidisciplinary teams that specialise in the assessment and intervention for under 18s with mental health needs and their families/carers.

Services for children and young people presenting in crisis, and requiring urgent assessment and intervention, are provided by Crisis Assessment Teams which are available 7 days per week.

Inpatient care for young people, when required, is provided in Beechcroft, the Regional Child and Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health Unit in Belfast.

Provision of an Air Ambulance

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the provision of an air ambulance.

(AQW 29315/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am currently considering the recommendations and implications of a report undertaken by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) about the feasibility for a helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS)/air ambulance in Northern Ireland.

In addition, I am liaising with the Irish Health Minister, Dr James Reilly TD, regarding the potential for a cross-border HEMS/air ambulance service.

The HSCB has in place an air ambulance contract for the transfer of adult and paediatric patients to and from Northern Ireland. This service is used primarily to transport seriously ill patients from a referring NI hospital to Belfast International Airport for onward transfer by dedicated aircraft to GB NHS services. It is also used to repatriate patients back to NI hospitals following treatment if they are deemed too unwell to travel by other means.

Mental Health Team in the Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many people have been referred to the mental health team in the Foyle constituency in the last two years; (ii) how many staff, and at what level, are available in this team; (iii) to detail the projected funding for mental health services up to 2015; (iv) how many people have presented in the Foyle constituency with (a) depression; and (b) anxiety problems, in the last two years.

(AQW 29322/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) From April 2011 to April 2013, 3,247 people have been referred to the mental health team in the Foyle constituency.
- (ii) All new referrals are in the first instance referred to the Primary Care Mental Health team, which is made up of:

■ 1 Team Manager	■ 1 Consultant Psychiatrist
■ 5 Social Workers (Band 6 and above)	■ 1 Staff Grade Doctor
■ 9 Community Psychiatric Nurses (between Bands 6 and above)	■ 1 Junior Doctor
	■ 6 Administration staff
- (iii) Currently the Western HSC Trust's total recurrent expenditure on mental health services across the whole Trust is £27.6M. It is not possible at this stage to detail the projected funding for mental health services up to 2015.
- (iv) Information on the numbers of people who have presented in the Foyle constituency with depression and anxiety problems, in the last two years is not available.

Number of GPs Practising Each Year Since 2008

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of GPs practising in each year since 2008; and whether there is any predicted rise in the numbers over the next few years.

(AQW 29335/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures provided by the Family Practitioner Services Information and Registration Unit in the HSC Business Services Organisation are as shown in the following Table:

Year	Number of GPs
2008#	1,148
2009#	1,156
2010#	1,160
2011#	1,163
2012\$	1,170
2013\$	1,171

Figures as at October each year.

\$ Figures as at November each year. The figures include principal and salaried GPs only, locums are not included.

No rise is predicted in the number of practicing GPs over the next few years.

Number of Consultants Working Each Year Since 2008

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of consultants working in each year since 2008; and whether there is any predicted rise in the numbers over the next few years.

(AQW 29336/11-15)

Mr Poots: The headcount and whole-time equivalent (WTE) of medical and dental consultants working in HSC organisations in each year since 2008 are shown in the table below.

Year	Headcount	WTE
2008	1305	1227.1
2009	1346	1271.9
2010	1377	1302.1
2011	1406	1328.0
2012	1494	1411.4
2013	1542	1455.0

Source: NI HSC Human Resources Management System/ Human Resources, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence System. Figures are as at 31st March in each year, and exclude staff with a whole-time equivalent less than or equal to 0.03 and staff on career breaks.

This shows a 19% increase in the HSC whole-time equivalent consultant workforce since 2008.

With regard to predicted increases, local staffing arrangements are the responsibility of HSC employers based on service need and available resources. The Department has a role in ensuring there are sufficient, suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the service overall.

GP Consultation Figures

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average number of consultations which GPs have had per patient in each year since 2008.

(AQW 29337/11-15)

Mr Poots: The data requested is not available. General Practitioners (GPs) are independent contractors who contract with the Health and Social Care Board to provide Primary Medical Services to their patients. As independent contractors, GPs are responsible for the day to day management of their practice, including patient appointment arrangements; therefore information on the annual average number of consultations per patient is not collated centrally and could only be made available at disproportionate cost.

Investment in General Practice

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has for investment in general practice from 2013-2016 as part of Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 29338/11-15)

Mr Poots: The role of general practice is recognised as a critical element of the new models of care set out in Transforming Your Care (TYC) and investment in General Practice is planned across the following areas:

- The 'shift left' of services set out in TYC, is supported by a planned shift of 5% of current resources from secondary care to primary and community care, including general practice, underpinning the overarching vision for TYC which is care closer to home and greater access to services in the right place at the right time;
- An estimated £16.4m of investment during the implementation of TYC in support of the establishment and development of ICPs in which GPs will play a key role;
- A continuation of the investment which has been made over a number of years via Enhanced Services aligned to the strategic direction of TYC to promote early intervention and prevention, and deliver more care closer to home rather than in hospital;
- Workforce and service planning to ensure there is sufficient numbers and capacity within general practice to meet the needs of our population and facilitate the shift left will be critical, and work has commenced to review this across a number of medical sub-specialties including general practice; and
- Alongside investment in general practice directly, a programme of infrastructure development and investment is taking place across Northern Ireland to provide upgraded accommodation for general practice, as well as a range of other health and social care services in one location which will reduce the need for patients to travel outside their locality to access services. This investment will be through a mixture of funding options which will be explored depending on the availability of funding and business case approval following the budget.

Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when staff in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast will be trained in Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation.

(AQW 29360/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Trust advises that in an emergency, staff can ensure those patients requiring emergency ECMO can be cared for safely. ECMO has been previously used successfully in the Cardiac Surgery Unit in Belfast, and staff training will ensure best practice guidelines are adhered to. The Trust further advises that there are several centres within the UK who provide training on ECMO and that they are making arrangements for staff to be facilitated within these courses.

Respite Care Places Available in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many respite care places are available in North Down on a weekly basis.

(AQW 29372/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not held centrally and was therefore requested from the South Eastern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. Their response is provided below.

Children's Disability

There are 6 beds available for overnight respite in the North Down geographic locality. These are allocated to a number of families throughout the year.

Older Peoples Services

There are 10 block beds for respite in the North Down & Ards sector in a range of Frail Elderly and Elderly Mentally Infirm nursing and residential homes which can be booked in advance for respite breaks.

In addition, the Trust also spot purchase beds in nursing and residential homes for respite to meet demand as required. In the week commencing 2nd December 2013, 9 additional beds were spot purchased for respite.

EU Tobacco Products Directive

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the introduction of minimum pack size for tobacco products under the revised EU Tobacco Products Directive.

(AQW 29375/11-15)

Mr Poots: I support the UK position on the revised EU Tobacco Products Directive which is currently under consideration in the European Parliament. The revised Directive includes measures for banning certain flavourings from tobacco products, introducing larger warnings on packaging and phasing out smaller packs of ten cigarettes.

I support these measures that will help to reduce the appeal of smoking for children and young people, and will also limit their access to cigarettes.

I understand the revised Directive is expected to be adopted in 2014 and the agreed measures will come into effect in all EU Member States, including the UK, from 2015/16.

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority: Nursing Home Inspectors

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many nursing home inspectors are employed by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA); (ii) how many nursing homes are on the RQIA's register; and (iii) how many people currently reside in those nursing homes.

(AQW 29377/11-15)

Mr Poots: RQIA employs a team of 9 nursing home inspectors. In addition RQIA employ a number of estates, pharmacy and financial inspectors who may also play a role in the inspection of nursing homes.

There are currently 269 nursing homes in Northern Ireland registered with the RQIA.

There are 10,965 nursing bed spaces within these nursing homes. Whilst RQIA records the number of patients accommodated within an individual home on the day of inspection, it does not maintain a day by day occupancy figure across the whole sector .

Social Services Safeguarding Team

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28643/11-15, how many children have been referred to the social services safeguarding team in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29396/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts have a Gateway Service that receive all new referrals regarding children and young people in need, including children where there are safeguarding concerns. In general, although there are some variations between the HSC Trusts, the HSC Trusts do not have dedicated social services children's safeguarding teams. Those children referred to social services who are deemed to require an ongoing service following initial assessment will be referred to appropriate Family Intervention/Support teams.

The table below contains the number of children referred to social services (Gateway Teams) in each of the last three years.

Table 1: The number of children referred to Social Services (2010/11 – 2012/13)

Year	Children Referred to Social Services ¹
2010/11	26,725
2011/12	28,496
2012/13	29,508

Source: 1. Children Order Return N1

This information is available in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2012/13' which can be found on the Department's website at the following link: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

Projects Delivered Through Social Enterprise

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the funding his Department has set aside for projects that can be delivered through social enterprise.

(AQW 29419/11-15)

Mr Poots: Funding provided in health and social care can be accessed by organisations using a variety of business models. No funding is specifically set aside for social enterprise.

Critical Care Building at the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the planned opening of the critical care building at the Royal Victoria Hospital has been delayed because of issues arising from the construction contract; (ii) when the building will open; (iii) to detail the cost of any defects with the building or from the contract; and (iv) whether the Health Service will incur costs from the defects and the delayed opening of the business.

(AQW 29420/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The planned opening of the critical care building has been delayed by the discovery of pipe-work corrosion problems which necessitated the complete removal and replacement of all five sealed water systems in the building; these were installed under the construction contract and the issue must be resolved under the terms of contract;
- (ii) It is now planned to bring the building into operation on a phased basis in the latter half of 2014 and early 2015;

- (iii) The contractor is responsible for the cost of repair and the details of the costs incurred by the contractor are not therefore available; and,
 - (iv) The Trust has had to incur expenditure (e.g. additional design team fees, expert opinion, etc.) which will now have to be recovered from the contractor in the settlement of the case.
- Royal Victoria Hospital: Critical Care Centre

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money has been invested in the critical care building at the Royal Victoria Hospital to date.

(AQW 29421/11-15)

Mr Poots: To date £139.5m has been invested in the critical care building project on the Royal Group of Hospitals. While a further investment of £8.8m is planned to complete this building, there has been no capital spent to date in this financial year, while the issues that have caused the project to be delayed are being resolved.

Critical Care Building at the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the original planned opening date of the critical care building at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 29422/11-15)

Mr Poots: Before discovery of the pipe-work corrosion problems, the building was to be handed over on 12 November 2012 and the Trust intended to bring the building into operation on a phased basis – theatres on 19 March 2013, critical care beds on 10 April 2013, and the emergency department on 18 May 2013. The upper three (maternity) floors were not to come operational until the new Maternity Building is completed in mid 2017.

Recruitment Reserve List for the Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the recruitment reserve list for the Fire and Rescue Service, to outline the position on allowing experienced local firefighters, who have been working in Britain, to return to work in the Service.

(AQW 29425/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) recruitment activity is subject to external advertisement and competition in order to comply with Employment Equality Legislation. Successful candidates are selected wholly on merit.

NIFRS' policy is that eligible Wholetime Firefighters from other Fire and Rescue Services must apply for posts in response to an external advertisement. However, in recognition of their expertise and experience, applicants from other Fire and Rescue Services are exempt from the normal initial physical and written tests. They are required to compete for entry alongside other candidates at the final interview stage.

Ambulance Waits Outside Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why Northern Ireland did not provide any data in response to a Freedom of Information request asking for the longest ambulance waits outside hospital for the 12 weeks from August to October 2013.

(AQW 29442/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust agreed an extension to the deadline for responding to this Freedom of Information request until 13 December 2013.

The response was issued on 9 December 2013.

Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the points in legislation where young people are defined, for the purposes of the work of the Children's and Young People's strategic partnership, as outlined in The NI Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14, Appendix 2, Section 2.2.

(AQW 29502/11-15)

Mr Poots: The legislative mandate for the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) is the statutory duty placed on the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) under The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (the 1995 Order) as amended by The Children (1995 Order) (Amendment) (Children's Services Planning) Order (Northern Ireland) 1998 (the 1998 Order). Under the 1995 Order, the HSCB is required to: annually review services provided to children and families under Articles 18, 21, 23, 27, 35 and 36 of the 1995 Order; and, taking account of the annual review and any review conducted under Article 20 (which relates to childminding and day care services), prepare a Children's Services Plan. In constructing the Plan, the 1995 Order requires the HSCB to consult with a range of agencies, named in paragraph 3 of Schedule 2. Article 2 of the 1995 Order, defines a child as a person under the age of 18. The 1995 Order (by way of amendment by The Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002) also makes provision for advice, assistance and support to be provided to former looked after children and young people up to the age of 21.

In addition, Articles 35, 35A, 35B, 35C and 35D of the 1995 Order also enables a young person to receive assistance in respect of employment, education or training until age 24 in specified circumstances.

Department of Justice

Staff Suspensions

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of staff suspended in each year since 2010; (ii) the cost of these suspensions; and (iii) the number of suspended staff who were reinstated.

(AQW 29026/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice):

- (i) The number of staff suspended in each year since 12 April 2010 is provided in the table below. Please note that a suspension may carry over more than one calendar year. Therefore, for the purpose of these statistics, the number of ongoing cases per year has also been included for information.

Year	Number of staff suspended	Number of ongoing suspensions
2010 (from 12 April 2010)	22*	-
2011	12	21
2012	17	26
2013	9	17

*19 suspensions were ongoing prior to the DOJ being created.

- (ii) The total cost of suspensions in the Department of Justice since 12 April 2010 is £1,276,709.60. A breakdown of the costs of these suspensions by year is below:

Year	Gross Salary Cost (£)	National Insurance Costs (£)	Pension Costs (£)
2010	324,559.55	23,100.07	63,335.59
2011	306,328.94	24,674.63	66,083.56
2012	222,197.02	19,122.49	43,571.43
2013	145,252.53	11,274.84	27,209.38

- (iii) 47 staff suspended during this period returned from suspension.

Research into Prostitution

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 28048/11-15, when he intends to commission research into prostitution, including the estimated commencement and conclusion dates; and when he will publish the Terms of Reference.

(AQW 29033/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the reply I gave him on 27 November 2013

(AQW/28153/11-15). The terms of reference will be shared with the Justice Committee in early January. It is anticipated that the contract for completion of the research will have concluded by autumn 2014.

Release of Prisoner

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 28490/11-15, (i) given the sentence imposed was of some vintage due to the nature of the offences, but taking into account offences involving high violence were committed whilst on licence/parole in the year prior to ultimate release in 2012, why Public Protection Arrangements (PPANI) were not involved in this case; (ii) whether an oversight or issue in this case has been identified as a result of the sentence imposed which could have led to PPANI notification; and (iii) in relation to future similar cases, whether he will amend legislation or guidelines to ensure the risk to the public is fully considered and extensive monitoring is in place to prevent potential re-offending, particularly in cases of high violence and previous re-offending.

(AQW 29057/11-15)

Mr Ford: My previous answer to AQW 28490/11-15 confirmed the offences which Mr Douglas committed during his time living in the community on licence in 2010 did not meet the criteria which would have allowed Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland (PPANI) to be engaged. As a result I can confirm that I am satisfied no oversight occurred in this case nor was any issue identified which could have led to PPANI notification. Furthermore I can also confirm that I have no plans to amend legislation or guidelines as a result of this case.

Historical Inquests

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to list the historic inquests which are outstanding; and to outline the timescale for holding each inquest.

(AQW 29105/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are currently 43 historical 'legacy' inquests relating to 70 deaths at various stages of completion. The attached table details these and includes available listing information.

The listing of inquests is a matter for the Coroner and is dependent on a range of factors including the availability and volume of relevant evidential material, the duration and complexity of preparatory work, and witness availability.

Legacy Inquests

[as at 19 November 2013]

	Name	Date of Death	Current Position (inc Hearing Date)
1	Roseanne Mallon	08/05/94	Inquest in progress
2	John McKearney & Kevin McKearney	03/01/92 & 04/04/92	Provisionally listed for inquest on 6/10/14 for three weeks
3	Neil John McConville	29/04/03	Preliminary hearing scheduled for 16/12/13
4	Daniel Doherty & William Fleming	06/12/84	AGNI referral 9/7/10 Preliminary hearing scheduled for 12/12/13
5	Gareth Paul O'Connor	11/06/05	Preliminary hearing scheduled for 31/1/14
6	Daniel Stephen Osvaldo McColgan	12/01/02	Inquest provisionally listed for 24/3/14 for three weeks
7	Michael James Ryan, Anthony Patrick Doris & Laurence McNally	03/06/91	Inquest Listed provisionally for inquest 1/9/14 for four weeks
8	Gerard Martin Slane	23/09/88	AGNI referral 20/5/11 Preliminary Hearing to be listed following update on PII issues.
9	Samuel James Marshall	07/03/90	Preliminary Hearing listed 25/2/14
10	Sgt John Quinn, Con Allan McCloy & Con Paul Hamilton (Stalker/Sampson cases) Lead Case	27/10/82	Preliminary Hearing listed 19/12/13
11	James Gervaise McKerr, Eugene Toman & John Frederick Burns (Stalker/Sampson cases)	11/11/82	See Quinn, McCloy & Hamilton above
12	Michael Justin Tighe (Stalker/Sampson cases)	24/11/82	See Quinn, McCloy & Hamilton above
13	Roderick Carroll & Peter James Martin (Seamus) Grew (Stalker/Sampson cases)	12/12/82	See Quinn, McCloy & Hamilton above
14	Gerard Laurence Casey	04/04/89	AGNI referral 7/7/10 PH listed 17/12/13
15	Gerard Lawlor	22/07/02	Police Ombudsman investigation.
16	Seamus Patrick Dillon	28/12/97	NOK funding still outstanding.
17	Liam Paul Thompson	27/04/94	Awaiting HET report. Update to be requested December 2013

	Name	Date of Death	Current Position (inc Hearing Date)
18	Richard Jameson	10/01/00	Family confirmed they still wish to wait for OPONI report.
19	Patrick Daniel Vincent, Sean O'Farrell, Peter Paul Clancy & Kevin Barry O'Donnell	16/02/92	Funding issues to be resolved
20	Sean Patrick Brown	12/05/97	On-going live police investigation. HET report outstanding Preliminary Hearing listed 3/1/14
21	Raymond McCord	09/11/97	On-going live police investigation. OPONI report required
22	Francis Patrick Bradley	18/02/86	AGNI referral 26/5/10 Disclosure on-going
23	Father Hugh Mullan Francis Joseph Quinn AG referral 10/6/11	09/08/71	AGNI referral - for date see each case Disclosure on-going
24	Joan Connolly Daniel Teggart Noel Phillips Joseph Murphy	09/08/71 09/08/71 10/08/71 Died 22/8/71 (Shot 9/8/71)	AG referral 11/11/11 As Father Mullan
25	Edward Doherty	10/08/71	AG referral 25/5/11 As Father Mullan
26	John Laverty Joseph Corr	11/08/71 27/08/71 (Shot 11/8/71)	AG referral 19/9/11 As Father Mullan
27	John James McKerr	20/08/71	AG referral 8/9/11 As Father Mullan
28	Bernard Watt	06/02/71	AGNI Referral 9/5/12 Disclosure on-going
29	Francis Rowntree	22/04/71	AGNI referral 21/6/12 Disclosure on-going Preliminary hearing listed for 21/1/14
30	Manus Deery	19/05/72	AGNI referral 19/6/12 Disclosure on-going
31	Kevin Anthony McAlorum	03/06/04	OPONI investigation. Inquest adjourned sine die

	Name	Date of Death	Current Position (inc Hearing Date)
32	John Coulter & Robert Mahood	21/08/00	Disclosure has been requested Ongoing PONI and PSNI investigations. Inquest adjourned sine die
33	Henry Thornton	7/8/1971	AG referral 25/2/13 Disclosure on-going
34	John Bryans Robert Chambers Reginald Chapman Walter Chapman Robert Freeburn Joseph Lemon John McConville James McWhirter Robert Samuel Walker Kenneth Worton	5/1/76	AG referral 8/7/13 Disclosure requested
35	Marion Brown	10/6/72	AG referral 18/7/13 Disclosure requested
36	James (AKA Seamus) Bradley	31/7/72	AG referral 18/7/13 HET report received Disclosure requested
37	Mary Kathleen Thompson	6/11/71	AG referral 2/9/13 Original inquest file received from PRONI Disclosure Requested
38	Daniel Carson	1/11/73	AG referral 3/9/13 Original inquest file received from PRONI Disclosure Requested
39	Terence McDaid	10/5/1988	AG referral 3/9/13 Disclosure Requested HET report delayed during their internal review
40	Fergal McCusker	18/1/98	24/9/13 - case transferred to the legacy team list HET report delayed during their internal review

	Name	Date of Death	Current Position (inc Hearing Date)
41	Craig McCausland	11/7/05	24/9/13 - case transferred to the legacy team list
42	Joseph Parker	11/12/1971	AG referral 26/9/13 Original inquest file received from PRONI Disclosure Requested
43	Elizabeth McDonald	16/8/76	AG referral 19/11/13 Disclosure Requested

Dangers of the Grooming of Children on the Internet

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department and the Criminal Justice Agencies are taking to protect children from abuse through the internet.

(AQW 29145/11-15)

Mr Ford: I would refer the Member to the replies I gave Mr McIlveen, under AQW/26116/11-15 and AQW/26117/11-15.

Female Genital Mutilation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the scale of the problem of female genital mutilation.

(AQW 29215/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been no convictions for offences under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 for the period for which data is available (from commencement to 2009). The Department of Justice does not hold any other data on which to base an assessment.

Proposed Changes to Legal Aid

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the responses, particularly from those in the legal profession who currently deal with legal aid cases, to his consultation document in connection with possible changes to the Legal Aid system, how many solicitors firms have indicated they will decline Legal Aid related work if his proposals are implemented.

(AQW 29259/11-15)

Mr Ford: To date, no solicitors have indicated they will decline legal aid related work arising from my proposals to reform both criminal and civil legal aid.

Provision of Legal Aid: Budget

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Justice what options his Department has considered with regard to the provision of Legal Aid within an acceptable budget.

(AQW 29301/11-15)

Mr Ford: The budget for NI Legal Services Commission for the years 2011-12 to 2014-15 was set as part of the Budget 2011-15 process.

The reform of legal aid is one of my priorities and bringing legal aid within budget is one of the strategic objectives of legal aid reform. Significant changes have been made to criminal legal aid which will save over £20m annually, and proposals have been published for further reform of both criminal and civil legal aid which are estimated to deliver further annual savings of some £24m.

The budget for 2015-16 will be set as part of the 2015-16 spending review process.

Legal Aid

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department has considered restricting Legal Aid to matters which pertain to crime, family law and child law.

(AQW 29302/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have asked my officials to begin work to examine the scope of civil legal aid, to allow me to consider whether there are areas where continued financial support from legal aid is inappropriate or unnecessary, or where there may be a better way of resolving the conflict or difficulty involved. That work is at an early stage. I am very aware of the need to ensure that any changes to legal aid will not leave vulnerable people without support, and identifying alternative sources of support will be a major part of this work.

Reduction in Legal Aid and Civil Aid

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the impact of the reduction in Legal Aid and Civil Aid on the service provided by solicitors to their clients.

(AQW 29303/11-15)

Mr Ford: Impact assessments are completed as part of the public consultation process conducted by my Department in delivering the programme of legal aid reforms. No specific evidence has been provided to the Department by the Law Society or solicitors' firms to quantify the impact on the service to their clients. This would vary from firm to firm depending on the type of work each firm undertakes and the level of legally aided work delivered within the firms.

Child and Family Law Proceedings

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Justice what actions his Department has taken to establish a more efficient and financially viable system for child and family law proceedings.

(AQW 29304/11-15)

Mr Ford: Further to a recommendation by the Access to Justice Review for a fundamental review of family justice, my Department, together with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, undertook work scoping a review of the operation of the family justice system. That exercise has been completed and the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and I have agreed to begin to address the issues found to be impacting on the operation of the system by adopting a staged approach to reform. The initial stage will include:

- the development of proposals for a pilot to minimise unnecessary delay in care proceedings;
- the development of a cross-departmental strategic approach to alternative dispute resolution services for families; and
- consideration of options for dealing with breaches of contact orders.

This initial stage will inform consideration of the need to take forward legislative reform in the future.

Changes of the Court Boundaries System

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice at what stage is legislation in relation to the changes of the court boundaries system.

(AQW 29325/11-15)

Mr Ford: Provisions for the creation of a single territorial jurisdiction for the county courts and magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland will be included in the Faster, Fairer Justice Bill. It is intended that the Bill will be introduced in Spring 2014.

Criminal Justice Inspection Reports

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27080/11-15, whether previous recommendations were not implemented by the previous governor or deputy governor, or any staff who held their posts on an acting or temporary basis.

(AQW 29326/11-15)

Mr Ford: The scale of required change, including addressing recommendations at all prison establishments, has been consistently acknowledged by NIPS and summarised by the Prison Review Team report. This is being delivered, not solely by the actions of individuals, but through the determined and concerted process of strategic change offered by the Reform Programme.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27656/11-15, and given that he states in his answer to AQW 27299/11-15 that, the text of the new Code was agreed by all stakeholders, to outline the rationale behind the decision not to include this information from the Professional Code of Conduct 2013; and why Prison Service staff are being treated differently to Civil Service staff and other prison service counterparts.

(AQW 29327/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Member is incorrect in his assertion that the Northern Ireland Prison Service does not sufficiently define or sufficiently inform prison staff of the types of offences that may lead to the invoking of disciplinary procedures in the new 2013 Code of Conduct. There is a whole section of the new Code of Conduct that deals specifically with that issue. Section 3.2 clearly sets out 17 possible examples of the types of offences that may lead to the invoking of disciplinary proceedings against staff.

Forensic Science Services

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what are the cost implications of any inter-governmental arrangement with the Republic of Ireland in the area of co-operation on forensic science services.

(AQW 29339/11-15)

Mr Ford: Co-operation between Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) and Eolaíocht Fhóiréinseach Éireann (EFÉ) takes place under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Criminal Justice Cooperation. That includes sharing experiences and participating in shared training events and incurs normal travel and subsistence costs. All other costs are met on a "quid pro quo" basis. For example, no charges were raised for the analysis of 60 drugs samples recently carried out by EFÉ on behalf of FSNI which was an exercise to test potential contingency arrangements.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct 2013

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27564/11-15, (i) to clarify the meaning of specialist staff, within 1.6 of the Code; (ii) on what date nursing staff ceased to be employed by the Prison Service; and (iii) whether alleged breaches of discipline will be investigated and adjudicated upon by the relevant Health and Social Care Trust in tandem with the Prison Service.

(AQW 29363/11-15)

Mr Ford: I think that the previous question the Member should have referred to is AQW/27654/11-15 as opposed to AQW/27564/11-15. On that basis I would advise as follows:

- (i) The specialist staff referred to in paragraph 1.6 of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Professional Code of Conduct are those groups of officers employed in more specialised areas within prisons such as dog handlers, physical fitness instructors, joiners or caterers;
- (ii) The healthcare staff ceased to be employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service on 31 March 2012; and

- (iii) I would confirm that discipline of healthcare staff is now a matter for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Professional Code of Ethics and Values and Code of Conduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27301/11-15, (i) to specify the current legislation that authorised him to approve and implement a transitional Code of Ethics and Professional Code of Conduct for members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS); (ii) why NIPS staff are not specifically informed of the transitional nature of the documentation; and (iii) for his assessment of the appropriateness of such action in the light of the deficiencies which have been identified in the Code. **(AQW 29366/11-15)**

Mr Ford:

- (i) Subject to the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel, the following legislation allows the Northern Ireland Prison Service to have its own disciplinary Code:

Rule 6 of the 1995 Prison Rules, which states that:

“The Department of Justice may approve a code, or codes, of conduct to have effect in relation to the conduct, duties and discipline of the staff of prisons”.

- (ii) The new Professional Code of Ethics and the new Professional Code of Conduct are internal Northern Ireland Prison Service policy documents. As such it is for the Northern Ireland Prison Service to decide when and how often they should be reviewed.
- (iii) Given this is a brand new disciplinary system for the Northern Ireland Prison Service in my view it is good practice for the Prison Service to review and, if necessary, amend the new Codes after they have been in operation for 12 months. The Department of Finance and Personnel endorses this view.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct 2013

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27564/11-15, in cases of gross misconduct that have the potential to remove employment and profession, whether it is accepted that any reasonable request for legal representation must be given fair consideration, given that failure to follow proper process may lead to an unfair dismissal claim to an Industrial Tribunal.

(AQW 29367/11-15)

Mr Ford: The previous question the Member should have referred to is AQW 27654/11-15 as opposed to AQW 27564/11-15, which was a question from another Member to a different Department.

The Department of Finance and Personnel has overall responsibility for disciplinary policy in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The central policy clearly states that a member of staff subject to disciplinary proceedings should not be accompanied by a person acting in a legal capacity.

All Party Group on Human Trafficking

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29220/11-15, whether he will reconsider the decision to refuse to disclose the nationalities and average age, as the corresponding information for the 2012/13 year was made readily available to the All Party Group on Human Trafficking in September 2013.

(AQW 29452/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has previously provided information on potential victims of human trafficking who have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism. This information relates to the potential victims' countries of origin, a breakdown between minors and adults and, where available, exploitation type.

Specific information about those who have been confirmed as victims of human trafficking, however, is not shared in order to protect their identities. This is in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, which precludes the disclosure of information that could lead to the identification of an individual. Having taken advice from the UKHTC, however, I can now advise that the average age of the confirmed victims since 1 April 2013, who are minors, is 16. I hold by my decision not to disclose information on nationality.

Maghaberry Prison: Prison Officers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to detail any occasion over the last four weeks, where prison officers were unable to retain control over sections of Maghaberry Prison.

(AQW 29468/11-15)

Mr Ford: There has been no occasion over the last four weeks where prison officers were unable to retain control over sections of Maghaberry Prison.

Security Threat Level for Prison Officers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to outline any guidance, and from whom did he receive it, when he downgraded the security threat level for prison officers.

(AQW 29469/11-15)

Mr Ford: I did not downgrade the security threat level, which is a matter for the Secretary of State.

Not for Profit Organisations: Legal Services

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice to detail if the contracts that his Department has with not for profit organisations require those organisations to apply for funding for Legal Aid in addition to public funding.

(AQW 29497/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission, through funding provided by the Department of Justice, has grant funding agreements with two not-for-profit organisations: the Housing Rights Service, for the provision of advice and assistance in mortgage repossession, and ejectment proceedings and the Law Centre (NI), for the provision of legal services for immigration, asylum and human trafficking.

These organisations may submit applications for legal aid on behalf of clients in respect of cases not covered by these grants.

Not for Profit Organisations: Legal Services

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many contracts does his Department have with not for profit organisations for the provision of legal services.

(AQW 29498/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission, through funding provided by the Department of Justice, has grant funding agreements with two not-for-profit organisations: the Housing Rights Service, for the provision of advice and assistance in mortgage repossession and ejectment proceedings and the Law Centre (NI), for the provision of legal services for immigration, asylum and human trafficking.

Department for Regional Development

Massey Avenue/ Belmont Road Junction: Cyclists

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider introducing changes to the Massey Avenue/ Belmont Road junction to make it safer for cyclists travelling in the direction of Parliament Buildings who are often overtaken by motorists who are continuing on the Belmont Road.

(AQW 28163/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I intend to refer this matter to the Cycling Unit.

Noise Models: Impact of Road Schemes

Mr Wilson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how many noise models have been used to assess the impact of road schemes; (ii) the number of cases that the revision of models has been necessary; and (iii) the number of cases that mitigation measures have been taken, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28510/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In developing a major road improvement scheme, a detailed assessment of the environmental implications of the proposals is carried out, which includes modelling to assess the associated noise implications.

The table below provides a breakdown of the noise models, as well as the number of revisions and cases where mitigation measures were required in each of the last three years:

Noise models used to assess road schemes in each of the last three years

Year	Number of Noise Models used to assess impact of road schemes	Number of Cases requiring revision of models	Number of Cases requiring mitigation measures
2010/11	5	1	3
2011/12	2	8	1
2012/13	1	1	1

After a scheme is constructed, legislation requires that the associated noise model is reassessed on the first, fifth, tenth and fifteenth year after road opening. The figures in the above table relating to 'Number of cases requiring revision of models' are all related to these reassessments, which by their nature redefine the model.

Penalty Charge Notices Issued in Kilrea

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued in Kilrea over the last three years; and of these, how many were successfully appealed.

(AQW 28712/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Kilrea, over the last three financial years, are included in the table below:

Financial Year	PCN's Issued
2010/11	95
2011/12	83
2012/13	54

It is not possible to provide figures relating to successful appeals by town or council area, as this information is not maintained in the format requested. However, an overall summary for Northern Ireland is provided in the table below for the last three financial years.

Financial Year	PCNs issued across NI	Number of PCNs appealed	Number of successful appeals
2010/11	118463	281	74
2011/12	124995	289	70
2012/13	108502	284	62

Special Christmas Parking Rate

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the car parks that have been designated as having a special Christmas parking rate; and the criteria used to select these from other urban car parks.

(AQW 28719/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the car parks, to which the special Christmas parking rate applies, are included in the table below:

Car Park	Location
Central (Castle Way)	Antrim
Dobbin Street Lane	Armagh
Friary Road (East Side)	Armagh
Linenhall Street	Armagh
Lonsdale Street	Armagh
Harrier Way	Ballyclare
Market Square	Ballyclare
Broughshane Street	Ballymena
Church Street 1	Ballymena
Church Street 2	Ballymena
Church Street 3	Ballymena
Town Centre Multi Storey	Ballymena
Church Street/Main Street	Ballymoney
Commercial Road	Banbridge
Downshire Place	Banbridge
Kenlis Street	Banbridge
Abbey Street East	Bangor
Abbey Street West	Bangor
Bingham Lane	Bangor
Castle Street	Bangor
Central Avenue	Bangor

Car Park	Location
Clifton Road	Bangor
Holborn Avenue	Bangor
Mills Road	Bangor
The Vennel	Bangor
High Street	Carrickfergus
Joymount	Carrickfergus
Lancasterian Street	Carrickfergus
Abbey Street	Coleraine
Long Commons	Coleraine
Mall	Coleraine
Irish Street	Downpatrick
Anne Street East	Dungannon
Castle Hill	Dungannon
Perry St East	Dungannon
Scotch Street North	Dungannon
Down/Market/Cross Street	Enniskillen
Eden Street	Enniskillen
Head Street	Enniskillen
Quay Lane North	Enniskillen
Quay Lane South	Enniskillen
Shore Road East	Enniskillen
Ballynahinch Street	Hillsborough
Church Road	Holywood
Hibernia Street North	Holywood
Hibernia Street South	Holywood
Agnew Street	Larne
Fairhill	Larne
Narrow Gauge Road	Larne
Central	Limavady
Connell Street	Limavady
Antrim Street	Lisburn
Barrack Street	Lisburn
Governors Road	Lisburn
Laganbank Road	Lisburn

Car Park	Location
Longstone Street Roundabout	Lisburn
Queens Road	Lisburn
Smithfield Square	Lisburn
Bishop Street	Londonderry
Carlisle Road	Londonderry
Foyle Street	Londonderry
Queen's Quay	Londonderry
Society/Palace Street	Londonderry
Spencer Road	Londonderry
Strand Road	Londonderry
Victoria Market	Londonderry
William Street	Londonderry
Castle Lane	Lurgan
Rainey Street	Magherafelt
Union Road	Magherafelt
Abbey Way Multistorey	Newry
Basin Walk	Newry
Canal Bank 2	Newry
Monaghan Street	Newry
New Street	Newry
Ann Street	Newtownards
Kennel Lane	Newtownards
Mill Street	Newtownards
Old Cross Street West	Newtownards
Old Cross Street East	Newtownards
South Street	Newtownards
South Street / Court Street	Newtownards
Upper Court Street	Newtownards
Drumragh Avenue (3 Mountjoy Road)	Omagh
Foundry Lane (30 Kevlin Avenue)	Omagh
Johnston Park	Omagh
Market Place	Omagh
Market Street (11 Dublin Road)	Omagh
Magowan Buildings	Portadown

Car Park	Location
Marley Street	Portadown
Meadow Lane West	Portadown
Butcher Street	Strabane
Lower Main Street North/South	Strabane
Railway Street	Strabane
Upper Main Street	Strabane
Total	95

With regard to the criteria used, the special Christmas tariff is being applied to all Roads Service car parks where drivers will benefit from it, (i.e. all car parks with a tariff of 30p per hour or more). It applies to areas outside of Belfast because they do not have the same level of accessibility to Park and Ride and Public Transport services. There would be no benefit to drivers if this rate had applied in lower tariff car parks, as the existing tariffs are already equal to, or lower than, the special rate.

Habitats Directive's Habitats Regulations Assessment

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any proposed road schemes came to the same conclusion for the need of an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive's Habitats Regulations Assessment as the A5 scheme.

(AQW 28744/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Under current legislation, all roads projects entailing the construction of a new or alteration of an existing carriageway must be assessed to determine their impact on ecology and the environment. Under the Habitats Regulations 1994, special consideration must be given to sites of special European status. These sites, which include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), are collectively referred to as Natura 2000 sites.

I carried out an Appropriate Assessment of the Main Valley Bogs SAC when making the decision to proceed with the A26 Frosses Road dual carriageway scheme.

During my time as Minister, a report to inform an Appropriate Assessment of the Natura 2000 sites has also been prepared for the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme, however, this scheme has not yet reached the stage where the Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken.

Prior to my tenure as Minister, a report to inform an Appropriate Assessment was prepared for the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson dualling scheme, which will be reviewed in due course.

In addition, the decision not to carry out an Appropriate Assessment for the A5 Western Transport Corridor Dualling was taken during the tenure of my predecessor.

Public Hire Taxi Ranks at High Street, Bridge Street and Botanic Avenue, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timeline of the actions since planning permission was sought in respect of additional Public Hire Taxi Ranks at High Street, Bridge Street and Botanic Avenue, Belfast

(AQW 28764/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is empowered to provide lengths of roads that may be used as stands for taxis under Article 27A of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. As such, planning permission is not specifically required.

Officials have developed proposals for additional taxi ranks in Botanic Avenue and High Street, Belfast and, on 18 September 2013, forwarded details to Belfast City Council and the PSNI for their comment and approval.

PSNI agreement to the proposals was obtained on 25 November 2013. My officials are presently preparing to carry out an informal consultation with the property owners immediately adjacent to the proposed locations to seek an agreed way forward, following which the necessary legislative procedures will be initiated.

Officials are not processing an additional public hire taxi rank at Bridge Street at present.

Upgrade of the Sydenham By-Pass to a 3 Lane Carriageway

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the planned upgrade of the Sydenham By-Pass to a 3 lane carriageway.

(AQW 28822/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is continuing to develop proposals for the A2 Sydenham Bypass Improvement Scheme. The proposed scheme will widen a 2.5km section, between Bridge End and Knocknagoney, from a dual 2-lane carriageway to a dual 3-lane carriageway.

The scheme is currently in the third stage of a three stage assessment process. Stage 1 focused on identifying the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages and disadvantages, in addition to the constraints associated with broadly defined improvement strategies. This concluded in the selection of the Proposed Corridor in May 2008. In Stage 2, a detailed assessment of a range of options within the Proposed Corridor was considered. This concluded in the selection of the Preferred Option in February 2010. Stage 3 involves detailed assessment of the Preferred Option and ongoing consultation with key stakeholders. This will result in the completion of the Statutory Orders; the draft Direction Order, Environmental Statement and Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order.

Whilst the budget for the period to 2015 will allow development work on Stage 3 to continue, progression beyond this will be subject to a satisfactory outcome to the statutory processes and the availability of funding in future years' budgets.

Road Calming Measures for Villages

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's policy on road calming measures for villages.

(AQW 28840/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The objective of traffic calming is to improve driver behaviour and control speed, thereby contributing to a reduction in the number, and severity of casualties resulting from road traffic collisions, especially amongst pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic calming also improves the urban street environment and reduces community severance.

My Department's traffic calming policy includes for the provision of gateway features at the entry points to villages and settlements. These features highlight the change in the road environment to drivers. In many cases, a speed limit change is associated with a gateway feature. Central islands and additional road markings are also provided for within the policy and have been used effectively to create a safer road environment.

Traffic calming is generally achieved through the provision of a range of engineering measures, which includes gateways, central islands, build-outs and road humps. However, it is not my Department's policy to provide road humps on through routes or trunk roads as a general rule, but only in exceptional circumstances.

Details on current traffic calming features can be accessed at

http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/traffic_calming_leaflet.pdf

Number and Use of Park and Ride Spaces

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, in each of the last ten years, (i) how many park and ride or park and share spaces have been in place; (ii) how many of those spaces were used; and (iii) what the equating number of vehicles was in terms of vehicles being taken out of the traffic flow. **(AQW 28851/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: AQW 28851/11-15

Details of the park and ride and park and share spaces operated by each Division of my Department's Roads Service, for the last ten years, are set out in the tables below:

Northern Division

Park & Ride/Share Site		D'derg Antrim	B'groobey, Antrim	Dunsilly, Antrim	T'patrick	Ballee, B'mena	Millbrook, Larne	Drumahoe, L'derry
No. of Spaces		100	35	258	68	87	84	271
Average Number of Cars Using Park and Ride Sites Daily	2013	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	150
	2012	79	20	131	82	87	52	97
	2011	59	23	64	64	72	Not opened	79
	2010	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not opened	60
	2009	73	30	105	78	59	Not opened	Not opened
	2008	49	21	110	57	44	Not opened	Not opened
	2007	39	28	86	62	44	Not opened	Not opened
	2006	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not opened	Not opened
	2005	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not opened	Not opened
	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not opened	Not opened

Southern Division

Park & Ride/Share Site		Newry, Sheepbridge	Cloughogue, Forkhill Road Newry	Armagh, Portadown Road	Lurgan, Lough Road
No. of Spaces		25	25	17	105
Average Number of Cars Using Park and Ride Sites Daily	2013	25	8	12	105
	2012	25	8	12	105
	2011	25	8	12	105
	2010	25	8	Not opened	105
	2009	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	105
	2008	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	105
	2007	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	105
	2006	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	105
	2005	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	105
	2004	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	105

Western Division

Park & Ride/Share Site		Ballygawley	Maghera	Castle-dawson roundabout	Castle-dawson Hillhead	Crevenagh Omagh
No. of Spaces		72	123	78	24	85/231*
Average Number of Cars Using Park and Ride Sites Daily	2013	38	107	79	4	85
	2012	52	85	80	8	73
	2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2010	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2009	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2008	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2007	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2006	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2005	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2004	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Capacity increased from 85 to 231 in April 2013

Eastern Division

Park & Ride/Share Site		Cairnshill	Spruce-field	Blacks Road	Eastside	Northside	Northside Overflow
No. of Spaces		720	320	220	220	231	154
Average Number of Cars Using Park and Ride Sites Daily	2013	388	226	202	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2012	219	224	192	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2011	152	211	177	213	232	47
	2010	99	220	151	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2009	Not opened	222	145	214	203	68
	2008	Not opened	241	150	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2007	Not opened	211	121	198	232	154
	2006	Not opened	146	99	120	225	145
	2005	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2004	Not opened	Not opened	Not opened	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note

- Where available, details of average occupancy levels have been included. As they are resource intensive, surveys to inform occupancy analysis are not carried out every year by each Division. In such instances "N/A" is specified in the tables.
- In some car parks occupancy levels can exceed capacity due to improper parking practices.

My Department's Roads Service does not hold data to illustrate the impact of park and ride and park and share schemes on traffic flow.

Details of the utilisation levels in all of Translink's Park and Ride facilities, for the last ten years, are set out in the following table:

Translink Park and Ride Facilities

YEAR	Number of Sites	Total Number of Spaces	Overall Utilisation Rate
2004	36	2,323	77%
2005	N/A	2,345	N/A
2006	N/A	2,874	N/A
2007	38	3,302	87%
2008	39	3,609	96%
2009	40	3,621	83%
2010	40	4,835	N/A

YEAR	Number of Sites	Total Number of Spaces	Overall Utilisation Rate
2011	45	5,136	70%
2012	49	5,697	75%
2013	49	6,099	76%

Note

- Where available, details of average occupancy levels have been included. As they are resource intensive, surveys to inform occupancy analysis are not carried out every year by each Division. In such instances "N/A" is specified in the tables.
- Translink does not hold information in relation to Park and Share facilities.

With regard to the number of vehicles being taken out of the traffic flow, a calculation using the data in the table above would suggest that, on the basis of an average 76% utilisation rate, on a daily basis 9,270 car journeys are removed from the network as a result of the provision of park and ride and park and share facilities.

A6 and the A5: Future Rounds of Infrastructure Building

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to prioritise the A6 or the A5 in future rounds of infrastructure building.

(AQW 28883/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) 2011-21 envisages improvements to both the A5 and A6 over the course of the 10 year period to 2021.

Both the Executive and the Irish Government remain committed to the A5 dual carriageway project and contractors are already in place. Following the Court ruling, work is progressing on an Appropriate Assessment process. Upon completion, this will be the subject of a public consultation exercise, which is expected to take place in spring 2014. A review of other matters considered in the Environmental Statement (ES) is ongoing, which may lead to publication of an updated document. Clearly I cannot prejudge any public consultation exercise and I am unable to give a definitive timetable as to when it may be possible for construction to start.

It is my intention to initiate a procurement competition to put a contractor in place for the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson scheme, so my Department would be in a position to avail of funding should it become available.

The A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme has been through Public Inquiry. My officials have considered the Inspector's recommendations and I expect to make a Departmental Statement on the way forward later this financial year.

However, progression of these schemes to construction will be dependent upon the successful completion of the statutory processes and the availability of funding.

Wards: Use of Public Transport

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the 10 per cent of wards in which people are least likely to use public transport.

(AQW 28887/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: This information is not currently available as there is no measure of the availability of public transport at Local Government District or Ward level, and Translink do not record this information.

Public Transport: Dunloy and Ballymoney; Ballymena; and Ballycastle

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to improve the public transport provision between Dunloy and (i) Ballymoney; (ii) Ballymena; and (iii) Ballycastle.

(AQW 28888/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have operational responsibility in regard to service provision. As Dunloy has a lower density of population, demand for conventional public transport is lower. It has also advised that all bus services throughout the network were examined under a Strategic Review in 2005.

Potential for increasing the service level in these areas has been discussed on a number of occasions since the review, but current usage would not justify additional journeys at present.

I have asked that Translink keep these corridors under review and look at any potential growth opportunities that may arise.

Increase in Public Transport Usage in North Antrim

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the increase in public transport usage in North Antrim over the last five years.

(AQW 28889/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The popularity of rail travel in the North West* continues to grow. Since 2007/08 growth in excess of 35% has been recorded along the corridor from Londonderry, through Coleraine, Ballymena and Antrim to Belfast and beyond. The recent £30m Renewals Project on the line between Coleraine and Londonderry which re-opened to passenger traffic on 24 March 2013 is likely to be a positive contribution to increased patronage.

A further contributory factor has been the enhanced timetable which came into operation in January 2013 which has resulted in an increase in frequency of over 40%.

Recently I announced that Translink will enhance the rail service provision in the North West.

Starting on 6 January 2014 Translink will offer passengers even more flexibility between Coleraine and Londonderry with the introduction of two additional trains. The extra service will depart Londonderry at 16:13, arriving in Coleraine at 17:01, while the return service will leave Coleraine at 17:55, and arrive back into Londonderry at 18:42. As a result the number of trains operating on the Coleraine to Londonderry section will increase from 59 to 64 each way per week

Bus service patronage in the North Antrim area, for the period requested is set out in the table below.

Year	Passenger Journeys
2008/09	8.6m
2009/10	8.2m
2010/11	8.1m
2011/12	7.9m
2012/13	8.0m

* Translink would define North West as Londonderry and Coleraine line

** Based on passenger statistics from Coleraine, Ballymena, Coleraine and Antrim depots

Cycle Filter Lights

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what cycle filter lights are installed on the roads network.

(AQW 28890/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are no cycle filter lights currently installed on my Department's road network.

ParkMobile App

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of the times the ParkMobile App; and (ii) the phone system have been used to pay for parking (a) in off-street car parks; and (b) on-street, in each month since their introduction.

(AQW 28905/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The most common methods of using Parkmobile to pay for parking events in parking places managed by my Department are the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Telephone System (also known as “automated voice recognition”) and the Parkmobile App. However, other less commonly used methods include texting from a mobile phone, using a computer to access the Parkmobile Internet Site, or being put through by a direct phone in cases where IVR cannot decipher the caller's voice.

The following table details the number of occasions that Parkmobile has been used to purchase off-street and on-street parking events, in each month, since being introduced by my Department in December 2010:

Year	Methods Used to Pay for Parkmobile						
	Parkmobile App		IVR Telephone System		Other (computer/direct phone/text)		On-Street
	Month	Off-Street	On-Street	Off-Street	On-Street	Off-Street	
2010	Dec		3				6
2011	Jan	0	4	15	5	3	28
	Feb	0	1	15	402	38	548
	Mar	22	529	33	774	28	465
	April	15	555	65	1026	23	386
	May	45	858	118	1377	46	467
	June	106	858	155	1777	38	430
	July	95	706	103	1227	21	292
	Aug	101	952	164	1814	30	447
	Sep	97	950	106	1746	45	1030
	Oct	85	1322	98	1821	84	1252
	Nov	100	1536	160	2340	40	748
	Dec	80	1538	165	2460	49	496
2012	Jan	147	1895	209	2797	68	471
	Feb	296	2330	410	3195	162	500
	Mar	327	2651	484	3553	132	544
	April	357	2271	549	3249	120	375
	May	416	2883	636	3999	125	542
	June	405	2673	666	3802	126	483
	July	226	1325	491	3161	304	1829

Year	Methods Used to Pay for Parkmobile						
	Parkmobile App		IVR Telephone System		Other (computer/ direct phone/text)		
	Month	Off-Street	On-Street	Off-Street	On-Street	Off-Street	On-Street
2012	Aug	333	1438	844	3533	507	2203
	Sep	638	2766	914	3520	286	887
	Oct	799	3706	1147	4068	285	653
	Nov	945	4216	1287	4251	384	578
	Dec	1713	3490	1951	3634	682	517
2013	Jan	2588	4513	2953	4210	461	463
	Feb	2792	5176	3031	4293	347	470
	Mar	3068	5979	3376	4442	225	360
	April	3681	6347	3665	4400	167	287
	May	4400	7275	4242	5061	201	317
	June	4778	6671	4655	4478	150	235
	July	5007	5849	4171	3779	130	247
	Aug	5887	7320	4542	4411	207	252
	Sep	6511	7678	5256	4886	213	272
	Oct	7960	9115	5951	5459	269	318
	Nov	8388	9386	5877	5182	292	249
	Total	62408	116765	58504	110132	6288	19647

Upgrade of Donaghadee Harbour

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to improve and upgrade the Donaghadee Harbour and its environs prior to the proposed transfer to the new North Down and Ards Council.

(AQW 28912/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In light of the proposed transfer of Donaghadee harbour to local authority control, considerable capital expenditure has been invested to ensure that the harbour's structures will transfer in good condition. Most recently, my Department funded dredging of the full harbour basin in 2011. The biennial harbour condition survey was carried out in 2013. My officials will consider the report of the survey when it is received and draw up an action plan for any capital works that are identified.

Civil Servants: Receiving Gifts or Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether, since May 2007, in relation to civil servants in his Department or its arm's-length bodies receiving gifts or hospitality, there have been any requests for approval of matters that fall outside the boundaries of what is normally allowable; and if so, to detail such requests.

(AQW 28959/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Within my Department and its arm's length bodies Northern Ireland Water and Translink, registers are maintained, updated and monitored in respect of all offers of gifts and hospitality made to

staff by third parties. These registers record details of each offer received and indicate, in each case, whether the offer was accepted (with management approval) or declined.

The entries in the registers show that, during the period from May 2007 to date, no requests were made for approval of matters which fall outside the boundaries of what is normally acceptable in this area.

Pedestrian Safety on the Comber Road Foot Path

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the width of the footpath planned, as part of the Comber Road safety improvements, in ensuring adequate safety for pedestrians and people with a disability.

(AQW 28973/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has inherited many footpaths in towns and villages throughout Northern Ireland which do not meet modern day standards. The Public Realm Scheme planned for Comber is an Ards Borough Council-led project, funded mainly by the Department of Social Development (DSD), but with a contribution from the Council.

In general, Environmental Improvement Schemes are intended to enhance and revitalise towns, providing finishes which will help encourage new development, increase business potential and make them more commercially viable and attractive to visitors. My Department's Roads Service is one of a number of consultees to the planning process in this regard.

As you will appreciate, site constraints in some narrow streets, together with other contributory factors, can present considerable practical difficulties when seeking to achieve desired aims. Roads Service will, however, in conjunction with Public Representatives, Ards Borough Council, DSD, Comber Regeneration Community Partnership, PSNI, Appointed Consultants and other interested parties, continue to provide advice and guidance in relation to potential road safety improvements in the town where practicable, subject to the availability of resources.

Comber Road Safety Improvements

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the process whereby the road traffic flow and pedestrian safety were evaluated in relation to the Comber Road safety improvements; and to outline the cost-benefit analysis undertaken prior to the decision being taken.

(AQW 28974/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: AQW 28974/11-15

My Department's Roads Service has been one of a number of consultees involved in the Planning process relating to a Public Realm Improvement Scheme for Comber. The scheme is led by Ards Borough Council and mainly funded by the Department for Social Development (DSD), with a contribution by Council.

I understand URS Consultants, who have been appointed to deliver the Public Realm Scheme, made a number of recommendations regarding traffic management in Comber. The recommendations were as a result of local consultations and took account of the physical need within Comber, set against the constraints of the target budget of £2 million. One suggestion was the possibility of introducing a one-way system in Comber town centre.

Departmental officials commissioned a Feasibility Study in 2009 to look at the possibility of introducing a one-way system in Comber town centre, including Castle Street. The basis of this study was considered by URS Consultants and proposals were included in discussions, in relation to the Public Realm Scheme, with local traders and stakeholders. No agreement or consensus could be reached, and the one-way proposal was withdrawn as it could have jeopardised the delivery of the Public Realm Scheme.

Consideration has also been given to a further suggestion by Comber Regeneration Community Partnership, to set the traffic signals further back in Castle Street to allow the footways to be widened on either side. The personal injury collision history records provided by PSNI, site constraints, parking/

servicing, potential traffic delays and reduced efficiency of the junction, together with road safety concerns, were taken into consideration during the primary assessment of this suggestion. The major concern with this proposal is the potential safety issue caused by traffic emerging from Castle Street after passing the set-back traffic signals on Castle Street. For example, any delay after passing the set-back green light may mean that traffic will reach the junction when other legs of the junction are on green – thus causing a serious road safety issue.

My officials are continuing to investigate and provide advice and guidance in consultation with Ards Borough Council and the various stakeholders involved in the Public Realm Scheme, to seek improvements to the infrastructure, where it is practicable to do so.

Pedestrian Safety on the Comber Road Foot Path

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what proposals the Roads Service has to improve pedestrian safety on the Comber Road foot path.

(AQW 28975/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has inherited many footpaths in towns and villages throughout Northern Ireland, which do not meet modern day standards. Roads Service officials will continue to investigate and assess potential improvements to the road network infrastructure and develop work programmes to be implemented, on a prioritised basis, in accordance with current guidelines, subject to available finance and resources. Castle Street, Comber will be given due consideration during this process.

Manually Operated Signalling Equipment in N. I. Railways

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, when the only manually operated signalling equipment in N. I. Railways from the 19th century that is currently functioning at Castlerock becomes unnecessary in 2015, will he ensure that the items are retained and kept for future generations.

(AQW 29001/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink officials have advised me that it has already had discussions with relevant heritage groups, i.e. Downpatrick and County Down Railway and Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, about the recovery and future use of any such redundant equipment and through these discussions will try to ensure that the items are retained and kept for future generations.

Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many entries his Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 29006/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Special Adviser has made no entries in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

Environmental Impact Assessment: A26 Frosses Road

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment carried out on the A26 Frosses Road; and (ii) the findings of the assessment.

(AQW 29016/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The scope and findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment carried out on the A26 Glarryford to A44 Dromedary Road Dualling scheme are reported in the scheme's Environmental Statement, which was published on 20 March 2012.

The Environmental Statement for this scheme can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address: www.drdni.gov.uk/a26frosses.

Number of Buses Disposed of or Sold by Translink

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of buses disposed of or sold by Translink in the last five years; (ii) the value of the sales; and (iii) the method of disposal.
(AQW 29024/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink, when disposing of redundant buses, aims to maximise their value using the most appropriate outlet. The vast majority of buses are life-expired and the highest scrap value is obtained from a scrap vehicle handler.

Selected vehicles which are considered to have further operational life are advertised on the Translink website and, where appropriate, in industry publications or by use of approved dealerships.

Offers for non-life expired vehicles are considered for approval by the Translink Executive Committee.

The tables below detail the information which you have requested.

Ulsterbus

Year	No. of Vehicles	Profit/(Loss) on Disposal (Assets) £	Comments
2009/10	125	374,764	57 sold as scrap 68 to other operators
2010/11	110	177,083	29 sold as scrap 81 to other operators
2011/12	75	72,778	23 sold as scrap 52 to other operators
2012/13	58	100,407	27 sold as scrap 31 to other operators
2013/14	53	150,481	13 sold as scrap 40 to other operators
Total	421	875,513	149 sold as scrap 272 to other operators

Metro

Year	No. of Vehicles	Profit/(Loss) on Disposal (Assets) £	Comments
2009/10	11	14,955	1 sold as scrap 10 to other operators
2010/11	7	14,705	3 sold as scrap 4 to other operators
2011/12	12	(25,797)	8 sold as scrap 4 to other operators
2012/13	23	47,041	15 sold as scrap 8 to other operators
2013/14	16	33,332	7 sold as scrap 9 to other operators
Total	69	84,236	34 sold as scrap 35 to other operators

A1 Road at Tinker Hill: Park and Ride Facilities

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the section of the A1 Road at Tinker Hill, Newry could accommodate additional Park and Ride facilities.

(AQW 29040/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: AQW 29040/11-15

I am pleased to inform you I officially opened a new expanded Park and Share facility at the Sheepbridge/Tinkers Hill Area of Newry on Monday 9 December 2013. The capacity of this well-used parking area has more than doubled with 62 spaces now available compared to the previous 25. This scheme has been constructed on lands owned by the Department following the construction of the Newry Bypass scheme.

At the present time there are no other viable sites located closer to Newry along the old A28 Belfast Road (previously known as A1 Tinker Hill). My officials will monitor usage in this area following the opening of the new facility and, should demand increase, will also further investigate the possibility of providing additional sites, subject to land acquisition and budgetary constraints.

Street Lights

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many street lights there are in each council area; (ii) how many tonnes of CO2 emissions they produce annually; and (iii) whether he has considered replacing them with LED technology lighting.

(AQW 29041/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of street lights my Department has, in each council area, are provided in the table below:

Council Area	Street Lights
Antrim	8,813
Ards	11,876
Armagh	8,115
Ballymena	10,093
Ballymoney	4,410
Banbridge	6,885
Belfast	35,780
Carrickfergus	6,642
Castlereagh	10,585
Coleraine	12,146
Cookstown	4,754
Craigavon	16,677
Derry	21,023
Down	10,321
Dungannon & South Tyrone	6,931
Fermanagh	10,408
Larne	5,326

Council Area	Street Lights
Limavady	5,669
Lisburn	18,098
Magherafelt	5,142
Moyle	2,957
Newry and Mourne	12,895
Newtownabbey	14,442
North Down	12,887
Omagh	7,399
Strabane	6,991

The electricity procured for street lighting is currently from 100% renewable sources. However, at a typical conversion rate for grid electricity, the amount of electricity consumed by the street lights would equate to some 53,613 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Roads Service has an ongoing programme of replacing street lighting assets when they reach the end of their serviceable life. Over recent years, Roads Service has installed a number of LED lighting schemes, with the largest and most recent scheme located at Upper Knockbreda Road, Belfast.

The use of LEDs for street lighting offers great promise of long life and reduced operational and maintenance costs. Roads Service is currently seeking to appraise available street lighting technologies, such as LEDs etc, as well as options for the provision and maintenance of street lighting.

Belfast Bike Hire Scheme: East Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to connect East Belfast to the Belfast Bike Hire Scheme; and whether a hub could be located in this area.

(AQW 29056/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Belfast City Council was awarded an Active Travel Demonstration Project Grant of almost £700k in August 2012, to develop the infrastructure requirements for a public bike hire scheme in Belfast.

Belfast City Council are responsible for the project management of the scheme and will be responsible for managing any future contractual arrangements, further development of the scheme and meeting ongoing running costs. The Council are fully responsible for the design of the scheme, including the location of docking stations.

Work has commenced on the identification of suitable sites for up to 25 docking stations which will hold a total of 300 bikes at core city centre locations.

My officials are providing a project assurance role in respect of the expenditure associated with the grant and will continue to assist Belfast City Council in any practical way possible, during the development of the scheme.

Bottled Water Supplies

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how much Roads Service has spent on bottled water, in each of the last five years; (ii) the cost per bottle; (iii) how often bottled water supplies are tendered for; and (iv) how many bids were received for each tender.

(AQW 29064/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of expenditure incurred by my Department's Roads Service on bottled water, in each of the last five years, are included in the table below:

Amount spent on bottled water in each of the last five years

Financial Year	Amount
2009/10	£5,457.86
2010/11	£5,868.60
2011/12	£5,093.35
2012/13	£2,807.54
2013/14	£968.35

Following a review in 2008 of the provision of bottled water in DRD premises, including those occupied by Roads Service staff, the DRD Departmental Board restricted the use of bottled water within DRD accommodation, where a fresh mains drinking water supply was available within the premises. However, where there was no fresh mains drinking water available in a building, the policy permitted the business area to procure bottled water, subject to the appropriate approval.

As mains drinking water supplies are being installed in each DRD accommodation, the use of bottled water within buildings is being phased out.

With regard to the cost per bottle over the period, this has ranged from £4 to £7.25 for a 19 litre bottle.

In relation to how often the bottled water supply has been tendered for and how many bids were received, due to the low costs involved in each Roads Service Business area/Division, it has not been necessary to tender for this service.

NI Water: Water Conservation

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department and NI Water encourage water conservation.

(AQW 29084/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has in place a wide range of measures, aimed at encouraging water conservation. In addition to NIW's leakage reduction strategy, it involves a proactive approach to water conservation by all customers, including education and awareness, the issue of water saving devices known as Hippo Bags and water audits. This involves a year round education and public awareness campaign to promote the water conservation message and make available a wide range of advice leaflets and water conservation aids. Over the past three years, NIW has run an extensive media campaign to highlight to customers the need to prepare their pipework in advance of the winter to protect from severe weather conditions. A dedicated Leakline number is available for customers to report leakage incidents.

40% of water delivered is used by the non-domestic sector where there is a wide range of consumption. Metering is the preferred charging method for these customers and NIW is currently extending the scope of metering of non-domestic properties. Metering in this sector is likely to have the most significant contribution to water conservation.

Dedicated pages are available on the NIW website at www.niwater.com with advice on household and non-domestic water efficiency. This includes guidance on the types of appliances that could be fitted to homes and business which would help them to be more efficient in the future and "Top Ten Tips for Business Water Efficiency".

Energy Saving Light Bulbs for Street Lighting

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to use energy saving light bulbs for street lighting.

(AQW 29090/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service seeks to use the most cost-effective street lighting equipment for energy efficiency and performance. Officials have been maintaining a keen interest in the ongoing development and use of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) for street lighting over recent years, through contacts with other roads authorities, professional organisations, manufacturers and contractors.

A number of LED street lighting schemes have already been installed, and Roads Service is currently seeking to appraise available street lighting technologies, such as LEDs etc, as well as options for the provision and maintenance of street lighting.

Wi-Fi in Train and Bus Stations

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to install Wi-Fi in train and bus stations.

(AQW 29116/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have liaised with Translink officials who have advised me that Wi-Fi is currently available at Central Station but is not free; rather it is a commercial service provided by BT Openzone.

Translink has looked at providing free Wi-Fi in key locations but this is not being progressed at present, due to the cost and the fact that passengers mostly 'turn up and go', i.e. they spend only a short period waiting for its services.

Planning Application Consultation: Response Time

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service has a target for the time it takes to respond to a planning application consultation.

(AQW 29130/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 28634/11-15.

Residents' Parking Scheme near the Magee Campus in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed residents' parking scheme near the Magee campus in Derry.

(AQW 29139/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service previously identified a number of areas, around the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster that were considered suitable for the introduction of "resident only" parking schemes, namely in the Lawrence Hill and Northland Road areas. The progression of these proposals is dependent upon the successful introduction of other residents' parking schemes in Northern Ireland, including one in the Bogside area of Londonderry, which have not yet been implemented.

The introduction of further residents' schemes will only be considered following careful monitoring and evaluation of the initial schemes. In addition, there are a number of other areas within the city that would be deemed a higher priority for the implementation of residents' parking schemes.

20mph Zones Outside Schools

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 5340/11-15, for an update on the introduction of 20 mph zones outside schools.

(AQW 29156/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department continues to deliver safety measures at schools and is developing policy to improve the safety of children on their journey to school. The concept of introducing part-time 20 mph speed limits outside schools has been agreed following the success of pilot schemes installed outside three primary schools.

However, as the cost of the safety measures used in the pilot schemes was higher than anticipated and given that financial resources are limited, my Department has been developing equally effective lower-cost safety measures, which will allow more schools to be treated within available budgets.

A new road safety at schools policy, which will encompass all available safety engineering measures, is also nearing completion. It is anticipated this policy will be in place for the next financial year.

Bus Services from Belfast International Airport

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what bus services operate from Belfast International Airport to Belfast city centre hotels.

(AQW 29166/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink provide bus services from Belfast International Airport to the Europa Buscentre, which is a short walking distance from a number of Belfast City centre hotels. From here passengers can also access other Translink services and/or taxi services to enable them to travel to other hotels throughout the city or further afield.

I understand that a private bus operator has made an application to the Department of Environment, (Driver & Road Transport Licensing) to provide a service from Belfast International Airport to the main Belfast City Centre hotels. This application is a matter for DOE and is currently being considered.

Road from Central Station to the Short Strand: Cycling Lanes and Infrastructure

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will work with the Department for Social Development to use the extra width on the road from Central Station to the Short Strand to introduce better cycling lanes and infrastructure.

(AQW 29217/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: One of my objectives in establishing a Cycling Unit within my Department is to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. I am confident that both Transport NI and the Cycling Unit will work with other interested stakeholders in developing robust and sustainable cycling infrastructure. My officials have recently met with DSD officials about this project and I expect the two Departments to work together to deliver a balanced and sustainable solution for all road users.

Capital Works at Donaghadee Harbour

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what capital works are required on Donaghadee Harbour and its environs.

(AQW 29286/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my previous answer on 16th December 2013 (AQW 28912/11-15).

NI Water: Rousky, County Tyrone

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water plans to locate a pumping station in Rousky, County Tyrone to connect homes to the public sewerage network.

(AQW 29312/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has no current plans at this time to provide a first time public sewer extension or pumping station in Rousky to enable homes to connect to the public sewerage network.

NIW received a requisition for a first time public sewer extension and wastewater pumping station from property owners at Rousky in 2009 and a follow up requisition in 2012. NIW is required to provide a requisitioned sewer, subject to certain conditions including a requirement that the persons requesting the requisition pay the reasonable costs of providing the sewer as determined in accordance with NIW's Charges Scheme. In calculating the cost to be borne by the persons making the requisition, NIW deducts a reasonable cost allowance in respect of providing a sewer to domestic premises. The overall estimated cost of the scheme exceeded the available funding under the reasonable cost allowance leaving a shortfall of approximately £270k (2012 prices) to be funded by those benefitting from the service. Unless they agree to meet the shortfall, NIW is unable to progress the work.

Ballygawley Water Treatment and Sewage Works

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development an update on the upgrading of Ballygawley Water Treatment and Sewage Works.

(AQW 29328/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that Ballygawley Wastewater Treatment Works is currently achieving its discharge standard and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has not reported any pollution incidents for the Works. Based on proposals for development within the catchment, NIW has identified a need for increased treatment capacity at the Works and it estimates that the construction of a new Works on the existing site would cost in the region of £2.5 million.

A priority list of capital works has been agreed with the environmental regulator (NIEA) for the forthcoming regulatory review PC 15, which covers the period 2015 to 2021. As the construction of a new Ballygawley Works has been placed at number 64 on the list, it must be considered against the other priority work to be included in NIW's PC15 capital work programme.

Disability Action Transport Scheme

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development what resources his Department has provided the Disability Action Transport Scheme to meet the transport needs of people with a disability.

(AQW 29344/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Since 01 April 2013, when the scheme started, my Department has provided grant funding of £2,264,546.00 to Disability Action to operate the Disability Action Transport Scheme across Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Water: Electricity

Mr Wilson asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions his Department has had with Northern Ireland Water to investigate the possibility of generating electricity from the flow of water within water mains, by installing Archimedean Screws within suitable water main pipes.

(AQW 29368/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Existing Ministerial Guidance to NI Water includes a priority to contribute to the Programme for Government greenhouse gas emissions reduction target (e.g. through increased use of green energy).

NI Water generates in the region of 2.5 Gigawatts of electricity per year from raw water sources. It is conducting an assessment of the potential to generate additional electricity from both raw water sources and from potable water mains. This assessment will consider a number of hydro technologies including Archimedes Screw and hydro turbines to replace pressure control valves within the water network.

My Department is consulting on future priorities in draft Social and Environmental Guidance for Water and Sewerage Service (2015-21). This includes proposals about investigating opportunities for generating renewable energy from NI Water assets. The Draft Guidance also includes a number of other priorities that could contribute to managing future increases in NI Water's energy demands and operating costs. The public consultation on Draft Social and Environmental Guidance closes on 31 January 2014.

Department for Social Development

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of (i) Housing Executive; and (ii) Housing Association properties in each Housing Executive District Office area.

(AQW 28327/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has provided information about the number of their properties in each District Office area in Table 1 below: -

Table 1 – Housing Executive Properties

North Belfast	6,167
South & East	7,582
West Belfast	5,060
Shankill	3,508
Bangor	2,658
Newtownards	3,855
Castlereagh	3,738
Lisburn Antrim Street	4,325
Lisburn Dairy Farm	1,842
Downpatrick	2,375
Newry	1,917
Banbridge	1,776
Armagh	3,048
Lurgan	2,522
Portadown	1,599
Dungannon	1,757
Fermanagh	1,988
Omagh	1,786
Cookstown	1,031
Antrim	2,364
Newtownabbey 1	2,160
Newtownabbey 2	2,134
Ballymena	2,722
Carrickfergus	1,894
Larne	1,295
Magherafelt	1,289
Ballycastle	818

Ballymoney	1,449
Coleraine	3,046
Limavady	1,451
Waterloo Place	2,179
Waterside	2,392
Collon Terrace	2,352
Strabane	2,164

The information for Housing Associations is not available in the format requested as they do not collate details of their properties by Housing Executive District Office area. However, Table 2 below details the number of Housing Association properties by District Council area: -

Table 2 – Housing Association Properties

Antrim Borough Council	467
Ards Borough Council	1162
Armagh City and District Council	375
Ballymena Borough Council	602
Ballymoney Borough Council	143
Banbridge District Council	404
Belfast City Council	14648
Carrickfergus Borough Council	563
Castlereagh Borough Council	850
Coleraine Borough Council	692
Cookstown District Council	168
Craigavon Borough Council	1294
Derry City Council	4278
Down District Council	902
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	627
Fermanagh District Council	630
Larne Borough Council	344
Limavady Borough Council	369
Lisburn City Council	2899
Magherafelt District Council	271
Moyle District Council	158
Newry and Mourne District Council	1123
Newtownabbey Borough Council	1012
North Down Borough Council	1229

Omagh District Council	384
Strabane District Council	541

NB: Where a housing association identified they had shared/hostel bedspaces these have been counted as one property.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Strategy

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Social Development how he will ensure that housing strategies align with Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 28934/11-15)

Mr McCausland: One of the five themes outlined in my Department's Housing Strategy is to meet housing need and support the most vulnerable

In order to meet housing need and support the most vulnerable in the owner occupied sector, the department will

Work with DHSSPS to make the best use of combined resources to support independent living

Review the Supporting People Programme to take into account all new and emerging policies to ensure that appropriate advice and support is available to allow individuals to find housing solutions that enable them to live as independently as possible: and,

Work with DHSS&PS to develop a more joined-up approach to provide the support that will allow as many individuals and families as possible to remain in their own home.

Programme for Government Targets

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Programme for Government target to deliver 8,000 new social and affordable homes by 2015, how many of these homes are scheduled for (i) Banbridge, (ii) Portadown and (iii) Lurgan.

(AQW 29091/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Programme for Government set a target to deliver 6000 social and 2000 affordable homes over the 4 year period 2011/12 – 2014/15.

Table 1 denotes the starts target per year and actual number of units delivered. The current year 2013/14 is year 3 of the PfG programme.

Table 2 details those schemes started on site during 2011/12 in Banbridge, Portadown and Lurgan. This information is based on the District Council areas of Banbridge and Craigavon. No starts occurred within these two Council areas during 2012/13.

Table 3 details those schemes within Banbridge and Craigavon District Council areas currently programmed to start on site during 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.

I am currently considering a new Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) for the 3 year period 2014/15 – 2016/17. This will be published on the Housing Executive's website in January 2014.

Table 4 details the number of affordable property purchases supported by the Co-Ownership Scheme in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years, in the relevant Council Areas. The information is not available in the format requested ie to 2015 due to this being demand led.

Table 1

Year	Starts Target	Actual units Started
2011/12	1400	1410
2012/13	1325	1379
2013/14	1275	217 (at 10th Dec 2013)
2014/15	2000	
Total	6000	3006 (at 10th Dec 2013)

Table 2

Year	HA	Scheme	Units	Need Group
2011/12	Oaklee	Glen View, Rathfriland	2	General
2011/12	South Ulster	169 Banbridge Road, Kinallen	4	General
2011/12	South Ulster	Hillcrest Lurgan	7	General
2011/12	South Ulster	96-100 Thomas St Portadown	3	General
2011/12	South Ulster	5 Abbey Manor Lurgan	1	General
2011/12	South Ulster	Clendinning ESPS Portadown	5	General
2011/12	South Ulster	4 Meadowbrook Craigavon	1	General
2011/12	South Ulster	16 Deans Walk Lurgan	1	General
Total			24	

Table 3

Year	HA	Scheme	Units	Need Group
2013/14	Not yet nominated	178 Banbridge Road Kinallen	5	General
2013/14	Clanmil	Bayview Park Derrymore	4	General
2013/14	Oaklee	Curran Street Portadown	6	General
2013/14	Trinity	4 Lake Street Lurgan	26	Elderly (Cat1)
2014/15	Habinteg	Woodlands Gilford	1	Physically Disabled
2014/15	Ulidia	South Area Older People Banbridge/Dromore	18	Frail Elderly
2014/15	Habinteg	Headington Drive Lurgan	20	General
2014/15	Oaklee	Edward Street Portadown	15	Homeless/Ex-offenders
2015/16	Trinity	12 Dromara Road, Dromore	9	General
Total			104	

Table 4

Year	Council Area	Units
2011/12	Banbridge District Council	14
2011/12	Craigavon Borough Council	51
2012/13	Banbridge District Council	18
2012/13	Craigavon Borough Council	79

Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to long-term Disability Living Allowance recipients who have been through several medical assessments and their award was not modified, but have since been reassessed by Atos Healthcare and their award has been reduced or removed, what changes have been made to examination guidelines or decision factors; and how these differ from the original guidelines, prior to Atos Healthcare taking over examinations.

(AQW 29124/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In a small number of Disability Living Allowance reviews a decision-maker in the Social Security Agency will request an Examining Medical Practitioner report to help them determine eligibility to the benefit. Prior to June 2011 the completion of the Examining Medical Practitioner report was carried out by a General Practitioner engaged by the Social Security Agency for that purpose only and completed during a visit to the claimant's home. The Examining Medical Practitioner gathered information on the diagnosis, the history of the condition, treatment and the severity and likely disabling effects of the condition on day-to-day living

From June 2011 Atos Healthcare has provided the Examining Medical Practitioner service for the Social Security Agency. The Examining Medical Practitioner report is still completed by a General Practitioner during a visit to the claimant's home and the report form completed is still the same one used prior to June 2011. The form is provided by the Social Security Agency to Atos Healthcare and continues to collect the same information as before.

Decision-Makers in determining entitlement to Disability Living consider all the available evidence including, where appropriate, information gathered through an Examining Medical Practitioner report. This approach, which is in line with the legislation governing the benefit, is supported by decision making guidance and has not changed since Atos Healthcare commenced providing the Examining Medical Practitioner service for the Social Security Agency.

Housing Waiting List

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are on the housing waiting list in each ward in North Down.

(AQW 29128/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive has advised that it does not routinely collate details about the waiting list at ward level. However, the table attached details the number of applicants on the waiting list by Housing Executive Common Landlord Area in its Bangor District Office area, at 1 December 2013.

Table: Number of Applicants on the Bangor Waiting List

NIHE Common Landlord Area	Applicants
Bangor Central	205
Bloomfield Road/ Balloo	644

NIHE Common Landlord Area	Applicants
Churchhill	19
Clandeboyne Road	37
Clanmorris	2
Conlig/ Breezemount	49
Crawfordsburn	14
Donaghadee Road	64
Greenmount Avenue	0
Groomsport	68
Helens Bay (Rural)	20
Hollywood/ Redburn	133
Kilcooley	327
Loughview/ White City	107
Skipperstone/ Tughan Court	62
Spencer Street	76
Strand/ Kinnegar	41
Whitehill	132
Woodlands	3

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Level of Pay to Tradespeople

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department monitors the level of pay to tradespeople employed by contractors and sub-contractors involved in Northern Ireland Housing Executive work.

(AQW 29151/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that it does not monitor the level of pay to trades people employed by either contractors or sub-contractors. However, the Housing Executive has further advised that all main contractors are required to inform the Housing Executive of any shortcomings in compliance with current legislation.

Departmental Contracts

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department monitors the standard of work carried out by contractors and sub-contractors to ensure quality standards compliance with contract and value for money.

(AQW 29152/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to how the Northern Ireland Housing Executive monitors the standard of work carried out by contractors and sub-contractors.

The Housing Executive advises that its Corporate Assurance Unit (CAU) is an independent assurance unit within the Housing Executive. CAU has inspection programmes in place for response and planned maintenance contracts including heating. The inspections provide the Housing Executive Board with a

level of assurance on the quality of the work provided by contractors in relation to Housing Executive standards and specifications and the accuracy of the costs claimed. In addition the inspections provide assurance on the management of the contractors by operational staff. On completion of inspections the CAU provide recommendations to management to address both quality and cost issues and they report inspections results quarterly to the Housing Executive's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many Disability Living Allowance recipients have had their award adjusted upward to a higher component following assessment by Atos Healthcare, since it took over medical examinations.

(AQW 29206/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available as the Department for Work and Pensions IT system used by the Social Security Agency to administer Disability Living Allowance does not capture this specific level of detail.

Cycling Lane Infrastructure

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will work with the Department for Regional Development to use the extra width on the road from Central Station to the Short Strand to introduce better cycling lanes and infrastructure.

(AQW 29218/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is currently working to complete a Public Realm Improvement Scheme from the Albert Bridge to East Bridge Street linking two previous schemes already completed at Cromac Street junction and Albertbridge Road. The works include upgrading the footway to a high quality stone material along with granite kerbs and suitable boundary treatments at the back of footways. No works are planned for the carriageway as this is the remit of DRD Roads Service. As with all DSD schemes DRD Roads Service is kept informed of all design proposals as part of the normal consultation process with statutory bodies as schemes are developed.

Homeless People in South Down

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Social Development how many people presented themselves as homeless in South Down in each of the last three years; and what action his Department is taking to support these people.

(AQW 29236/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Please note that figures cannot be produced at constituency level. The closest figures can be obtained by interpreting South Down as being represented by the Downpatrick, Newry and Banbridge District Offices of the Housing Executive.

The following tables display the homeless presentations and homelessness acceptances by the 3 districts over the past 3 years and the first six months of this year.

Downpatrick	Presenting as homeless	Accepted as homeless Full Duty Applicant
2010/11	609	299
2011/12	574	204
2012/13	420	209
2013/14 (6 months)	286	134

Newry	Presenting as homeless	Accepted as homeless Full Duty Applicant
2010/11	770	324
2011/12	805	322
2012/13	761	402
2013/14 (6 months)	428	204

Banbridge	Presenting as homeless	Accepted as homeless Full Duty Applicant
2010/11	345	145
2011/12	310	120
2012/13	316	156
2013/14 (6 months)	170	73

In response to homelessness across Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive and its partners in the Promoting Social Inclusion Homelessness Partnership have been developing and producing a range of homeless prevention measures under the auspices of the Homelessness Strategy 2012/2017.

The Housing Executive launched the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland on 1 May 2012. This followed an extensive consultation and redrafting process throughout 2011 to establish agreement among the Statutory and Voluntary Agencies who would be helping to deliver the strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy 2012-17 sets out a strategy for tackling homelessness over the next five years and establishes the guiding principles for the development and delivery of homelessness services. At this time of economic uncertainty and financial constraints it is more important than ever that homelessness services are appropriate, timely and effective.

The aim of this homelessness strategy is that long term homelessness and rough sleeping is eliminated across Northern Ireland by 2020.

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Smoke Alarms

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether it is Housing Executive policy to fit smoke alarms in its properties.

(AQW 29250/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that there have been numerous specific smoke and heat detectors installation schemes and their records indicate that smoke alarms have now been fitted in the region of 86,000 of their total tenanted stock of 87,303. The Housing Executive will continue to provide smoke detectors to their remaining stock during heating and kitchen installation schemes and during Disabled Persons Adaptations work. However, it should be noted that a number of tenants did not allow planned work to proceed in their homes which would have included the installation of a wired smoke alarm; the Housing Executive continues to encourage each of these tenants to install a battery powered smoke alarm. The Housing Executive also regularly advises all its tenants to test their alarms.

Warm Home Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 28668/11-15, given the disparity of takeup between council areas of similar population size and demographic composition, what further steps can be taken to encourage people to avail of the Warm Homes Scheme.

(AQW 29261/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The marketing of Warm Homes Scheme is the responsibility of the two Scheme Managers (Bryson Energy and H&A Mechanical). The Scheme Managers produce annual marketing plans outlining their proposed promotional activities and report on these activities at the monthly meetings with the Housing Executive. Marketing activities range from press releases and adverts, to attendance at local events and direct mail promotion to target households on qualifying benefits.

They also work with two rural projects, Western Home Environmental Assessment Project (WHEAP) and Maximising Access in Rural Areas (MARA) to encourage scheme take up in rural areas. The Scheme Managers monitor uptake across all their contract areas and respond appropriately. For example, one Scheme Manager is currently targeting households in North Down, where the scheme uptake has typically been low.

The scheme has been successful and since its inception in 2001 more than 117,000 homes have received energy efficiency improvement measures. The scheme is based on eligible households self referring and there will always be variance in numbers by council areas as there will always be those who will not come forward to take advantage of schemes like Warm Homes.

Since April 2012 my Department has been delivering the Affordable Warmth Pilot, working in partnership with the University of Ulster, local councils and the Housing Executive using a targeting tool to identify homes that may be entitled to help from the Warm Homes Scheme. Once this pilot has been completed my Department will report and evaluate on the outcomes and will go to public consultation on proposals for a new scheme early next year.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the rationale for the date of birth cut-off for Winter Fuel Allowance eligibility being moved forward by six months for 2013-2014 as opposed to a full year.

(AQW 29263/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Originally entitlement to Winter Fuel Payment was directly linked to pension age so a woman was entitled from age 60 but a man was not entitled until age 65.

Now, both men and women are entitled to Winter Fuel payment on the same basis. In effect, this is if they have attained the state pension age for a woman in the qualifying week for the winter concerned (the week beginning with the third Monday in September).

Pension age for men and women is currently being equalised on the phased basis set out in Table 1 in Schedule 2 to the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (as amended). As set out in that Table, for the winter 2012/13 only those born before 6 July 1951 attained pension age for a woman by the qualifying week. For the winter 2013/14, only those born before 6 January 1952 attained pension age for a woman by the qualifying week.

Hostel Accommodation Places

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of hostel accommodation places provided to homeless people in North Antrim, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 29296/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Please note that this information cannot be provided by constituency so figures have been provided for the Ballymena, Ballymoney and Ballycastle NIHE District Offices.

Statistics are included for the full year of hostel placements for April 2012 to March 2013. In addition it is only possible to provide figures for the first 5 months of this year from April 2013 to August 2013, the reports for the months of September 2013 to November 2013 are still in development.

The number of households provided with hostel accommodation from April 2012 to March 2013:

District	NIHE hostels	Voluntary Sector hostels	Total
Ballymena	16	63	79
Ballymoney	2	14	16
Ballycastle	0	3	3

The number of households provided with hostel accommodation from April 2013 to August 2013:

District	NIHE hostels	Voluntary Sector hostels	Total
Ballymena	7	32	39
Ballymoney	0	9	9
Ballycastle	1	1	2

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Double Glazing Schemes: North Antrim

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the double glazing schemes (i) delivered in the last twelve months; and (ii) planned for the next twelve months, in the North Antrim constituency.

(AQW 29297/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised as follows regarding double glazing schemes in the North Antrim constituency: -

- (i) Delivered in the last 12 months
 - Glebeside 190 dwellings
 - Ballymena 215 dwellings
 - Ballycastle 60 dwellings
- (ii) Planned for the next 12 months
 - Ballymoney 103 dwellings
 - Ballymena 271 dwellings

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes benefited from the Warm Homes Grant Scheme in the North Antrim constituency, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 29298/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive administers the Warm Homes Scheme on behalf of the Department. Management information is collected at Council level. The North Antrim constituency comprises the council areas of Moyle, Ballymoney and Ballymena. In those three council areas in the 12 months from December 2012 to November 2013, a total of 662 homes have had Warm Homes measures provided.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Community Workers

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department can take to help a community worker in Whitehill Estate, Bangor, whose salary runs out at the end of 2014.

(AQW 29330/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive does not enter into direct funding arrangements with community workers but has in the past made available limited funding for groups through the Community Development Budget which has been used by groups for salary costs. As this budget is limited, the Housing Executive has sought to invest in communities through locally based community grants (which do not cover salary costs) to help develop local community initiatives on a wider scale. The Housing Executive has therefore, over the past number of years, encouraged Groups to vary their funding sources for salary costs or enter into joint funding arrangements.

At this point in time the Housing Executive anticipates that some funds may continue to be available for salary costs at the end of 2014, however it is not possible for them to give an undertaking at what level funding can be provided or to guarantee funding to secure any particular post.

Housing Maintenance Schemes: Millisle Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to list the housing maintenance schemes earmarked for the Millisle area, in the next financial year.

(AQW 29332/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the planned programme for Millisle next financial year includes:

- Kitchen replacements to 28 dwellings
- Heating replacement to 17 dwellings (mainly previous refusals)
- Double glazing installation to 12 dwellings

Housing Maintenance Schemes: Donaghadee Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to list the housing maintenance schemes earmarked for the Donaghadee area, in the next financial year.

(AQW 29333/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the planned programme for Millisle next financial year includes:

- Kitchen replacement to 74 dwellings
- Heating replacement to 28 dwellings (mainly previous refusals)
- Double glazing installation to 11 dwellings

Housing Benefit Payments to Landlords who Reside Outside Northern Ireland

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department co-operated with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs when making housing benefit payments to landlords who reside

outside Northern Ireland, to ensure that there is an awareness of the income derived from the public purse.

(AQW 29347/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Housing benefit may be paid directly to a landlord in certain circumstances, for example, where a claimant has requested such an arrangement. This is provided for in housing benefit legislation.

There is no requirement for the Department for Social development to notify Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs when payments are made directly to a landlord, regardless of whether or not the landlord resides in Northern Ireland.

Armed Forces Veterans

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the scale, scope and availability by area of housing accommodation available to veterans of the Armed Forces.

(AQW 29357/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Social Housing in Northern Ireland is allocated in accordance with the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme. Subject to a person being eligible in accordance with the rules of the Scheme, they are entitled to be placed on a waiting List in an area of their choice. There is no specific housing for veterans of the Armed Forces.

Armed Forces Veterans

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the numbers of veterans of the Armed Forces waiting for housing accommodation.

(AQW 29358/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information cannot be provided as the Housing Executive does not hold information on the social housing application form that can identify if a person applying for social housing is a veteran of the Armed Forces.

System of Allocating Social Housing

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to change the system of allocating social housing from the current points based system.

(AQW 29369/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In 2012, I announced a fundamental review of social housing allocations in Northern Ireland, delivering on a commitment set out in my Housing Strategy and Facing the Future Action Plan.

My Department commissioned independent research and three reports, prepared by the Universities of Ulster and Cambridge have been published (see link below), providing the academics' views on the future of social housing allocations.

When public comments have been received on the reports, the feedback will be considered and proposals developed, which will in turn be subject to full public consultation.

<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/hsdiv-housing/allocations-research.htm>

Representatives of the Glass and Glazing Federation

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of his acknowledgement that he was erroneous in thinking that he had met with representatives of the Glass and Glazing Federation rather than Turkingtons, whether he will revise his answers to Assembly Questions that he has answered on this matter.

(AQW 29440/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I advised the Committee for Social Development on 12 December 2013 that I inadvertently and unintentionally misinformed the Committee about the attendees of the meeting that was held on 16 April 2012. I will revise my previous answers to Assembly Questions on this matter.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

International Calls from Parliament Buildings

Mr McGlone asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 28396/11-15, what consultation took place with Members prior to enforcing the restrictions on international calls from Parliament Buildings. (AQW 29346/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): It was the understanding of Building Services Branch that, while telephones in Parliament Buildings had previously been re-set to bar international calls, no telephone lines were deliberately restricted from making calls to 00 353 numbers. We have now re-assessed all telephone lines and have discovered that a small number do not have the required 'tac' levels to call 00 353 numbers. This appears to have been due to a technical error and we have subsequently requested, through IT Assist, that all telephone lines in Parliament Buildings are provided with the appropriate 'tac' level in order to make calls to 00 353 numbers.

No restrictions on 00353 numbers were intentionally enforced and therefore no consultation was required. All telephone lines will now have access to 00 353 numbers within Parliament Buildings.

I apologise for any confusion and inconvenience that may have been caused by this inadvertent reduction in 'tac' levels. Please let me know if you require anything further.

Statutory Assembly Committees: Televised Meetings

Mr Copeland asked the Assembly Commission to detail what action it is taking to ensure all meetings of Statutory Assembly Committees are televised and furthermore are broadcast on the Assembly website. (AQW 29480/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly has three Committee rooms capable of being recorded in both video and audio - Room 30, Room 29 and the Senate Chamber. Another Committee Room, Room 21, is audio only.

The current design of the broadcast system can only deliver three simultaneous live outputs, although all other output is recorded. That means that when there are more than three Committee meetings happening simultaneously in Parliament Buildings, there is not the capacity to make a video stream available for all Committee meetings.

The Assembly is also able to stream two of these meetings using its current streaming service. To maximise the coverage of Assembly Committees visitors to the Assembly website are advised how they can access meetings being streamed by the BBC Democracy live service and the content of the Assembly streams are sometimes altered to avoid duplication of streaming by the BBC thus maximising the number of Committees available through web streaming.

The 'Listen Again' function on each Committee's individual web page gives access to the audio recording of most recent open session of that Committee and, therefore, is available to all on the website.

In addition, the video feeds of any meetings in Room 29, 30 and the Senate are provided to external TV companies as requested as well as audio feeds for any of the Committee rooms for radio broadcasters.

Access for the public to Committee proceedings is available via attendance at meetings, web streaming, 'Listen Again', Committee minutes and the official Report where available. In addition, all recordings, both video and audio, are archived for the mandate and are available by request.

To further increase the level of access a business case has been developed to procure a new internet video streaming service that will address the issue of smartphone and tablet compatibility so that the Assembly's video and/or audio streams can be made accessible on a wider range of devices and platforms. The new service will also increase the number of available feeds from two to three simultaneous live streams capable of carrying video and/or audio. It is planned that the new service will be in place for the 2014/2015 session.

Further, a plan is being considered at present for a temporary installation of video cameras in Room 21 to ensure a continuity of service and to minimise disruption to the business of the Assembly during the repairs being made to the roof. This is a measure to service a specific need during the renovation and repair phase.

However, this is a only temporary measure as to add one or more televised rooms will require a substantial redesign of the broadcasting infrastructure including finding additional accommodation for production galleries and broadcasting staff. This would be a major project that would require significant capital investment and, in the current climate of austerity and value for money, is not an option that is being considered at present.

Eurest: Excess Food

Mr Agnew asked the Assembly Commission to detail how Eurest currently manages excess food.
(AQW 29503/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Eurest minimises food waste by managing a robust food production system. This allows for effective planning with EPOS (Electronic Point Of Sale) information used to forecast production. During Recess periods food production is matched to the occupancy of the building.

All food waste is collected by the Northern Ireland Assembly waste management contractor who transports it to NWP at Glenside for composting.

All Eurest employees are trained in Food Management, Fighting Food Costs and Trim Trax. All these schemes allow Eurest to optimise their food production system.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 20 December 2013

(AQW 13524/11-15)

31,596 benefit customers were referred to my Department for consideration of applying a sanction from May 2011 to date.

(AQW 13529/11-15)

10,029 sanctions were imposed on customers in receipt of benefit from May 2011 to date.



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