

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 24 January 2014

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Written Answers to Questions

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

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

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 24 January 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Soft Market Testing at Ballykelly

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the recent announcement of the 'soft market testing' exercise in relation to Ballykelly Camp, whether any private sector interest will be distinct and separate from the ongoing Department of Agriculture and Rural Development preparation to move onto the site in 2015.

(AQW 28669/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The soft market testing of the Shackleton site, currently being undertaken by BTW Shiells on behalf of OFMDFM, takes into account the commitment of DARD to use approximately 10 acres of the site to accommodate its new headquarters.

Funding for Victims and Survivors Groups

Mr McCallister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much funding Victims and Survivor groups have received since 2011.

(AQW 29394/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Letters of offer totalling £24,588,922.00 have been issued to Victims and Survivors groups for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015.

Shared Housing and Shared Education Projects: Economic Pact

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail what projects will be funded from the further £100 million RRI borrowing available across 2014-15 and 2015-16 for shared housing and shared education projects as part of the Economic Pact.

(AQW 29408/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM is currently co-ordinating a bids exercise to identify suitable projects for RRI funding under the Economic Pact.

The Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus, which will bring together six schools serving almost 4,000 pupils in the Omagh area has been agreed. The Department of Education will shortly be launching a programme aimed at identifying further projects suitable for support.

In addition, officials are currently assessing a number of proposals for shared neighbourhood schemes that have been identified by the Department for Social Development.

Time Taken to Answer Assembly Questions

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the average time it has taken their Department to answer an Assembly (i) Written Question; (ii) Priority Written Question; and (iii) 2 day Priority Written Question.

(AQW 29588/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The information is not held by the Department in the format requested and could not be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

Ebrington Masterplan

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why a proposal in Ilex's Ebrington Masterplan, which was subsequently the focus of a feasibility study, to develop Ebrington Clock Tower as the core of a major art gallery did not proceed.

(AQW 29625/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The 2006 draft Ebrington Master Plan identified possible uses for buildings on the site, including the potential for an Arts Gallery at the Clock Tower. A Strategic Outline Case for the development of an Art Gallery, undertaken in 2011, was reviewed and it was unable to demonstrate the necessary support of stakeholders and funders required to generate the £21 million to enable the project to proceed.

Ilex and its strategic partners will continue to explore the potential of developing the Clock Tower for viable projects within the current Ebrington Development Framework consultation process.

Delivering Social Change

Mrs Hale asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress of Delivering Social Change.

(AQO 5259/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Delivering Social Change framework was set up by the Executive to tackle poverty and social exclusion. It represents a new level of joined-up working across Government departments to drive through initiatives which have a genuine impact on the ground and achieve real, long lasting benefits.

Implementation of the initial 6 Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes, announced in October 2012, is progressing well.

The Department of Education is leading on the Signature Programme to improve literacy and numeracy levels within schools. This programme will see 233 additional teachers placed in 267 primary and post- primary schools to deliver tuition to children who are currently struggling to achieve even basic educational standards.

Over 200 of the posts are now filled and recruitment of the remaining teachers is ongoing.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has lead responsibility for 2 of the signature programmes – the provision of additional Family Support Hubs and Support for Parents.

The Family Support Hubs Programme will see 16 existing Family Support Hubs being maintained and 10 new Family Support Hubs being established.

In the Northern Trust Area, 2 new Hubs have been established and a third is at an advanced stage of implementation. Work is ongoing to identify potential locations for the 7 Family Support Hubs in the Belfast area. It is anticipated that all 10 new Hubs will be online by April 2014.

In respect of the Support for Parents Signature Programme, a suite of programmes have been developed which will see guidance, training and information being provided for up to 1,200 families.

The Department for Social Development and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment are jointly taking forward the Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs Signature Programme. Eleven Hubs will be established in currently vacant commercial premises and will offer a range of business advice and practical support to social enterprise entrepreneurs.

Good progress has been made with leases for 9 of the Hubs having been agreed; the remaining 2 hubs will be agreed this month. It is envisaged that providers of supporting services will be appointed in March 2014 in preparation for the majority of the Hubs being operational in April 2014.

The Department for Social Development in collaboration with the Department of Education have established 20 new nurture units within school settings. The establishment of these additional nurture units allows us to play a key role in improving the lives and educational attainment of our most vulnerable children by targeting support where it is most needed. One hundred and sixteen children have now undergone observation and assessment and are currently attending the units.

The Department for Employment and Learning is taking forward the Community Family Support Signature Programme which aims to support parents and prevent younger family members from falling into the Not in Employment, Education or Training category.

The programme was successfully piloted earlier this year and the upscaled programme was launched in November. This will reach up to 720 disadvantaged families.

In addition to the initial Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes, on 8 October 2013 Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann and Jonathan Bell announced the Play and Leisure Signature Programme. This will support initiatives in championing play, greater local access to space for play; and planning and support for play at a community level.

Delivering Social Change is about focusing on a smaller number of actions which can really make a difference. Departments are now working together on priority issues to maximise outcomes and improve the lives of everyone living here, and particularly those who need help the most.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Animal Cruelty Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether there are any plans to review animal cruelty legislation in light of the statistics revealing the low number of custodial sentences imposed for such offences.

(AQW 29561/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): My Department brought forward a new Welfare of Animals Act in 2011 to replace the Welfare of Animals Act 1972. The 2011 Act recognises that causing unnecessary suffering to any animal is a very serious offence and the penalties contained in it reflect this. It significantly increased the penalties for animal welfare offences to a maximum of 6 months imprisonment and/or a maximum fine of £5,000 on summary conviction; and on conviction by indictment to a maximum of 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

These new penalties provide the Courts with a range of sentencing options to ensure that the perpetrators receive a punishment that fits the crime. However, sentencing within the legislative framework is a matter for the Judiciary and I understand that in making sentencing decisions Judges take into account the law, the seriousness of the offence, any aggravating or mitigating factors, sentencing guidelines and all the relevant circumstances in each case.

Following the introduction of the new Act I met the Minister of Justice to discuss the possibility of encouraging the Courts to use the maximum sentences available. He informed me that the Lord Chief Justice, in his Programme of Action on Sentencing, was enhancing the structures by which the Judiciary ensure consistent and appropriate sentencing. I am advised that new sentencing guidelines for

Magistrates' Courts, on offences of animal cruelty, tail docking of dogs' tails and animal fighting were published in December 2013.

Whilst I fully support tough sentences for serious animal welfare offences, changing legislation will not increase the low number of custodial sentences imposed by the Courts for such offences. I therefore have no plans to review animal welfare legislation.

Coastal Defences: Spend

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the (i) capital; and (ii) resource spend on coastal defences, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 29564/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency's estimate of the annual capital and resource spend on designated coastal defences in the last 5 years is shown below.

Year	Capital £k	Resource £k
2013/14 Projected spend	50	279
2012/13	118	224
2011/12	111	218
2010/11	85	213
2009/10	47	208

Coastal Defences and Emergency Planning

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the recent extreme weather conditions, whether she has any plans to review the effectiveness of coastal defences and emergency planning.

(AQW 29565/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency is responsible for some 26 km of designated coastal flood defences which are subject to a rolling programme of inspection and maintenance. Rivers Agency's initial assessment following the coastal storms in early January suggests that these defences performed well. A more extensive inspection of these defences is now underway and should this identify the need for works, these will be given appropriate priority.

Rivers Agency organised and led a recent emergency planning exercise on coastal flooding. That exercise was held at the end of November and involved over 70 organisations. There is no doubt that the learning from the exercise meant that when the threat materialised, organisations were well prepared for the co-ordinated response required. I am very pleased with the collective response by Government and the public in preparing for and responding to the storms, and there will be, as with all serious incidents of this nature, a review of the preparations and response to identify any further lessons to be learnt.

Elliott Report into the Horsemeat Scandal

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the steps taken as a result of the Elliott Report into the horsemeat scandal.

(AQW 29614/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I welcome the publication of the interim report of the Elliott Review into the Integrity and Assurance of Food Supply Networks.

In his interim report Professor Elliott has made recommendations, including a number for Government, about action that can be taken now to improve the assurance and integrity of food supply networks. None of the recommendations in this interim report were specifically targeted for action by DARD.

My Department already has legislation in place to meet EU requirements on the identification, movement and traceability of animals. Implementation and enforcement of this legislation is supported by our Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) which enables stringent controls and checks to be undertaken to confirm the traceability of food producing animals. DARD also enforces the Beef Labelling legislation, which provides customers with assurance about the origin of beef, in abattoirs and approved cutting plants insofar as they pertain to fresh & frozen cuts of beef and veal.

The report recognises that our consumers have some of the safest food in the world but it is vital to maintain and enhance this reputation. I have always championed our local food and in November my Department hosted a red meat stakeholder meeting along with the Livestock and Meat Commission to promote the integrity, quality and traceability of our local food chain.

Professor Elliott's recommendations will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the safety and integrity of the food chain and I look forward to taking receipt of the final report, due in Spring 2014, which will set out in more detail what Professor Elliot believes is required of Government as well as the wider industry.

While food authenticity is primarily an FSA responsibility here, it is clearly an issue that will impact on the future sustainability of our entire agri-food sector. I have a fundamental interest in all issues which impact upon the resilience and sustainability of agricultural production, including consumer confidence in the food industry. Once the final report is published, my Department will work closely with the FSA to identify where they can work together for the integrity of our agri-food industry.

Coastal and Flood Defences: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the recent tidal surges, what assessment is being carried out of the coastal and flood defences in North Down.

(AQW 29639/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The only coastal defence in North Down for which Rivers Agency has responsibility is located at Kinnegar. Responsibility for the defence is shared with 2 other public authorities. Whilst it was not overtopped during the recent storms, there was some minor ponding of water behind it and the Agency is liaising with the other authorities to clarify responsibilities for any necessary maintenance and repair.

Coastal Defences: North Down

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what work is planned, in conjunction with other agencies, to upgrade sea defences along the North Down coast at (i) Holywood; (ii) Groomsport; and (iii) Donaghadee.

(AQW 29641/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In relation to Holywood, during the recent coastal storms there was some relatively minor ponding of water behind the sea defence. Rivers Agency shares responsibility for sections of this defence with two other public authorities and discussions are currently ongoing to establish where responsibility for maintenance and repair lies.

Whilst Rivers Agency has no responsibility for sea defences at Groomsport or Donaghadee, it has developed detailed mapping of coastal flood risk for the whole of the north of Ireland which it is already sharing with key infrastructure owners and the public.

The Agency is willing to provide whatever additional support is required by other organisations in their assessment of the infrastructure and coastal defences for which they are responsible.

Common Agricultural Policy Arrangements: Definition of Active Farmer

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the definition of active farmer which will apply under the new Common Agricultural Policy arrangements.

(AQW 29728/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are a number of provisions in the EU Regulations on CAP Reform which relate to active farmer.

The Basic Act provides for no direct payments to be granted to applicants whose agricultural areas are mainly areas naturally kept in a state suitable for grazing or cultivation and the minimum activity defined by Member States/regions is not carried out on that area.

The Basic Act also provides for no direct payments to be granted to applicants who operate airports, railway services, waterworks, real estate services, and permanent sport and recreational grounds unless they can meet one of the following criteria:

- Their annual amount of direct payments is at least 5% of the total receipts from non agricultural activities in the most recent fiscal year for which evidence is available,
- Their agricultural activities are not insignificant,
- Their principal business or company objects consist of exercising an agricultural activity.

It is possible for Member States/regions to add similar types of non agricultural businesses or activities to the list referred to above.

The draft Delegated Act which, has not yet been adopted, states that the in line with the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union, payment entitlements should be allocated to the person enjoying decision making power, benefits and financial risks in relation to the agricultural activity on the land for which such allocation is requested.

The provision in the draft Delegated Act has particular relevance for land let under conacre arrangements.

I hope you find this helpful.

High Speed Broadband for Rural Dwellers

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQO 4130/11-15 and given her commitment to provide high speed broadband to rural dwellers, for an update on the progress made during the last six months on this objective.

(AQW 29826/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department through the 'Next Generation Broadband' project has already invested £2.5m in rural broadband and this has lead to almost 14,500 rural dwellers and businesses now having a connection to broadband.

In addition to this funding my Department is also contributing £5m to the NI Broadband Improvement Project which is being taken forward by DETI. The tender process for this project has completed and the response is being carefully evaluated to ensure best value for money. Assuming a satisfactory conclusion to the evaluation process and, pending necessary approvals, it is anticipated that a contract will be awarded in the next few weeks with implementation commencing shortly thereafter and completing in 2015.

Animal Cruelty: Sentencing

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the sentencing framework and maximum sentence available for animal cruelty.

(AQW 30023/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department brought forward a new Welfare of Animals Act in 2011, which significantly increased the penalties for animal welfare offences to a maximum of 6 months imprisonment and/or a maximum fine of £5,000 on summary conviction; and on conviction by indictment to a maximum of 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. These penalties reflect the fact that causing unnecessary suffering to any animal is a very serious offence.

Sentencing within the legislative framework is a matter for the Judiciary. I am advised that the Lord Chief Justice, in his Programme of Action on Sentencing, published new sentencing guidelines for Magistrates' Courts in December 2013. The guidelines cover offences of animal cruelty, tail docking of dogs' tails and animal fighting and are available on the Judicial Studies Board website.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Major Capital Projects: North Down Constituency

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

(AQW 29510/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Thank you for clarifying the meaning of major in this context to be capital investments in excess of £50k.

Budgets are allocated according to financial years. I can report that no capital investment meeting your definition has yet been allocated to the North Down constituency for the financial year 2014/15.

The Executive has not yet set budgets for 2015/16 so no allocations have been made in any constituency.

I am able to draw the member's attention to capital investment in his constituency in previous years. From 2008/09 to 2012/13, Sport NI invested £14.439m in partnership with North Down Borough Council to fund the Olympic Standard 50m pool.

In addition to this, resource projects with a total value of £1.081m were funded by the Department and its sponsored bodies in the North Down constituency during this period.

New Stadium: Loughside Playing Fields

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail what information she or her Department has on the proposal by Crusaders Football Club to develop a new stadium at Loughside Playing Fields.

(AQW 29651/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I do not have any information regarding development proposals by Crusaders Football Club.

Furthermore, as funding for the development of sub-regional association football stadiums has yet to be secured, no decision of any kind on funding to assist the development of any sub-regional stadiums has been taken.

Redevelopment of Brandywell Stadium

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the funding awarded to Derry City Council for the redevelopment of Brandywell Stadium; and (ii) how this funding will be allocated.

(AQW 29690/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL has awarded no funding to Derry City Council for the redevelopment of Brandywell Stadium.

On 23 October 2013, I announced that my Department will invest at least £2million towards the Daisyfield/Showgrounds as part of City of Culture capital legacy projects in 2014/15.

My officials are working with Derry City Council as they take forward this project.

City of Culture 2013: Project Funding

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in relation to the legacy of the funding provided for the City of Culture 2013, to detail (i) the projects that will receive funding between January and March 2014; (ii) when the project list was prepared prior to her announcement; (iii) how the list was prepared; and (iv) if these projects were put out to tender.

(AQW 29873/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have secured over £2m for the January to March 2014 period to support continuation of key projects from the City of Culture's cultural programme and to prevent the loss of key benefits, partnerships and momentum after December 2013. This will also include strategic investment to sports facility development.

Supported projects will include:

- Music projects, for example key elements of the Music Promise project and the return of Other Voices to Derry in February 2014;
- Digital projects, for example continuation of the Portrait of a City project and digital skills provision;
- Literacy skills projects, for example the Disobey Gravity programme;
- Community projects delivered under Community Cultural Strategies developed for neighbourhood renewal areas;
- A pilot creative voucher scheme, which includes a focus on the North West, designed to stimulate new collaborations between creative enterprises and businesses from a diverse range of other sectors;
- Expansion of the Nerve Centre's Fab Lab with a wider North West emphasis; and
- Sports facility development in Coleraine and Dungiven.

In addition I have made funding available for the purchase of Eamonn O'Doherty's Armoured Pram, Lumiere's Stitch in Time piece and a portable community venue, subject to appropriate contractual agreements.

Legacy funding has been allocated on the basis of need to continue key projects from the 2013 cultural programme, and in the context of my Department's priorities and Business Plan. My officials worked closely with stakeholders in Derry, including Derry City Council and Culture Company, throughout 2013 to consider which Cultural Programme projects and benefits might be jeopardised if support ceased at December 2013. Final business cases were approved in November 2013.

The aim is to promote the positive continuance of key benefits, partnerships and momentum after December 2013 and to invest in the development of modern sports facilities.

It is my intention to make a bid to the Executive for funding for the 2014/ 15 financial year to support ongoing and new interventions which maximise City of Culture benefits across the North West of Ireland in tackling poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

Department of Education

Third Sector Organisations: Funded by the Department

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) all third sector organisations funded by the Department who provide services to the public; and (ii) the value of each contract.

(AQW 29410/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The third sector organisations funded directly by the Department are detailed in the table below.

Organisation	Grant -Aid
ChildLine	£260,000
Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children	£1,228,000
East Belfast Partnership – Easter School 2013	£9,030
Greater Shankill Partnership – Summer Transition School 2013	£20,372
North Belfast Partnership – Easter School 2013	£20,371
North Belfast Partnership - Summer Transition School 2013	£13,525
South Belfast Partnership – Easter School 2013	£17,614
South Belfast Partnership – Summer Transition School 2013	£11,616
West Belfast Partnership – Easter School 2013	£5,906
West Belfast Partnership – Summer Transition School 2013	£35,274
The Pushkin Trust	£25,000
Business in the Community – Time to Read	£50,000

Registrar of the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the qualifications and ability of the Registrar of General Teaching Council Northern Ireland to make a claim that unregulated transfer selection tests are of dubious validity, reliability or comparability.

(AQW 29491/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have asked officials to check whether such a claim has been made by the Registrar and will write to the Member when I have further information, if I deem it appropriate to do so.

I am also advised that the Registrar has no published background in psychometrics.

Registrar of the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to provide the Registrar of the General Teaching Council NI's published background in psychometrics.

(AQW 29492/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have asked officials to check whether such a claim has been made by the Registrar and will write to the Member when I have further information, if I deem it appropriate to do so.

I am also advised that the Registrar has no published background in psychometrics.

Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Enhancement Scheme

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of schools that (i) applied for; and (ii) received funding through the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Enhancement Scheme in (a) 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14.

(AQW 29626/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I can confirm that in 2012/13 and 2013/14, Education and Library Boards (ELBs) received the following applications for funding through the CRED Enhancement Scheme:

Year	No. of Applications Received for CRED Enhancement Scheme Funding	No. of Applications Approved to Receive CRED Enhancement Scheme Funding	No. of Schools Involved in Projects Approved to Receive CRED Enhancement Scheme Funding
2012/13	113	101	174
2013/14	142	109	181

This response provides information on the number of applications received by ELBs, some applications are for projects which involve 2 or more schools.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the legal force of a ruling of a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal; and whether parents are compelled to comply with the rulings in relation to school choice.

(AQW 29636/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Article 23A of the Education (NI) Order 1996 places a duty on education and library boards to comply with orders made by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Article 23(5) of that Order provides that a person who without reasonable excuse fails to grant discovery of documents or fails to comply with a requirement to attend as a witness commits a criminal offence.

Notwithstanding the legal redress available to any party to an appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, Article 16 (4A) of the Education (NI) Order 1996 does not require the name of a school or institution to be specified if the child's parent has made suitable arrangements for the special education provision specified in the statement to be made for the child.

If the child's parent does not make suitable arrangements as specified above or place the child in the school as directed by the ruling of a tribunal then the parent may be in contravention of Article 45 (1) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, that is:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Spend on Teaching the Irish Language

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education how much is spent annually on teaching the Irish language as a subject in schools.

(AQW 29752/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Modern languages are a statutory requirement at Key Stage 3, and a qualification choice at Key Stage 4 and sixth form. Schools can choose to deliver any of the languages of the 27 EU member states, including Irish.

To support primary schools wishing to deliver language learning the Primary Language Programme was introduced in 2007 to give pupils at Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 the opportunity to learn an additional language in school. There are currently 88 primary schools learning Irish through this programme.

It is up to individual schools to decide how to deploy the resources available to them from their delegated budgets to fund the delivery of all subjects in the curriculum. The Department does not hold information on the languages schools choose to teach or how much each school spends in this area.

Chief Inspector of the Office for Standards in Education

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the recent comments by the Chief Inspector of OFSTED on the use of unqualified teachers in schools.

(AQW 29774/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the Ofsted Chief Inspector has commented that headteachers in England should be allowed to hire unqualified teaching staff if they consider them to be the right person for their school. However he also said that it was a headteacher's job to ensure that such staff are accredited as soon as possible. The Chief Inspector's statement should be read in the context of England where there is a significant shortage of qualified teachers.

My policy is clear. In order to be eligible to teach in schools here, all teachers should be qualified and registered with the General Teaching Council. The Department's Circular DE 2007/22 sets out the minimum qualification requirements needed to be eligible to teach in our schools.

There may occasionally be circumstances in which it is not possible to employ a qualified teacher, for example, for a short-term period. Legislation enables employing authorities to employ an unqualified teacher for up to four weeks.

My Department has been and continues to be active in challenging schools where it has been found that they are employing unqualified teachers beyond that four week period. I am pleased to say that instances where unqualified teachers are being employed in breach of the legislation are exceptionally rare.

Education and Library Boards: Educational Psychologists

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many educational psychologists were employed in each Education and Library board in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29775/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of educational psychologists employed in each Education and Library Board, in each of the last 3 years, (headcount as at 15 January) is listed below:

	2012	2013	2014
SEELB	31	37	37
SELB	34	34	35
WELB	21	22	23
BELB	34	35	36
NEELB	26	30	30

Education and Library Boards: Educational Psychologists

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline the average waiting times for a pupil to be seen by an Educational Psychologist in each Education and Library Board; and the reasons for any differences.

(AQW 29776/11-15)

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 June 2013 to December 2013, is as follows:

BELB	18 days
NEELB	37 days
SEELB	116 days

SELB	63 days
WELB	60 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.

The reasons for differences in average waiting times between the ELBs are largely due to natural fluctuations in staffing levels caused, for example, by illness, maternity leave or retirement.

Disposal of Unused School Properties

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education to outline any plans he has to dispose of unused school properties; and what are the estimated value of these properties.
(AQW 29793/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department does not own property or land; responsibility for property is dependent on the type of school.

Voluntary Grammar, Maintained and Grant Maintained Integrated schools are the responsibility of each school's Trustees, who will make decisions on the use or sale of vacant properties.

The relevant Education and Library Board (ELB) is responsible for school properties in the Controlled Sector. In keeping with Land & Property Services' (LPS) Guidance 'Central Advisory Unit: Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property in Northern Ireland March 2013' the ELBs keep their property under continual review and release surplus property with the least possible delay. This is important as proceeds from the sale of surplus education assets are reinvested in capital works needed within the existing school estate.

The current available estimated value of ELB properties listed for disposal, between April 2014 – March 2016, is approximately £8 million.

This figure is based on the following factors:

- the total is derived from properties currently listed on the Asset Disposal register as advised by the ELBs
- open market valuations, provided by LPS, are subject to review every 6 months
- several properties are still in the process of being valued by LPS

Not all properties may have reached the final 'open market' stage of disposal which is managed by LPS.

Proceeds actually realised will depend on many factors including legal issues arising and planning permission but most notably the fluctuations in market valuations and the prevailing property market conditions.

Education and Library Boards: Child Abuse or Neglect

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education what is the threshold for which a child abuse or child neglect allegation will be deemed serious enough by the Education and Library Boards to inform the PSNI and Gateway services.
(AQW 29798/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Referrals are made to PSNI or the Gateway teams when there is concern that a child may have been the victim of abuse. Signs and symptoms of abuse are set out in DE circular 1999/10 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' and in the DHSSPS guidance 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children'.

Referrals are normally made by schools' staff, as the parties in direct contact with the child and the Education and Library Boards' Child Protection Support Service for Schools acts in support of schools' staff through the provision of advice and training on child protection matters.

PSNI: Instances of Threats and Intimidation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education whether he has reported to the PSNI the instances of threats and intimidation of which he claimed knowledge in the Assembly on 14 January 2014.

(AQW 29841/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No.

Assessments for Special Educational Needs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many assessments for Special Educational Needs were conducted within the North Eastern Education and Library Board in 2013; and what was the average waiting time from referral.

(AQW 29843/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) has advised that 375 statutory assessments of pupils' special educational needs were completed in 2013.

The average waiting time for those 375 pupils' assessments, from referral to completion, was 20.32 weeks.

Education and Library Board: Social Security Agency Offices

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in each of the last three years, how many application forms have been returned to parents of pre-school children in each Education and Library Board because of administrative errors by the local Social Security Agency office.

(AQW 29857/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: This information is not recorded. Pre-school settings are responsible for administering the admissions process and parents submit their pre-school application forms directly to their first preference setting.

Common Funding Formula Consultation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education for an update on the outcome of the Common Funding Formula consultation, which concluded on 25 October 2013.

(AQW 29875/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the closing date of 25 October, nearly 15,000 consultation responses were received to the main consultation. A full analysis of those responses is currently underway and as I have previously stated, I will not be making any final decisions until a full analysis of all these consultation responses has been carried out. I will give careful consideration to the views of all those who responded.

The changes to the Common Funding Scheme (CFS) remain on track for delivery for the new financial year and I intend to make my final decisions and advise schools of their actual allocations as soon as possible.

I will arrange for a consultation summary to be published on the DE website, shared with the Education Committee and placed in the Assembly Library in due course.

Free School Meals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to increase the provision and uptake of free school meals.

(AQW 29973/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Children from families on low incomes and those living in poverty face significant barriers in accessing and benefiting from a good education. The provision of healthy free school meals helps address the particular challenges that these children face in accessing and participating fully in school life, in improving their learning outcomes and ultimately their lifetime opportunities. It is a key measure, therefore, through which my Department contributes to the statutory target to eradicate child poverty here by 2020 and to the Programme for Government commitment to tackle disadvantage.

On 11 June 2013 I announced my intention to adjust the eligibility criteria for free school meals so that from September 2014, the same eligibility criteria for free school meals for both primary and postprimary pupils will apply. This will benefit an estimated additional 15,000 children from lower income households.

A number of actions are being taken forward by my Department, working with the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the School Catering Service to ensure that all those entitled to receive free school meals receive this important benefit. For example, the Resource Allocation Plans for each of the ELBs include targets to maintain or increase the uptake of all school meals and of free school meals.

Each year the ELBs issue press releases, send out renewal applications and issue letters and posters to schools, the Social Security Agency, the Citizens Advice Bureau and libraries. The School Catering Service continuously seeks to increase uptake of school meals undertaking a range of activities including, for example, the installation of cashless catering systems in a number of post-primary schools to reduce any stigma associated with free school meals, sending menus home and placing these on school websites, providing meal deals, arranging theme days and taster sessions for parents and pupils.

My officials are also working with colleagues in the Department of Social Development to take forward a joint project to encourage the uptake of free school meals as part of the work of the Inter-Departmental Group on Benefit Uptake (IDGBU).

Department for Employment and Learning

Catholic Teacher Training College

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in regard to the proposed merger of Stranmillis College with Queens University, and the issues disclosed by PRONI, whether the Catholic Church has indicated to the Department their current position in regard to a Catholic Teacher Training College.

(AQW 29528/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): You will be aware that the second stage of the review of the Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland is underway. The review panel requested submissions from interested stakeholders on relevant issues that should be taken account of in considering options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education. The panel has received a significant number of submissions which include a number from Catholic Church representatives. The key themes from the submissions will be summarised in a report to be published on my Department's website.

Students Enrolled in Legal Professional Studies: Magee Campus

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many (i) students are enrolled in this academic year, in legal professional studies, at Magee campus; and (ii) staff teach the course.

(AQW 29530/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold information on numbers of students enrolled in this academic year, in legal professional studies, at Magee campus, nor numbers of staff that teach the course. Officials, therefore, sought this information from the University of Ulster and their response is attached at Annex A.

Annex A

- (i) In the 2013/14 academic session 16 trainees are registered on the postgraduate professional legal studies programme offered at the University of Ulster, Magee campus.
- (ii) Four members of University staff contribute to teaching on the programme who are supported by legal practitioners who are specialists in their area.

St Mary's Teacher Training College

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning in relation to a proposed merger of Stranmillis College with Queens University, to what extent do the issues disclosed by PRONI apply in the present considerations, specifically but not exclusively in the retention of St Mary's Teacher Training College as a unique establishment.

(AQW 29575/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Panel appointed to review Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland will take into account all relevant issues, including previous reports, in considering options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education.

The panel has received a significant number of submissions on the review from the Initial Teacher Education providers and a variety of interested stakeholders.

At this stage the findings of the panel cannot be anticipated and they will be meeting with the providers and stakeholders scheduled for the coming weeks.

Further and Higher Education Colleges: Disability Discrimination Act

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 27902/11-15, for his assessment of the provision provided by Omagh Campus and its staff, and whether he has any plans to replicate this provision across other South West College campuses.

(AQW 29589/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is my desire that all students with learning difficulties, who have the ability to participate in FE provision, can access excellent educational opportunities. I am content that all further education colleges continue to provide such opportunities.

In relation to provision at the Omagh Campus of South West College (SWC), I am aware of the range of courses offered, which are reflective of local demand and financial viability.

The scale and level of provision, available across all campuses, remains the responsibility of the College and is in line with the level of demand within the catchment areas of these campuses. Therefore, in view of your question, my officials will seek comment from SWC on any plans, which it may have, for the remaining campuses, and I will write to you again, following receipt of this response.

Steps2Success Pre-Qualification Quotation

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in relation to the Steps2Success Pre-Qualification Quotation, to outline the organisations which (i) applied for consideration for each of the delivery areas; and (ii) were successful in their application for each of the delivery areas.

(AQW 29608/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) The outcome of Stage 1 of the procurement process for Steps 2 Success was notified to all tendering organisations on Monday 18 November 2013. To protect the integrity of the procurement process of the Steps 2 Success competition it is not possible to release information relating to those organisations who applied for each of the contract areas but were not successful.
- (ii) My department has published details of those organisations who were successful at Stage 1 of the Steps 2 Success Competition on its website as follows:

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

Successful 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.

Successful 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, Killeel, Lurgan, Magherafelt, Newcastle, Newry, Omagh, Portadown.

Successful Organisations

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

G4S has withdrawn from the competition for the Steps 2 Success competition for Contract Area 3.

Steps2Success Pre-Qualification Quotation

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to confirm that each of the organisations which were successful in the Steps2Success Pre-Qualification Quotation had applied specifically for consideration in the delivery area in which they were successful.

(AQW 29609/11-15)

Dr Farry: Each organisation was selected on the basis of being one of the top 6 ranked candidates in the area(s) that they had indicated they wished to be considered for as detailed in question CA1 of the Stage 1 published requirements as below.

Below is an extract from the Central Procurement Directorate electronic tendering system:

“[CA1] Contract Areas Applied For: Candidates must list which contract areas they wish to be considered for.

Candidates may be invited to tender for more than one (or all) contract areas, but may only be awarded one contract area.”

EU's Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28186, to detail his involvement in the work of the EU's Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

(AQW 29659/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs is an initiative aimed at increasing the overall supply of digitally skilled professionals and to better match supply and demand of digital skills. The European Commission is leading this multi-stakeholder partnership to tackle the lack of ICT skills and the several hundred of thousands of unfilled ICT-related vacancies throughout the European Union.

The Coalition was launched in March 2013 by President José Manuel Barroso, Vice-Presidents Neelie Kroes and Antonio Tajani, Commissioners László Andor and Androulla Vassiliou.

The Grand Coalition has received more than 40 pledges so far, including from large companies such as Google, Telefonica, SAP, Microsoft and Cisco. In addition, national coalitions are being developed in more than 10 Member States with the aim of facilitating action at the local level. For example, Lithuania, Poland and Romania have officially launched their national coalitions.

Officials in my Department are currently engaging with officials in the European Commission to explore how Northern Ireland can pledge its support to the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs and contribute effectively to its aims and objectives.

I am committed to ensuring that local ICT employers have access to the skilled workforce they need now and in the future in order to grow and enhance the sector. The ICT Skills Working Group, which I established and Chair, utilises a multi-stakeholder approach using collaborative action to address skills mismatches in the digital/ICT sector.

I am very keen to explore how we can share the best practice approach in relation to ICT skills, developed in Northern Ireland, with the European Commission and other national and regional actors in the European Union.

Officials in my Department have also been exploring the possibility of submitting an application to a Call for Proposals under the PROGRESS funding stream which is seeking to identify effective implementation measures, good practice and innovative approaches with a special emphasis on the employment potential of ICT and the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

Review of Post 19 Special Educational Needs

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on (i) the review of post 19 special educational needs in respect of (a) further educational needs; (b) disability employment service; and (c) transitions; and (ii) how this is progressing in South Tyrone.

(AQW 29762/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is committed to ensuring that all students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who have the ability to participate in further education provision, can access quality educational opportunities. I am content that all further education colleges continue to provide such opportunities, including those colleges which serve the South Tyrone catchment area.

I am aware that access to such provision can be an issue, especially in rural areas. Therefore I instructed my officials to examine access to transport for students with a learning difficulty and/or

disability, aged 19 and over. My Department will consider a course of action and develop proposals, once this initial piece of work has been completed.

The Disability Employment Service is fully committed to playing its part to ensure that young people with disabilities are provided with the tailored support and assistance they need to help them achieve their employment goals.

A strategic review of my Department's Disability Employment Service (DES) is underway. To inform this review, an overarching Disability Employment Strategy is being developed with the aim of having a draft Strategy available by April 2014, which will then be subject to a public consultation.

A Working Group has been established to take forward the Strategy and membership includes a number of key representatives from the local disability sector. In addition, a number of user engagement events have been scheduled throughout Northern Ireland, to ensure that the views of people with disabilities are also considered as part of the development of the strategy.

The Health and Social Care Board commissioned a review of Day Opportunities and recently concluded a public consultation on proposals on a "Regional Learning Disability Day Opportunities Model" for consideration. DEL officials have met with Health colleagues to discuss their proposals and how we, with others, can work together to facilitate improving the Transition services across a number of key Departments' responsibilities.

My Department's Careers advisers are actively involved in the transition planning process and during the 2012/13 academic year, attended 1055 transition planning meetings. Working with multi-disciplinary teams, including teachers and educational psychologists, they contribute to the young person's Transition Plan by providing impartial careers guidance on the range of educational, training and employment opportunities available to them.

In South Tyrone the Careers Service has a partnership agreement in place with Sperrinview School and attended all transition planning, annual review meetings and parents evenings to which they were invited during the 2012/13 academic year. The Careers Service also provides services to learners attending Parkanaur College in partnership with DEL colleagues from the Disability Employment Service. This includes supporting learners as they progress towards completion of their training to assist them in making the transition back to their home area in planning the next stage of their career.

The Careers Service has developed and implemented a social inclusion policy which focuses on addressing the needs of young people facing, or vulnerable to, social exclusion, including young people with a severe learning difficulty. It has established working relationships with the relevant statutory, voluntary and community sector bodies across Northern Ireland with a shared interest in supporting clients vulnerable to social exclusion.

I have raised the issue of transition with the Inter-Ministerial Group on Mental Health and Learning Disability in November 2013. As a result, OFMDFM are co-ordinating discussions between all relevant departments under the auspices of the Executive's Disability Strategy.

Veterinary Degree

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the introduction of the Veterinary Degree at the Coleraine campus of the University of Ulster.

(AQO 5312/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has signalled an intention to offer courses in veterinary medicine commencing in the 2015/16 academic year. My Department has requested that the university prepares a strategic business case to demonstrate that there is demand for such courses in Northern Ireland, that they are sustainable, and to outline how these will contribute to the economic growth of the region. My Department awaits the submission of the strategic business case and further more detailed analysis may be required once the strategic case has been considered by the Department.

Manufacturing: Skills Gap

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any discussions he has had with representatives of the manufacturing industry to help fill the current skills gap in the sector.

(AQO 5314/11-15)

Dr Farry: I recognise the importance of the manufacturing sector to our economy and I have established two sectoral working groups: the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Services Working Group, which I Chair; and the Food and Drink Manufacturing and Processing Future Skills Action Group, which I co-chair with Tony O'Neill, Director of Moy Park Limited.

These Groups bring together employers, academia, employer representative bodies and Government, such as the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Invest NI.

This ensures departments, together, can address the current and future skill needs of the sector.

Each Group has an action plan setting out what they intend to implement under three themes: Skills Provision; Sector Attractiveness; and Co-ordination and Communication.

My Department has recently commissioned research into advanced manufacturing and engineering services skill needs, and this report will be published shortly.

Currently, the Groups are taking forward a number of agreed initiatives such as:

- the commencement of the first phase of a higher level apprenticeship in engineering;
- the creation of a Computer Numerical Control Machining Conversion course;
- a Food Engineering Apprenticeship, which commenced on 6 January 2014;
- a Tasty Careers Programme led by Improve Sector Skills Council, which promotes the food and drink manufacturing industry; this is being funded for a second year by my Department; and
- Breakfast Clinics for food manufacturing employers, in conjunction with other Government Departments; these aim to raise awareness of skills provision available and how to access it.

In addition, my Department's Skills Solutions team works with individual businesses in the manufacturing sector to help employers understand and access available training provision. This service is available to local industry to enable companies to up-skill and re-skill their employees.

Unemployment

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the opportunities to reduce levels of unemployment in 2014.

(AQO 5315/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment takes the lead in job creation with Invest NI having responsibility for promoting 25,000 new jobs by 2015. This is being achieved by supporting new business starts, encouraging locally-owned businesses to grow and develop in external markets and by winning new and follow-on investment. During this Programme for Government period, Invest NI support has already led to the promotion of over 18,000 jobs.

Delivering the actions set out within the Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative will lead to increased job opportunities and reduced levels of unemployment in the future.

To support this excellent work, my Department offers a wide range of programmes and initiatives to equip people with the necessary knowledge and skills to find and sustain employment.

A priority for 2014 is to ensure that employers have access to appropriately skilled employees and provide people, particularly young people, with the opportunity to secure and sustain meaningful employment.

The Training for Success Programme enables participants to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing opportunities to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and Essential Skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The Assured Skills programme has led to the delivery of graduate academies as a short term intervention to meet the identified needs of companies.

The Employment Service has a network of offices that support employers and jobseekers. We are developing a new adult employment programme, Steps 2 Success, as a replacement for Steps to Work which will provide more flexible, individually tailored, longer- term support.

My Department is also leading on the development of an Economic Inactivity Strategy. I, together with the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, will launch the public consultation exercise this month. I encourage members to contribute to the consultation process.

Foreign Direct Investment

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department works with InvestNI to identify the reasons for foreign direct investors opting not to locate locally.

(AQO 5316/11-15)

Dr Farry: Northern Ireland continues to be successful in attracting high value foreign direct investment particularly in the Software and Information Technology sectors, winning a greater share of inward investment, relative to population, than other regions.

I am confident that the joint efforts of Invest Northern Ireland and my Department are making Northern Ireland one of the most attractive locations for investment.

There are a range of factors why some companies do not locate in Northern Ireland and only companies themselves can provide their very specific reasons.

What I do know is that a very substantial focus is being applied across Government to ensure that Northern Ireland is attractive to investors.

The Northern Ireland proposition is based on a combination of quality and cost competitiveness. We have a ready supply of skilled and talented people, excellent links between universities and businesses, an advanced telecommunications infrastructure and world class companies operating in key knowledge-based sectors.

Operating costs are highly competitive and can be significantly lower than many regions of the UK and Europe, including the Republic of Ireland.

My officials work closely with Invest Northern Ireland to ensure that we make the best possible proposition to potential investors, and my Department's Assured Skills programme is now a critical part of the offers made.

Assured Skills is designed to guarantee employers the skills they need to support a growing business can be found in Northern Ireland.

During the financial year 2013/14 Assured Skills has already supported the creation of 1,460 jobs across four projects, with funding of £1.306 million committed from my Department. Set alongside complementary support from Invest Northern Ireland, these results would suggest that Assured Skills support has been crucial in securing jobs for Northern Ireland.

There are regular meetings between my officials and colleagues in Invest Northern Ireland to discuss the pipeline of potential investors.

North/South Ministerial Council

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his departmental priorities contribute to the work of the North South Ministerial Council.

(AQO 5317/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department and I are committed to working on a north-south basis and identifying and developing opportunities for co-operation and mutual benefit to both jurisdictions.

The work of my Department does not currently fall within the six areas of co-operation as originally set out in the Good Friday Agreement. I am open to this being reconsidered in the Review of the North South Ministerial Council.

Areas of ongoing co-operation include student flows and student access in both further and higher education, research, unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, employment relations, and apprenticeships.

North West Regional College

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why changes were made to the agreed action plan on the implementation of the McConnell recommendations at the North West Regional College.

(AQO 5318/11-15)

Dr Farry: North West Regional College developed a plan detailing the actions required to implement the recommendations of the McConnell report. This was developed and agreed with stakeholders, including the University and College Union. I would like to note the encouraging progress which has already occurred in the implementation of the action plan.

The plan included a monitoring role, against a number of actions, for a College Improvement Team. The Governing Body had signalled that this Team would be established to lead a process of college strategy development and improvement across the College as a whole. However, there has been considerable delay in establishing this team with its wide ranging role, because the Governing Body has prioritised the implementation of the McConnell report.

The Department's role in the process is to monitor progress and ensure that the changes recommended in the report are fully implemented. The fact that the College Improvement Team was not established and therefore not performing its required function in respect of the Action Plan, was a matter of concern. As a result, it was agreed with the College to strengthen the accountability arrangements and formally transfer oversight responsibility for those actions, initially assigned to the College Improvement Team, to the full Governing Body. In practice, the Governing Body had been fulfilling this role in the absence of a College Improvement Team.

This is the only change which has been made to the Action Plan. There has been no change to any action within the plan. The change ensures that the process is robust by providing direct lines of accountability to the Governing Body, which has ultimate oversight of both the implementation of McConnell and the improvement programme in the College.

Irish-medium Courses

Ms Ruane asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the introduction of courses at Further and Higher Education level being delivered through the medium of Irish.

(AQO 5319/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further education colleges currently deliver a range of Irish language courses, including short courses and accredited courses, such as GCSE and A-Level. In addition, four colleges list their mainstream Irish language provision on the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's Lófa website.

All further education colleges remain prepared to deliver further education courses through the medium of Irish, where sufficient demand exists.

Higher Education courses are currently being delivered through the medium of Irish at Queen's University, the University of Ulster and St. Mary's University College. Courses include Diploma in Irish Language, Bachelor's Degree in Irish Language, Master's Degree in Irish Translation and an Irish Medium Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

Beyond the statutory further education sector, a pilot was established within my Department's Training for Success programme, to deliver vocational training through the medium of Irish. This was provided through a sub-contracting arrangement between one of my Department's contracted training suppliers and GaelChursai, which was formed in February 2011, to provide training and develop employment opportunities within the Irish medium sector. Furthermore, my Department also sought to extend Steps to Work provision to support training through the medium of Irish. In both cases, there was insufficient demand.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Development of Unconventional Oil and Gas

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail whether (i) she will introduce additional regulations and/or legislation to govern the development of unconventional oil and gas; and (ii) new regulations or legislation will be in place before unconventional oil/gas extraction is permitted to take place.

(AQW 29654/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The preparation for possible unconventional oil and gas development in Northern Ireland, and its regulation, will require input from several government departments and other bodies. Whilst DETI has the initial role in licensing and regulating of petroleum exploration, DOE would be the principal regulator for Shale Gas development through its environmental and planning responsibilities.

The Shale Gas Regulators' Forum, established as a joint initiative by myself and the former DOE Planning Minister continues to keep the legislative and regulatory requirements needed to support possible development under review; and where appropriate, will coordinate these functions and facilitate cooperation.

Trade: Island-Wide Proposals

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her proposals to enhance island-wide trade.

(AQO 5328/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Through my Department Invest NI and InterTradeIreland both work on a collaborative and individual basis to progress trade and business development in Northern Ireland and Ireland. Latest figures show that the total combined cross border trade in goods increased by 10.5% in 2012, to £2.3 billion. This has largely been achieved through the delivery of a wide range of activities and programmes including InterTradeIreland's All-Island Procurement initiative and their cross border sales programme Acumen, where Invest NI and InterTradeIreland work closely. Invest NI also provides Northern Ireland businesses with a wide range of financial assistance and other support to help them sell their products and services in export markets, including the Republic of Ireland.

Along with UK Trade and Investment, Invest NI and Enterprise Ireland continue to work together to identify suitable joint initiatives to grow global trade and exports. This is in recognition of the importance of other emerging export markets that Northern Ireland needs to exploit.

Renewable Energy

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what recent meetings she has had with the Irish and British Governments on the proposed Inter-Governmental Agreement on Renewable Energy.
(AQO 5329/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have had no meetings with either Government as the Intergovernmental Agreement is a matter between the UK and Irish Governments. However, my Department has representation on the Steering Group which has been formed by the two Governments to examine if a trading arrangement may be beneficial to both parties. This Steering Group meets on a monthly basis.

Unemployment: Foyle

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, outside of the Economic Inactivity Strategy Framework, what action her Department is taking to address unemployment rates in the Foyle constituency.
(AQO 5330/11-15)

Mrs Foster: High levels of Economic Inactivity have been a persistent feature of our economy over the past thirty years. The Executive has prioritised the development of an Economic Inactivity Strategy to tackle this key structural problem which will help increase overall levels of employment.

However, taking action to support economic growth and employment creation is the responsibility of the whole Executive.

The path we have chosen to increase employment and prosperity is to rebalance the economy by building a larger and more export-driven private sector. The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, and the complementary Economy & Jobs Initiative, set out what the Executive is doing collectively to deliver higher levels of employment across Northern Ireland.

Energy Costs

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given Bombardier's move to lower its energy costs, what steps she is taking to facilitate similar moves among other companies and groups of companies.
(AQO 5331/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Opportunities to lower costs by developing self-generation capability and coming off the grid are a commercial decision for companies to take and market arrangements exist to cover such decisions. I have no plans to intervene in these arrangements. Mechanisms such as the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation and the Renewable Heat Incentive are available to those companies who are considering generating their own energy.

Job Creation

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what level of assistance her Department has provided for job promotion and creation in the North Down Constituency since 2011.
(AQO 5332/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Between 1st April 2011 and 30th September 2013, Invest NI offered financial assistance totaling £1.85 million in support of job promotion and creation in the North Down Constituency.

Tourism: Funding

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department, or its Arm's-Length Bodies, provide funding to the Regional Tourism Organisations.
(AQO 5333/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are no longer Regional Tourism Organisations.

There are a number of Regional Tourism Partnerships which include, Causeway Coast and Glens, Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau, Fermanagh Lakeland Trust and Greater Belfast Regional Tourism Partnership.

These bodies obtain finance from local authorities and membership subscription.

As you are aware there is a Review of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and wider tourism structures currently being undertaken.

Renewable Energy

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the role that her Department plays in supporting the development of renewable energy businesses.

(AQO 5334/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has been proactively working with Northern Ireland companies for over five years to help them enter the renewable energy market. Northern Ireland companies have been successful in the Renewable energy market, winning an estimated £52 million in new business in 2012-2013.

A database has been developed detailing over four hundred Northern Ireland companies involved in the various Renewable supply chains. A programme of specialised workshops and supply chain events is ongoing to highlight business opportunities.

Advice is also available on the use of renewable technologies and support in the form of resource efficiency visits and interest-free loans to help businesses install these technologies.

Broadband: Rural Areas

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment at what stage are the negotiations on additional funding for the rollout of high speed rural broadband.

(AQO 5335/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The procurement for the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project has completed and the tender response is being carefully evaluated to ensure that best value for money is achieved. This project is attracting public funding of £19.3 million. It is hoped to award the contract for this project in the next few weeks with implementation commencing immediately thereafter for completion in 2015.

The UK Government announced a further £250 million of funding in 2013 to support the extension of superfast broadband services into the most challenging areas. Details are yet to emerge as to how this funding will be allocated but my officials are formulating a project aimed at accessing a share of this funding and, in doing so, are working closely with colleagues in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Department of the Environment

Planning Permission: Statutory Flood Risk Assessment Query

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will include a statutory flood risk assessment query on all future planning application forms.

(AQW 29515/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): Planning plays an important role in managing future development that may be at risk from flooding or that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

There is no statutory requirement for a flood risk assessment to be carried out in respect of any planning application however the susceptibility of all land to flooding is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Applications are assessed having regard to Planning Policy Statement 15 (PPS15) 'Planning and Flood Risk' which sets out the Department's approach to flood risk and adopts a precautionary approach to development and the use of land. If a proposed development is likely to be affected by or impact on flooding elsewhere the Department will consult Rivers Agency for advice and a flood risk assessment may be requested in order to inform consideration of the planning application.

The Department is currently carrying out a review of PPS 15 and the public consultation period ended on 10 January 2014. The revised draft was published in order to fulfil a commitment in the original PPS that the policy would be reviewed after 5 years, in order to take account of emerging information relating to flood risk and climate change and also experience in the implementation of flood risk policy.

The Draft PPS requires the planning authority to take account of the most up to date flood risk information in carrying out its development plan and development management functions. It also refers to the role and responsibility of developers to use the publicly available flood risk information to assess the flood risk implications of their development proposals.

Currently I do not consider it necessary to include a statutory flood risk assessment on all application forms as I am satisfied the ongoing review will provide the necessary policy framework to ensure that flood risk is fully taken into account in the processing of future planning applications.

Sustainable Development: Detailed Flood Risk Maps

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what action he is taking to ensure that sustainable development happens so that detailed flood risk maps are produced under the EU Floods Directive and PPS 15.

(AQW 29516/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department seeks to promote safe and sustainable development that takes full and proper account of flood risk. This is carried out by applying the policies contained in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 'Planning and Flood Risk' through the Department's development plan and development management functions. The overall aim of PPS 15 is "to prevent future development that may be at risk from flooding or that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere."

Last October I launched Revised Draft PPS 15 for public consultation. This fulfils a commitment in the original PPS to review the policy after 5 years, in order to take account of emerging information relating to flood risk and climate change and also experience in the implementation of flood risk policy.

PPS 15 and the emerging revised draft document seek to promote sustainable development in a number of ways. These include avoiding development in flood plains in all but the most exceptional circumstances and encouraging the use of sustainable drainage for new development.

In applying the policy, Planning officials take full account of the most up to date flood risk information provided by DARD Rivers Agency, which as the competent authority for the implementation of the EU Floods Directive in Northern Ireland, is responsible for the Strategic Flood Map and its ongoing development and refinement. The Department works closely with Rivers Agency and further changes to the Strategic flood Map will be accompanied with training and guidance for planning officials where appropriate.

Locations where Radioactive and/or Toxic Waste has been Disposed

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail all undisclosed locations where radioactive and/or toxic waste has been disposed.

(AQW 29550/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) Premises that accumulate and dispose of radioactive waste must have a certificate of authorisation issued under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 (previously 1960). Such premises in Northern Ireland include hospitals, universities, research centres and a small number of industrial sites. One of the routes for the disposal of low level solid radioactive waste

historically included in the authorisations was via controlled burial in landfill sites. Two locations for controlled burial were identified in authorisations: a) Culmore Point Landfill, Derry and b) Duncrue Street Landfill, Belfast. The authorisations contained limits and conditions to help ensure the waste was disposed of without presenting a radiation risk to either people or the environment. The practice of controlled burial ceased in Northern Ireland in 2006.

2. The authorisations also allowed, subject to limitations and conditions on the radionuclide content and method of disposal, the removal of certain types of very low level solid radioactive waste to local refuse sites for disposal with large quantities of non radioactive waste.
3. Copies of authorisations issued under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 for the disposal of radioactive waste are on public registers held in NIEA offices in Belfast and in District Council offices.
4. Prior to 1981 there was no requirement to keep separate records for the deposition of hazardous waste (previously known as Special Waste). From 1981 to 1998 local authorities in Northern Ireland were required to manage records for all movements of special waste under the Pollution Control (Special Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1981. In 1998 this function transferred to my Department under the Special Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 having since been amended by the Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Since late 1998 to date the Department holds records for all hazardous wastes being deposited in Northern Ireland. Following the end of landfill co-disposal of non-hazardous and hazardous waste in 2004 there was only one landfill site (Lisbane Landfill, County Armagh) accepting hazardous waste (asbestos waste only) which ceased accepting such waste in June 2013.

Drilling Boreholes under Petroleum Exploration Licences

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) what constitutes a mineral in The Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993; (ii) whether this legislation allows borehole drilling as permitted development, despite being excluded under equivalent legislation in England and Scotland; (iii) whether drilling boreholes under petroleum exploration licences qualifies as permitted development under Part 16 of the Order, and if so, whether the Order will be amended so that this can be more effectively regulated by the planning system.

(AQW 29551/11-15)

Mr Durkan: What constitutes a mineral is not specifically defined by the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1993; however the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 does define minerals as “includes all minerals and substances in or under land of a kind ordinarily worked for removal by underground or surface working, except that it does not include turf cut for purposes other than sale”.

There are certain permitted development rights under Part 16 of Schedule 1 to the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1993 for Mineral Exploration where planning permission is not required, which includes exploration for petroleum. They allow certain specified development on land in any period not exceeding four months consisting of drilling boreholes, carrying out seismic surveys or making other excavations. Any operation within an area of special scientific interest or site of archaeological interest is specifically excluded from these permitted development rights.

There are also certain limitations and conditions associated with this temporary permitted development right including pre-commencement notification to the Department of the Environment giving details of the location, target mineral, details of plant and operations and anticipated timescale which a developer, should they wish to invoke these permitted development rights, must notify the Department of in order that a decision can be taken on whether or not the permitted development right should be removed and the proposal made subject to the full planning application process..

In addition, where development is identified in either of the Schedules to the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 and Environmental Impact Assessment is applicable based on the details of the proposed development, permitted development rights do not apply (Article 3(8) of the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1993 refers).

In the interests of clarity, it is important to note that the temporary permitted development rights for minerals exploration do not allow the commercial extraction of minerals, including petroleum. Such activity will be subject to the full planning application process as well as relevant Environmental Impact Assessment, licensing and environmental permitting arrangements.

There are no plans at present to amend the existing legislation in N. Ireland in relation to permitted development rights for Mineral Exploration under Part 16 of Schedule 1 to the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1993. The Department takes the view that the permitted development right as currently drafted strikes an appropriate balance between permitting the carrying out of legitimate exploratory activity and at the same time protecting amenity interests and the environment.

Designation of Quiet Areas

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has considered designating more quiet areas.

(AQW 29554/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) (“END”) requires Member States to create noise maps and draft action plans, which amongst other things, “aim to protect quiet areas against an increase in noise”. Such quiet areas are to be designated within the Belfast Agglomeration.

Following the production of the round one noise maps and action plans in 2008/9, the Department of the Environment designated all areas within the Belfast Agglomeration with a consolidated noise level (noise from all sources combined) of less than 55Lden as Candidate Quiet Areas. The purpose of this was to highlight these areas for further investigation once more precise policy on the designation of Quiet Areas had been developed.

The END does not define Quiet Areas. Nor does it prescribe noise limits or the features of such an area. It is for each Member State to develop this policy.

The Department is in the process of developing a Quiet Area policy taking into account issues around the form, content and legal status of the final document and will issue the draft policy for public consultation later this year.

Public Hire Taxis Registered in Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment how many public hire taxis were registered in Belfast, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29566/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The number of Belfast public hire taxis licensed in each of the last three years was as follows:

2012/13	437 ¹
2011/12	498 ¹
2010/11	548 ¹

1 The figures represent totals as at 31 March each year. Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation.

Research Programme into Unconventional Gas Exploration and Exploitation

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will seek to ensure that a representative of the local community is on the steering committee dealing with the research programme into unconventional gas exploration and exploitation.

(AQW 29584/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The primary aim of the all island research programme is to produce outcomes that will assist regulators (North and South) in fulfilling their statutory roles regarding this proposed activity. The Steering Committee is therefore composed of those regulators, as they are best placed to ensure that relevant research is carried out to provide the robust evidence base to make decisions on this controversial industry.

The extensive consultation exercise carried out on the Terms of Reference for the research programme resulted in calls for a Health Official to join the Steering Committee. As a result of this feedback a Health expert has been invited onto the Steering Committee. No other comments or concerns were received in relation to the membership of the Steering Committee.

Keeping all interested stakeholders, including representatives of the local community, abreast of the progress of the research programme will be a key part of the dissemination plan, the specific detail of which is part of the current tender process.

George Best Belfast City Airport

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the rationale for reversing the decision on the planning approval for a private car park at George Best Belfast City Airport.

(AQW 29598/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department did not reverse its decision in this case. A recommendation to approve was made on 21 February 2013 but was deferred by the Town Planning Committee of Belfast City Council. Following deferral, a meeting was held with the objectors who raised further legal and policy matters.

On re-assessment the Department concluded that determining weight should not have been given to the spare parking capacity at the Ikea site and that the applicable policy was Policy AMP 10 of Planning Policy 3 - Access, Movement and Parking. This provides the key policy test for the provision of new car parks with the requirement that they 'meet a need identified by the Department for Regional Development in Transport Plans or accepted by DRD following robust analysis provided by the developer'.

The applicant was given the opportunity to submit a case of need which he submitted in August 2013. The Department fully considered the case presented but concluded that the case of need presented by the applicant did not meet the policy test. The Department re-presented the application to Belfast City Council Town Planning Committee on 12 December 2013 as a refusal on this basis. This decision was taken locally by planners and I was not involved in any capacity as a decision maker.

The process in this case is not unusual as often applicants or third parties, through the deferral process, will bring further matters to the Department for consideration in relation to an application.

There is a process of appeal available for anyone dissatisfied with a decision made by planning officials.

Coastal Communities Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding has been awarded, or distributed, from the Coastal Communities Fund in each of the last five years.

(AQW 29612/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) was launched by Treasury in 2012-13, and its annual budget is equal to 50% of the annual revenue from the Crown Estate's marine activities in that area.

In 2012-13, the NI budget was £450,000 of which £423,465 was awarded to two projects. The Seaview Heritage Activity Centre in Glenarm was awarded £265,000, and the Water Wheel Project in Magheramorne was awarded £158,465.

In 2013-14, the NI budget was £500,000 of which £447,342 was awarded to two projects. The NI Lobster and Marine Hatchery Research Centre in Kilkeel was awarded £260,782, and the Coastal Centre at Waterfoot was awarded £186,560.

Any funds not awarded in one year are added to the available funds for the following year. Up to 5.87% of the Fund over the lifetime of the programme is used to cover administration fees incurred by the Big Fund in delivering the CCF. This amounted to £26,520 in 2012/13 and will amount to a maximum of £29,350 in 2013/14.

The third round of the CCF will open in early February 2014.

The CCF is a UK-wide programme and the single outcome is that “coastal communities will experience regeneration and economic growth through projects that directly or indirectly create sustainable jobs, and safeguard existing jobs”. However there are also some country specific requirements and priorities.

Here the CCF is aimed at projects that help contribute to the Executive's Economic Strategy. The Strategy's key priorities include growing a sustainable economy, investing in the future, creating jobs and tackling disadvantage.

CCF priorities in Northern Ireland are focussed on applications:

- from small and medium size coastal communities facing economic challenges;
- that promote regeneration and job creation through investment in tourism, business and the built and natural environments of coastal settlements; and
- that promote training and skills development, linked directly to the project activity, to enable local people to secure jobs in local industry growth sectors.

The key decision-making criteria are UK wide and are:

- Whether the project will directly or indirectly create jobs, and/or sustain existing jobs, and promote economic growth;
- Whether the need for the project has been clearly demonstrated;
- How well the project meets the CCF's outcome and country requirements;
- How well the project fits with local plans and priorities;
- How likely the project is to successfully deliver its intended outcomes;
- How likely the project is to be delivered within two years;
- How the benefits of the project will be sustained after the CCF funding finishes;
- Whether the project represents good value for money, that is, how much it will cost to create or safeguard jobs in relation to the overall project funding requested.

Grants of £50,000 and over are available, and the following types of organisations can apply:

- local authorities;
- development agencies;
- other public sector bodies;
- charities;
- voluntary and community sector organisations;
- social enterprises, including cooperatives and community ownership initiatives; and
- private sector companies.

Here funding decisions are made by a publicly appointed panel and endorsed by me.

More detail on the Fund can be found on the Big Lottery Fund website at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/uk-wide/coastal-communities>

Coastal Communities Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment when the next tranche of Coastal Communities Fund money will be available.

(AQW 29613/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) was launched by Treasury in 2012-13, and its annual budget is equal to 50% of the annual revenue from the Crown Estate's marine activities in that area.

In 2012-13, the NI budget was £450,000 of which £423,465 was awarded to two projects. The Seaview Heritage Activity Centre in Glenarm was awarded £265,000, and the Water Wheel Project in Magheramorne was awarded £158,465.

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Coastal Communities Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to detail the criteria used for awarding funding from the Coastal Communities Fund; (ii) who is eligible to apply for funding; and (iii) who makes the decision on whether applications are successful.

(AQW 29615/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) was launched by Treasury in 2012-13, and its annual budget is equal to 50% of the annual revenue from the Crown Estate's marine activities in that area.

In 2012-13, the NI budget was £450,000 of which £423,465 was awarded to two projects. The Seaview Heritage Activity Centre in Glenarm was awarded £265,000, and the Water Wheel Project in Magheramorne was awarded £158,465.

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Coastal Communities Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what is the annual budget of the local Coastal Communities Fund.

(AQW 29616/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) was launched by Treasury in 2012-13, and its annual budget is equal to 50% of the annual revenue from the Crown Estate's marine activities in that area.

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Taxi Operator Licences: Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29122/11-15, to list the operators of each of the 94 licenses; and how many licenses, broken down by year, each operator holds.

(AQW 29620/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A list of the 94 taxi operator licence holders is attached at Annex A. Each operator holds only one operator's licence.

Annex A**Name of Operator**

■ A Cabs	■ Gregory Feeney	■ Michael Harkin Wedding Cars
■ A1 Taxi Derry	■ Hugh Colm McIntyre	■ Michael McGrath
■ Anthony Carton	■ Tony Morrison Taxi Service	■ Mr Santhosh Vazhangattil
■ Barry O'Neill	■ SEA - MC	■ Neil Benedict Campbell
■ BE-KAB	■ James Gerarde Harkens	■ Niall Martin McGilloway
■ Bernadette Doherty	■ James Grieve	■ Oliver Lynch
■ Biju John	■ Call A Cab	■ Patrick Barton
■ Brendan Gourley	■ James McCarron	■ Patrick Doherty
■ Brendan O'Neill	■ John Gerard McGinley	■ 3D Limos
■ Brian Patrick Keenan	■ John Hutton	■ Patrick Killen Taxi's
■ City Cabs (Derry) Ltd	■ JJ's Taxi	■ Paul McMullan
■ Culmore Taxis	■ John Joseph Robinson	■ Paul Vincent Mullan
■ Damien Griffiths	■ J.L Taxi	■ Pauline Gallagher
■ Daniel McLaughlin	■ John Parke	■ Peter Hutton
■ Feeny Cabs	■ John Sweeney	■ Peter Joseph Fleming
■ Brown's Taxi	■ Foyle Taxis	■ Raymond McCafferty
■ Waterside Taxi	■ Joseph Ebbs	■ Rijumon Varghese
■ Declan O'Donnell	■ JS Cab Services	■ Robert Cooke
■ Derry Taxis Limited	■ Kenneth Laurence Bradley	■ Bob's Easy Park
■ Nippy Taxis	■ Sunvale Taxis	■ K Cab
■ Eamonn Denis Burke	■ Kieron Brian Coyle	■ R K Taxis
■ Edward Burke	■ Laurence McGowan	■ Sean Doherty
■ Eglinton Taxis	■ Liam Farren	■ Terence McDermott
■ Elite Executive Travel	■ Link Cabs	■ The Taxi Company N.I. Limited
■ Eoighan McCauley	■ Glassagh Taxis	■ Thornhill Taxis
■ C.F.B Taxis	■ Swift Cabs	■ Tony Begley
■ George Hegarty	■ City Tours	■ V Cab
■ Gerard John Moore	■ Michael's Taxi	■ William Gill
■ GMC Taxi	■ Michael Brolly SNR	■ William Joseph Havlin
■ DMK Taxi	■ Michael Browne	■ Sackville (Coop) Taxis
■ Gerard Thomas Conaghan	■ MC Taxi	■ W.R.Ross
■ Gregory Brady		

Lisburn's City Status

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment whether Lisburn's city status will be affected by the postponed merger with Castlereagh Borough Council.

(AQW 29644/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is working towards taking the necessary steps to ensure that the city status in respect of all five cities in Northern Ireland, including Lisburn, is not affected by the reorganisation of local government.

As city status is conferred by Letters Patent issued under Royal Prerogative, my officials are working closely with the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that city status is preserved. Draft legislation will be brought before the Assembly in due course.

Council Debt

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department intends to ensure that ratepayers, who currently live in an area where council debt is lower per capita, are not required to pay towards the debt previously incurred by a Council area that they are being joined with.

(AQW 29645/11-15)

Mr Durkan: District Councils are bodies corporate as defined in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and, as such, are directly responsible for decisions regarding their own financial affairs.

Furthermore, my Department has no indication from the Chief Local Government Auditor that there is any defect in councils' strategies in relation to debt management.

However, I understand the specific concerns that some ratepayers may have in the run-up to local government reform in April 2015. As I have previously stated to the Assembly, 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.

New Stadium: Loughside Playing Fields

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail what information he or his Department has on the proposal by Crusaders Football Club to develop a new stadium at Loughside Playing Fields.

(AQW 29652/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is not aware of a proposal by Crusaders Football Club to develop a new stadium at Loughside playing fields. Planning permission was refused on the site in 2012 for a mixed use development that included a foodstore and new playing fields. This proposal did not make provision for a football stadium however.

Coastal Defences

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment why his department has referred questions tabled for him to answer in relation to coastal defences to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

(AQW 29656/11-15)

Mr Durkan: DARD has powers under the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 to maintain watercourses and sea defences that have been designated by the Drainage Council for NI; and to construct and maintain drainage and sea defence structures.

DARD's Rivers Agency performs this flood defence role; and consequently monitors and maintains some 26km of designated sea defences (some of which are in the Strangford constituency) and two tidal barriers. In addition, DARD is the competent authority in terms of implementing the EU's Floods Directive.

It was on these grounds that my department approached DARD seeking the formal transfer of AQWs 29513 and 29514, which DARD accepted.

Climate Change Bill

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the introduction of a Climate Change Bill.

(AQW 29689/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and growing a sustainable, productive low carbon economy. The introduction of a Climate Change Bill is an option under active consideration.

There was a divided response to the pre-consultation on the need for a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill which closed on 24 May 2013. As a follow up to this pre-consultation, I am meeting with businesses, agri-food, energy and environmental stakeholders, the Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change and the Environment Committee over coming weeks to hear their views on the optimum outcome focused approach to tackling climate change. Following this engagement I will confirm my course of action.

Changes to the Ownership of Used Cars

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to quantify the number of changes to the ownership of used cars, indicated by changes to the name on vehicle log books, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 29691/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The figures provided below detail the number of changes of ownership transactions processed in each of the last ten years.

Year	Number of Change of Ownership Transactions
2013	197,491
2012	192,255
2011	196,605
2010	205,197
2009	209,028
2008	257,083
2007	283,520

Year	Number of Change of Ownership Transactions
2006	259,499
2005	241,818
2004	307,227

The figures are provided from Agency records and do not form part of published and validated DOE Official Statistics.

Public Consultation Responses

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQO 5204/11-15, to detail (i) the number of respondents to the public consultation; and (ii) the number of respondents advocating that the research programme should include a health impact assessment.

(AQW 29692/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) 1356 valid submissions were received.
- (i) The exact number was not recorded when submissions were processed, however a significant number of responses referred to the specific issue of health impact assessments and the general issue of public health.

A summary report, as well as links to all the submissions, is available from the Environmental Protection Agency (Ireland) website: <http://www.epa.ie/researchandeducation/research/striveprogramme/water/ugree%20research/>

Mandatory Taxi Metering

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what steps are being taken to notify the taxi industry of the introduction of mandatory taxi metering by September 2014.

(AQW 29699/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I acknowledge the importance of effective communication with the taxi industry over the coming months on issues such as the introduction of mandatory taxi metering.

As such, as part of the Taxi Reform Implementation Programme officials are developing a comprehensive communication plan, aimed at maximising awareness of the new provisions and effective dissemination of information relating to them to the industry.

Although the details of the communication plan have not yet been finalised, measures are likely to include use of direct mailshots to the taxi industry, promotion of the new provisions on the internet (including NI Direct), the dissemination of posters and leaflets through DVA test centres and local offices, and a news release will be issued to media outlets. These communications will be taken forward in advance of the provisions of the Regulations coming into effect.

Mandatory Taxi Metering

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what assurances he can give that mandatory taxi metering will take place by 1 September 2014.

(AQW 29700/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The introduction of mandatory taxi metering is an important element of the Taxis Act and one that will bring significant benefits to consumers.

In response to the Environment Committee's request that the suite of legislation implementing the Taxis Act 2008 should be made operative from September 2014, my Department has been progressing the various draft Regulations to ensure that these targets are met.

The Regulations will become operative in September and will make it an offence to use a taxi without a taximeter fitted from March 2015, giving the industry 6 months to comply with the new regulations. Similarly, the mandatory requirement to have and use a receipt printer will take effect in January 2016.

My Department is engaging with the private sector in order to promote the establishment of a network of Approved Taximeter Centres, where it is intended that meters will be fitted, calibrated and sealed in accordance with prescribed conditions. It is intended that these Centres will be operating from September 2014. A programme of work is underway, working towards this date.

Mandatory Taxi Metering

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what is the timescale for the implementation of mandatory taxi metering for taxis that do not currently have a meter.

(AQW 29701/11-15)

Mr Durkan: When the Regulations implementing the Taxis Act 2008 are fully implemented, taxis will fall into one of four categories.

Class A and Class B taxis, which will comprise the vast majority of the taxi fleet, will be required to have taximeters fitted. This requirement will take effect from March 2015. The requirement to have a receipt printer will take effect from January 2016.

Class C taxis (including limousines, chauffeured cars and wedding cars) and Class D taxis (taxibuses) will not be required to have taximeters or receipt printers fitted.

Taxi Meters: Fitting

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what checks will be in place to ensure that taxi meters are fitted to a safe and high standard.

(AQW 29702/11-15)

Mr Durkan: By September 2014 my Department will have established a network of Approved Taximeter Centres (ATCs). These will be privately owned and operated and will be authorised by the Driver and Vehicle Agency once officials are satisfied that they have met the prescribed requirements. Only ATCs will be permitted to fit, calibrate and seal taximeters. They will be subject to regular quality audits to ensure that the required standards continue to be met.

All taximeters will be required to undergo an annual calibration test. When a vehicle is submitted to DVA for a taxi vehicle test, the person presenting the vehicle will be required to present proof of a recent calibration test by an ATC. Additionally, the installation of the taximeter will be checked to ensure that the requisite seals are present and that there is no evidence of tampering.

Where an ATC is found to have failed to meet the required standards, the Department has the power to withdraw its approval, after which it will no longer be able to legally install or test meters.

Introduction of Taxi Metering

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department will inform the public of the introduction of taxi metering.

(AQW 29703/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Communication of the introduction of taxi metering to the general public will be included in an overall communications plan which is currently being developed by my Department. Measures are likely to include the promotion of the new provisions via the internet including NI Direct, posters and

leaflets to be disseminated through DVA test centres and local offices and other outlets, and a news release to media outlets.

The main communication effort focussing on the public is likely to be scheduled closely to precede the mandatory fitment of meters, in order to maximise its effectiveness.

Planning Application for an Electricity Sub Station in Rasharkin

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether the current planning application for an electricity sub station in Rasharkin meets the criteria for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken in accordance with Article 2 of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations.

(AQW 29720/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The current planning application for an electricity substation at Finvoy Road, Rasharkin meets the criteria for a determination to be carried out as to whether the proposal is EIA development. In this case the Department determined on 13 December 2013 that the proposal was not EIA development and that an Environmental Statement was not required.

Crawfordsburn Country Park: Vehicular Access

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration is being given to ensuring that vehicular access for visitors to Crawfordsburn Country Park is available all year round.

(AQW 29745/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have been advised by officials in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), who manage access to Country Parks and State Care Monuments, that the opening of Crawfordsburn Country Park is reviewed on an annual basis. This review takes into account matching available resources to best meet public demand at Country Parks, historic castles and other State Care Monuments.

In 2013, the main entrance to Crawfordsburn Country Park was only closed to vehicular access via the main entrance on three days (25th, 26th and 27th December 2013 inclusive). Access to the park via other access pathways remained open at all times of the year.

Officials in NIEA have advised me that it may be a necessary to restrict access to properties at short notice due to health & safety concerns, such as extreme weather events, which could lead to damage to property, injury or worse still a fatality. They have also advised that it may be necessary to restrict access to allow maintenance works such as resurfacing. It is therefore not possible to guarantee all year round vehicular access to Crawfordsburn Country Park due to these reasons.

Most recently you may be aware that due to a severe weather warning and public holidays access was not permitted via the main access route to Crawfordsburn Country Park on 25th, 26th and 27th December 2013. This decision was undertaken by NIEA due to a risk of falling branches and trees during high winds along the main entrance avenue and lower car park area. During this period alternative car parking was however made available at two car parks nearby at Grey Point Fort and Fort Road which are both owned by NIEA from which Crawfordsburn Country Park can easily be accessed.

It appears however that despite NIEA staff closing the main access gate on 24th December 2013 a person, who was not an NIEA staff member, unfortunately opened the main entrance gate which led to traffic disruption on the main avenue on 26th December 2013 due to access barriers being closed further into the park. These second barriers are in place to allow access outside of hours to the scout centre but not to the main car park so as to deter anti-social behaviour. To ensure this does not happen again NIEA staff have changed the locks on access gates and will ensure that signage will be placed, in the event this gate is closed, to advise of alternative nearby parking facilities from which the park can be accessed.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 26630/11-15, for an update on the adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQW 29781/11-15)

Mr Durkan: After extensive assessment of the recommendations made by the Planning Appeals Commission, my Department submitted BMAP to the Department for Regional Development for assessment of the Plan against the Regional Development Strategy 2035. I can confirm that the Plan was awarded a Certificate of General Conformity on 21 October 2013. The other outstanding statutory processes have recently been completed and my Department is now taking forward the next steps in the adoption and publication process.

Hire Company for Taxi Meters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has any plans to establish a hire company for taxi meters; and what initial steps have been taken to date.

(AQW 29782/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is working to establish a network of Approved Taximeter Centres (ATCs), which will be owned and operated by the private sector. These are likely to be affiliated with or agents of particular taximeter manufacturers, and will be able to sell and fit taximeters, as well as to carry out calibration testing and sealing.

It will be up to individual ATCs to decide which products to offer, and whether to sell or hire them. However, given that it is common practice in both Britain and Ireland to offer hire packages for taximeters and receipt printers, it is likely that ATCs in this jurisdiction will offer this service also.

Taxi Meters: Fitting

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether any concerns have been raised by the Committee for the Environment on the issue of taxi metering and installation.

(AQW 29788/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I attended a meeting of the Environment Committee on 24 October 2013 during which concerns were raised about the impact of the costs of implementing all of the taxi reforms at the same time. One of the main costs mentioned was that of the purchase of a taximeter and receipt printer. Accordingly I instructed officials to stagger the implementation of the provisions in order to mitigate the financial impact on the industry.

I am not aware of any other concerns having been formally raised by the Committee.

Installation of Taxi Meters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what actions are being taken to ensure that the installation of taxi meters will be carried out by accredited installers.

(AQW 29789/11-15)

Mr Durkan: When the Regulations implementing the Taxis Act are implemented, it will be an offence for a company or individual who has not been authorised as an Approved Taximeter Centre by the Department to install or calibrate a taximeter. When a taximeter is approved and tested, a test certificate will be issued by the ATC and a small plaque will be fixed to the dashboard of the vehicle close to the meter, including details of both the installation and the installer.

When the vehicle is presented for its annual taxi vehicle test, the certificate and the plaque will both be examined. Where they have not been validly issued by an authorised ATC, the examiner may refuse to complete the test.

The certificate and plaque may also be examined at any time by a DVA enforcement officer, who will be able to take appropriate enforcement action if the certificate and plaque are not valid.

All ATCs will be subject to a periodic audit by DVA.

Calibration of Taxi Meters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what steps are being taken to ensure that the calibration of taxi meters will be undertaken by an independent company.

(AQW 29790/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Under the new arrangements due to come into effect from September 2014, the opportunity to become an Approved Taximeter Centre (ATC) will be open to anyone in Northern Ireland. It is likely that applications will be received from existing taximeter installers and from in-car entertainment fitters. Applicants will have to satisfy the Department that they are competent and able to fulfil the conditions prescribed by the Regulations; such companies will be subject to periodic auditing by DVA. These conditions will cover the equipment used to install and calibrate meters, the training of installers, procedures to be followed and records to be kept.

All such ATCs will be independent from the Department. Further, it may not be appropriate for taxi operators to establish themselves as ATCs, given the potential for a conflict of interest. Consideration is being given to this issue as the conditions for the approval of ATCs are developed.

Calibration of Taxi Meters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what checks are in place to ensure that the calibration of taxi meters and equipment is carried out correctly.

(AQW 29791/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Taximeters are at present only mandatory for Belfast Public Hire taxis. They are checked annually by DVA and a calibration test is carried out by DVA staff. When the test has been completed successfully, seals are applied by the DVA examiner. The calibration check is carried out by confirming that the approved fare charging programme code installed in the taximeter matches that supplied by the taximeter manufacture. The taxi is then driven along a measured test route where the fare being charged is checked at periodic distance points. Finally, the taximeter waiting time clock and related fare charges are checked using a stop watch.

Ages of Public Hire Vehicles

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment to list the ages of public hire vehicles licensed to carry passengers.

(AQW 29792/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A summary table providing the age of public hire vehicles licensed to carry vehicles is attached at Annex A of this response.

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

Annex A - AQW 29792/11-15

Taxi Age (Years)	Number
1	4
2	3
3	4
4	13

Taxi Age (Years)	Number
5	26
6	14
7	18
8	26
9	27
10	28
11	24
12	28
13	52
14	40
15	59
16	22
17	13
18	10
19	13
20	0
21	2
All Belfast Public Hire	426

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

Planning Application for an Electricity Sub Station in Rasharkin

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether the current planning application for an electricity sub station in Rasharkin is a Schedule 2 development as outlined in Article 2 of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations.

(AQW 29805/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The current planning application for an electricity substation at Finvoy Road, Rasharkin meets the criteria under Schedule 2 of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 for a determination to be carried out as to whether the proposal is EIA development. In this case the Department determined on 13 December 2013 that the proposal was not EIA development and that an Environmental Statement was not required.

Ravenhill Rugby Grounds: Taxi Operators

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28809/11-15, whether any specific taxi company have a Taxi Operator Licence granted for an Operator Centre at Ravenhill Rugby Ground on Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast.

(AQW 29847/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are no taxi companies with an operating centre at Ravenhill rugby ground listed on their Operator Licence.

Department of Regional Development: Taxis in Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment on how many occasions he, or his staff, have met with their colleagues in the Department of Regional Development on the taxi situation in Belfast; and to list the dates of these meetings.

(AQW 29851/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I met with Minister Kennedy on 17 December 2013 to discuss issues relating to taxis in Belfast which cut across both our portfolios, including ranks, parking enforcement and bus lanes.

My officials met with DRD colleagues to discuss taxi licensing/ranking issues on 13 February 2012, 9 August 2012, 24 April 2013, 10 May 2013 and 5 December 2013. There were also meetings around taxibus issues on 14 May 2013, 20 June 2013, 25 September 2013 and 24 October 2013.

Road Safety Forum

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment, given the recent rise in road fatalities, to outline the discussions of the recent meeting of the Road Safety Forum.

(AQW 29971/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As Minister with lead responsibility for road safety, I remain committed to the partnership work that has so greatly reduced road casualties over the last 40 years. I will work with all stakeholders to improve road safety and to reduce road casualties further.

To that end, and in response to the rise in road deaths at the beginning of 2014, I last week convened an urgent meeting of the Road Safety Forum. The turn-out for the meeting at such short notice, and members' obvious commitment and resolve to tackle road safety issues, demonstrated the importance of doing so. The meeting was attended by a range of road safety stakeholders including all relevant government departments, statutory agencies and the emergency services.

At the Forum the police presented an anonymised report on the fatal collisions, which was followed by discussion on what more might be done.

The meeting agreed that we need to continue our efforts, need to take every opportunity to communicate road safety messages and need to take a number of early actions to add to current work. DOE is providing additional focussed road safety advertising and messages. You will perhaps already have seen new messages on television and in the newspapers. We will also provide young people's groups with more materials to help them better communicate key road safety messages to their members. PSNI will continue its focus on visible road traffic policing, including increased focus on inappropriate speed, particularly in areas where there is known to be a risk of speed related collisions. DRD will, as Minister Kennedy announced in the Assembly chamber on 13 January, review the provision of information for those who make decisions on road gritting.

The Forum agreed to meet again before Easter to review progress on a range of other measures to be taken forward in 2014, including:-

- the Road Traffic Amendment (NI) Bill, for which I hope to have Executive approval soon;
- two new road safety public information campaigns on cyclist safety and speeding, that I will launch this year;
- Northern Ireland's first Safety & Lifeskills Centre; and
- a new Motorcycling Safety Strategy.

Everyone who uses the roads has to play a part in making our roads safer and must adjust their behaviours to suit the conditions. Drivers, particularly, need to concentrate and not get distracted, always wear a seatbelt, never drink and drive and moderate their speed to the road and the conditions. We all need to heed the key messages that will help keep us all safe.

I have asked all those in public life to seize every opportunity to communicate these messages to help keep their constituents and communities safe on our roads, and thank those that have, and continue to do, so.

We need to focus on the fact that travelling on our roads is probably the most dangerous thing that most of us will do on most days, and continue to work towards a vision of zero road deaths.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Electric Car Charge Points

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any plans to install electric car charge points in the lower east car park, Parliament Buildings.

(AQW 29507/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): DFP has been in discussions with DRD in relation to the installation of electric car charge points at a number of Government car parks including the lower east car park, Parliament Buildings. The required work will be subject to a future funding bid by DRD.

Institute for Professional Legal Studies Examination

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of students that have taken the Institute for Professional Legal Studies examination in each of the last five years, including the number seeking and obtaining barrister and solicitor admission.

(AQW 29519/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department does not directly hold this information.

Land Registry: Property Sales Values

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline why the Land Registry's system of making property sales values available to the public, differs from the system operated in England and Wales.

(AQW 29574/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Each of the Land Registries in the UK and Ireland operate under different legislation and use different methodologies to hold and store information. Therefore the information available and how it is categorised and published, differs from Registry to Registry.

Northern Ireland Civil Service Shower Facilities

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 27675/11-15, to detail the two buildings for which additional shower facilities are planned.

(AQW 29593/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The answer to AQW 27675/11-15 stated that provision of additional shower facilities are planned in a further two buildings, both of which are detailed below.

Building Name	Address
County Hall	Drumragh Avenue, Omagh
Forestview	Purdy's Lane, Newtownbreda

Rate Debt

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 28958/11-15, to detail the quantitative assumptions made concerning the write off of bad debt in the setting of the Regional Rate and the Penny Product calculations in 2013/14.

(AQW 29607/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: When undertaking the Penny Product calculations for 2013/14, LPS analysed debt for each district council as at September 2012 by category and age and based on this analysis applied a provision percentage. Results were then discussed with individual councils, some of whom amended their total write-off figure slightly to reflect circumstances specific to their council area. Based on this work, £27.1M was set aside for write-off in the 2013/2014 year.

A further £6.7M was provided in the estimate for writing-off debt relating to Rating of Empty Homes (REH) assessments leaving the total estimated write-off at £33.8M. As REH was only implemented in October 2011, there was no trend information available and a percentage was applied to the assessments in order to calculate an estimated write-off figure for 2013/2014.

Welfare Reform

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the process regarding the penalty arising from the failure to implement welfare reform.

(AQW 29678/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Chief Secretary to the Treasury wrote in June 2013 advising that it was the intention of the UK Government to adjust the Northern Ireland Executive DEL allocation should welfare reforms not be agreed by January 2014.

HM Treasury has not yet advised how this penalty will be applied. However, in anticipation of a penalty being applied, the Executive has agreed, on my recommendation to make a provision of £15 million to cover the remaining three months of this financial year.

Departmental Ministerial Travel

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel in the periods (a) January to June 2013; and (b) July to December 2013, respectively.

(AQW 29680/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information on the travel expenditure of Northern Ireland Ministers is not held centrally.

Countries for which the Proportion of Total Trade is above Three Percent

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail, for the most recent consecutive five years, the proportion of trade (i) to Britain, (ii) to the south of Ireland; (iii) to countries for which the proportion of total trade is above three percent; and (iv) not included in the categories above.

(AQW 29695/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) Regional Trade Statistics (RTS) series provides information on the exports of goods from regions of the UK to other countries; however it does not measure trade between Northern Ireland (NI) and Great Britain (GB).

Table 1 presents the proportion of NI exports to Ireland and all other countries with a share of exports greater than three percent. Information is presented for 2008 to 2012 (the latest year for which complete figures for NI are currently available from the HMRC RTS series).

The proportion of trade to GB is available for the manufacturing sector only from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) NI Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey (MSES).

Table 2 presents the sales by NI manufacturing companies to GB as a proportion of total sales (i.e. regardless of destination) and as a proportion of external sales (i.e. sales to destinations outside Northern Ireland), sourced from NISRA's MSES.

Table 1: Proportion of exports¹ of goods² for selected countries (with at least 3% share of exports) from Northern Ireland (%)

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ireland	41.1	41.2	39.0	37.3	36.1
<i>Countries with 3% or greater share of exports</i>					
United States of America	9.1	8.0	7.7	7.9	9.1
Canada	9.4	10.9	9.1	8.7	6.0
Germany	3.3	3.4	3.8	4.0	4.0
France	3.9	5.0	5.3	5.3	4.8
All other countries	33.2	31.5	35.1	36.7	40.0
Grand Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Figures may not add due to rounding. Source: HMRC

Table 2: Proportion of sales by Northern Ireland manufacturing companies to GB as a percentage of total sales and external sales (%)

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Total Sales ³	41.2	45.6	46.9	45.9	47.9
External Sales ⁴	53.1	58.0	60.4	59.3	61.1

Source: Northern Ireland Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey, NISRA

Footnotes:

- 1 Exports include all sales outside the United Kingdom
- 2 Including live animals
- 3 Total sales includes all sales regardless of destination
- 4 External sales include all sales outside Northern Ireland.

Department for Agriculture and Rural Development: Legal Action

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total amount spent by his Department on the recent legal action taken against the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding European funding.

(AQW 29704/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I refer the Member to AQO 5363/11-15 which was answered on 21 January 2014.

Family Law: Access to Children

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the consideration he has given to changing family law to enable penalties to be put in place by parents who do not grant each other access to their child following a break up.

(AQW 29709/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Under our current law, the court can impose penalties on those parents who breach a contact order, for example a custodial sentence or a fine. It has been suggested that additional enforcement measures should be available. However, it has also been suggested that more should be done to help parents to better understand their responsibilities toward their child and avoid disputes about contact. In the coming months I hope to elicit views on the issues, with a view to determining whether any legislative amendments are required.

Number of Deaths from Cancer

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people have died from (i) lung; (ii) throat; and (iii) mouth cancer in each (a) constituency; and (b) council area, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 29712/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The attached tables detail the number of registered deaths due to (i) lung cancer; (ii) throat cancer; or (iii) mouth cancer (2003-12), by Local Government District and Assembly Constituency.

Table 1: Number of Deaths from Lung¹ Cancer Registered in Northern Ireland by Local Government District, 2003-2012

Local Government District	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Ards	30	32	33	30	38	33	33	45	36	43	353
Belfast	208	225	187	211	224	231	204	220	224	209	2,143
Castlereagh	32	32	43	41	39	48	37	46	31	29	378
Down	27	23	23	26	37	27	31	26	36	26	282
Lisburn	45	38	41	43	50	43	46	53	48	70	477
North Down	46	38	38	38	30	43	37	31	37	30	368
Antrim	21	24	29	20	27	28	21	17	13	24	224
Ballymena	22	21	20	19	22	23	19	30	33	34	243
Ballymoney	8	10	6	14	9	11	12	13	9	16	108
Carrickfergus	20	21	25	23	20	21	22	24	25	22	223
Coleraine	23	30	39	22	25	27	23	27	26	34	276
Cookstown	5	13	8	16	13	15	14	17	13	13	127
Larne	14	19	21	10	11	17	24	15	13	12	156
Magherafelt	11	11	20	10	13	16	22	15	18	13	149
Moyle	10	12	7	6	10	6	8	6	9	5	79
Newtownabbey	40	44	35	34	43	54	45	52	55	53	455
Armagh	15	19	23	21	21	22	27	25	22	28	223
Banbridge	10	19	12	18	8	18	17	15	15	25	157
Craigavon	32	26	37	39	28	45	54	43	49	50	403
Dungannon	26	21	16	23	20	23	22	19	19	25	214

Local Government District	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Newry & Mourne	42	48	38	42	39	43	42	42	40	44	420
Fermanagh	30	37	27	32	24	25	29	24	32	23	283
Limavady	6	10	9	22	15	19	14	14	15	16	140
Derry	51	36	54	60	56	45	58	59	64	74	557
Omagh	18	9	21	11	20	27	26	13	16	25	186
Strabane	18	19	12	19	21	17	19	18	14	14	171
Northern Ireland	810	837	824	850	863	927	906	909	912	957	8,795

- 1 Lung Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C33-C34.

Table 2: Number of Deaths from Lung¹ Cancer Registered in Northern Ireland by Constituency, 2003-2012

Assembly Constituency	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Belfast East	69	72	65	69	77	82	55	69	63	51	672
Belfast North	81	97	78	82	98	96	97	88	107	99	923
Belfast South	54	56	49	48	51	61	60	58	55	50	542
Belfast West	63	69	66	80	80	79	69	82	62	83	733
East Antrim	41	47	52	38	38	46	51	46	51	38	448
East Londonderry	33	44	51	45	43	48	40	46	41	50	441
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	50	54	39	49	43	40	44	38	47	39	443
Foyle	47	32	51	59	53	43	55	54	64	74	532
Lagan Valley	39	31	30	34	38	36	33	45	40	54	380
Mid Ulster	22	28	32	32	27	39	43	37	35	35	330
Newry & Armagh	38	50	51	46	46	46	49	50	45	53	474
North Antrim	38	43	32	38	38	39	38	48	50	55	419
North Down	52	47	42	42	36	49	41	40	41	37	427
South Antrim	37	35	43	32	38	46	37	42	33	48	391
South Down	38	34	31	37	42	42	48	40	46	45	403
Strangford	31	30	35	36	46	34	34	43	43	41	373
Upper Bann	38	40	44	53	28	57	67	52	59	65	503

Assembly Constituency	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
West Tyrone	36	28	33	30	41	44	45	31	30	39	357
Unknown	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
Northern Ireland	810	837	824	850	863	927	906	909	912	957	8,795

- 1 Lung Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C33-C34.

Table 3: Number of Deaths from Throat¹ Cancer Registered in Northern Ireland by Local Government District, 2003-2012

Local Government District	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Ards	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	4	13
Belfast	3	8	6	2	5	5	7	5	7	4	52
Castlereagh	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Down	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	6
Lisburn	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	10
North Down	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	1	10
Antrim	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	5
Ballymena	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	7
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	6
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Coleraine	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	7
Cookstown	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4
Larne	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Magherafelt	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
Newtownabbey	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	1	10
Armagh	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	2	8
Banbridge	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	6
Craigavon	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	2	10
Dungannon	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	10
Newry & Mourne	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	3	2	14
Fermanagh	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	7
Limavady	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Local Government District	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Derry	0	4	2	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	13
Omagh	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
Strabane	0	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	9
Northern Ireland	14	26	19	19	23	22	23	26	29	27	228

- 1 Throat Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C09-C13 & C14.0.

Table 4: Number of Deaths from Throat¹ Cancer Registered in Northern Ireland by Constituency, 2003-2012

Assembly Constituency	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Belfast East	0	3	2	0	1	3	1	2	2	1	15
Belfast North	1	2	1	1	3	0	5	2	4	2	21
Belfast South	4	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	12
Belfast West	1	2	3	0	0	2	1	2	3	2	16
East Antrim	1	2	0	3	2	0	0	1	1	0	10
East Londonderry	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	8
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	13
Foyle	0	4	2	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	13
Lagan Valley	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	8
Mid Ulster	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	4	12
Newry & Armagh	2	0	1	0	3	1		4	1	4	16
North Antrim	0	1	0	0	1	3	4	2	0	4	15
North Down	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	1	10
South Antrim	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	6
South Down	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	3	0	10
Strangford	1	1	1	3	0	2	0	1	2	4	15
Upper Bann	0	1	1	3	3	3	1	2	0	2	16
West Tyrone	0	2	2	1	3	0	2	0	1	1	12
Northern Ireland	14	26	19	19	23	22	23	26	29	27	228

1 Throat Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C09-C13 & C14.0.

Table 5: Number of Deaths from Mouth¹ Cancer Registered in Northern Ireland by Local Government District, 2003-2012

Local Government District	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Ards	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	7
Belfast	4	3	2	3	5	4	3	4	6	1	35
Castlereagh	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
Down	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	7
Lisburn	0	0	3	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	10
North Down	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	3	0	7
Ballymena	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	7
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Carrickfergus	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	5
Coleraine	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Cookstown	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	5
Larne	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Moyle	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Newtownabbey	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	6
Armagh	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Banbridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Craigavon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Dungannon	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Newry & Mourne	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Limavady	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Derry	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	0	8
Omagh	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	4
Strabane	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	4
Northern Ireland	7	7	10	20	19	11	12	18	18	12	134

1 Mouth Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C03-C06.

Table 6: Number of Deaths from Mouth¹ Cancer Registered in Northern Ireland by Constituency, 2003-2012

Assembly Constituency	Registration Year										Total
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Belfast East	1	1	0	3	0	3	1	1	1	1	12
Belfast North	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	8
Belfast South	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	6
Belfast West	0	2	2	1	2	2	1	3	2	0	15
East Antrim	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	9
East Londonderry	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	5
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
Foyle	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	0	8
Lagan Valley	0	0	2	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	9
Mid Ulster	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	7
Newry & Armagh	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	5
North Antrim	0	2	0	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
North Down	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	3	0	9
South Antrim	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
South Down	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	5
Strangford	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	7
Upper Bann	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
West Tyrone	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	2	8
Northern Ireland	7	7	10	20	19	11	12	18	18	12	134

1 Mouth Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C03-C06.

Introduction of Universal Credit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel in regard to the introduction of universal credit, to ensure that any changes being considered for rate relief will continue to provide rate rebates to low income households.

(AQW 29796/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The second consultation on the future of rate rebates closed recently, a report on the consultation is available on the Department's website.

I will be considering the responses shortly and providing direction on the way forward. I do however support the view that rate rebates should continue to protect households least able to pay domestic rates.

Procurement

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how he intends to reform the procurement process to make it easier for small and medium sized businesses to bid for government contracts.
(AQO 5357/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: A key focus of the Procurement Board for Northern Ireland, which I chair, has been to make it easier for small and medium size businesses to bid for public sector contracts by simplifying procurement processes and making them less bureaucratic. Much of this work has been taken forward in consultation with the construction industry and business sector representatives.

Actions taken include:

- advertising all government contracts over £30,000 on a single portal;
- breaking larger contracts into lots to bring them within the scope of smaller businesses;
- simplifying procurement processes resulting in reduced bidding costs;
- requiring contracts which are over the value of the EU threshold to have a procurement strategy which includes engagement with the supply base;
- reducing liability and insurance requirements by making them proportionate to the risks associated with the contracts; and
- encouraging the advertisement of subcontracting opportunities.

The levels of small business and local business participation in the delivery of public contracts in Northern Ireland compares very well with the other devolved UK Administrations and is well above the levels achieved in England. For example:

- 80% of all contracts awarded by departments, agencies and non departmental public bodies in 2011/2012 were awarded to SMEs. 75% of these contracts went to businesses with fewer than 50 employees. In the construction sector 93% of contracts were awarded to SMEs.
- 79% of all contracts awarded in 2011/2012 went to companies based in Northern Ireland. Within the construction sector some 96% of contracts went to local businesses.

The work to improve procurement processes continues. A key priority is to ensure that Northern Ireland takes maximum advantage of the additional freedoms provided by the new EU procurement Directives to be adopted in the near future.

We continue to work closely with business organisations and a procurement conference to be held later this month will highlight improvements to the procurement process resulting from work carried out in conjunction with CBI.

Economic Prospects

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the economic prospects presented by the Chancellor in his Autumn Statement.
(AQO 5358/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: After a long period of slow economic growth it is encouraging to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer reporting that the UK economy gathered momentum during 2013. I am also encouraged by the revised OBR projections suggesting that overall UK growth will increase from 1.4% in 2013 to 2.4% in 2014, reaching 2.7% by 2017-18.

However, despite the promising growth within the UK economy as a whole, the outlook for 2015-16 and beyond will continue to be challenging for public sector finances as evidenced by the continuing cut to Whitehall departments and the Chancellor's recent comments about further cuts in future years. As a result the Executive will undoubtedly face tough decisions going forward.

Budget Review Group

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the work of the ministerial Budget Review Group.

(AQO 5359/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Ministerial Budget Review Group last met on the 15th January. On the agenda were a range of strategic issues, including streamlining the procurement process to speed up the delivery of capital projects.

We also discussed key budget issues such as Revenue Financed Investment, transfer of social housing stock and local government reform.

Block Grant

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the latest Office for Budget Responsibility Expenditure Projections for the determination of the NI block grant in future years.

(AQO 5360/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Office of Budget Responsibility's UK public expenditure projections were set out in their latest Economic and Fiscal Outlook report, which was published alongside the Chancellor's Autumn Statement back in December. This report showed that overall UK Resource DEL is expected to decline until at least 2018-19, with overall UK Capital DEL expected to increase marginally.

It is important to note that the Office for Budget Responsibility projections are at a UK level and that Northern Ireland's funding will be determined through the Barnett Formula. It therefore matters for us how the UK Government prioritise its budget in future Spending Reviews.

However given the latest UK public expenditure projections, it is prudent to assume that our Resource DEL will continue to be heavily constrained, with perhaps slight increases in our Capital DEL.

Rates: Sports Clubs

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of abolishing rates for amateur sports clubs.

(AQO 5362/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: In 2011 the Assembly passed a motion which asked that DFP examine the rate relief afforded to sports clubs.

Following that debate it was agreed that DCAL would initiate the work, as the policy competent department. That Department have advised that they are currently considering the issue, having engaged with key stakeholders in the sports and recreation sector via the Northern Ireland Sports Forum. I am also aware that Daithi McKay has recently raised the issue of seeking enhanced relief for Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) by proposing a private members' bill that would bring relief up to 100% from the current level of 80%. I understand he is consulting with the sector.

I would like to wait for some findings before I give my view on the matter. What I would say, however, is that this is not a straightforward issue of Northern Ireland 'playing catch up' with the rest of the UK, as many have suggested, because in GB they also apply 80% mandatory rate relief to amateur sports club facilities. Local authorities there can choose to top up the relief to 100% but only do so in limited circumstances where additional criteria are met. There are also issues with clubs that have substantial social facilities because this raises the question of unfair competition with private enterprise, as businesses are required to pay full rates on their restaurants and licensed premises. This is not to say that change should not occur but we need to consider the evidence and await a proper assessment of the issues.

Legal Costs

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the cost of the recent legal action taken against the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

(AQO 5363/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The final bills in respect of the case for DFP have not yet been received but it is estimated that the case will cost DFP less than £20,000 which is less than 0.02% of the amount of the proposed transfer from Pillar I to Pillar II.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Northern Ireland Pensioners' Parliament

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his response to motions HS12, HS13, HS14, HS15, HS16, HS17, HS18 and HS19 recently passed by the Northern Ireland Pensioner's Parliament.

(AQW 29430/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): As we move forward with home as the hub, I expect the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors to work together to ensure we have the necessary flexible and responsive domiciliary care services and relevant training will be an important part of that. I have paid tribute many times to the enormous contribution that carers in our community make towards helping family members and friends to remain in their own homes, and live more independent and fulfilling lives. It is vitally important that carers are able to avail of their statutory right to assessment, to discuss their own needs as a carer, and be considered for services in their own right.

More widely I also recognise the issues of dignity and engagement raised in the motions: I have shared the Dignity Code with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and have asked that it be publicised throughout the HSC. On 07 May, in light of concerns about Trust engagement, I stopped Trust consultations on the potential closure of statutory residential homes. I instigated a new regional process, led by the HSC Board which is designed to facilitate widespread engagement and includes two periods of public consultation, the first of which is currently underway.

In the TYC Strategic Implementation Plan, the Health and Social Care Board indicated that it would review the list of TYC projects in order to identify which of those will be subject to equality screening. The results of screening exercises will subsequently identify those requiring a full Equality Impact Assessment.

The intention is that screening and impact assessments will be conducted once each specific project reaches the appropriate stage, in line with the HSCB's equality scheme.

The scale of financial challenge facing my Department over the coming years is significant and, in that context, the Health and Social Care Trusts are currently considering all options, including efficiencies and savings opportunities, to maximise the amount of funding available to meet identified needs.

Whilst this is likely to mean difficult decisions must be taken, I am committed to ensuring that the needs of patients and clients are placed at the centre of this process.

Prescriptions Guidelines

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what guidelines are provided to GP practices in relation to the time taken to transfer prescriptions from surgery to pharmacy.
(AQW 29522/11-15)

Mr Poots: GPs are not responsible for the transfer of prescriptions from surgery to pharmacy.

Community pharmacies generally offer patients a collection and delivery service for prescriptions. This service is not commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board. Guidance has however been provided by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. Under this guidance pharmacies should have an agreement with the GP practice about the procedures when a prescription collection service is offered to patients which should ensure that prescriptions are available in a reasonable and timely manner for dispensing, patient data is protected and consent recorded.

When providing a collection and delivery service the pharmacist must obtain consent to collect/receive patients' prescriptions and explain fully to patients, or their carers, what the service involves, including the time period required to collect/receive and dispense their prescription.

Bamford Review

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the actions contained in the Bamford Review.

(AQW 29532/11-15)

Mr Poots: Progress against the Bamford Action Plan 2012-15 is monitored on a six-monthly basis by the Bamford Inter Departmental Senior Officials Group, and by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Mental Health and Learning Disability.

When I launched the Bamford Action Plan 2012-15 in March last year, I committed to publishing regular monitoring information to highlight progress. The first monitoring report has been drafted and was approved by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Mental Health and Learning Disability in November 2013. An easy read version of this report is currently being prepared, and I hope to publish both versions within the next few weeks.

In general terms, there has been good progress made on the Bamford Action Plan 2012-15, with 83% of the 76 actions on target for completion, and the remaining 17% are progressing, with some delay against the target date. The monitoring report, when published, will provide a detailed update against each of the 76 actions.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people attended Accident and Emergency departments (i) between 30 and 39 times; (ii) between 40 and 49 times; and (iii) more than 50 times a year, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 29569/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not currently available at a regional level.

My Department is in the process of developing a regional dataset for attendances at emergency care departments, and it is intended that this information will be available from 2014/15 onwards.

Funding Sources

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the funding sources available to Health Service institutions for investment in new and innovative technologies; and who has responsibility for administering and dispersing these grants.

(AQW 29599/11-15)

Mr Poots: Funding for new and innovative technologies is provided through the Departmental capital DEL programme which is allocated to Trusts on an annual basis and set as part of the Executive's overall budget. In the current year, EU funding became available through the European Regional Development Fund and just over £21.5m was allocated to research and development and other new and innovative projects across all Trust areas. This programme was administered by the Department.

On occasions Trusts receive funding directly for research and development activities for the facilitation, support and governance arrangements for Clinical Trials of new pharmaceutical agents and medical

devices from Pharmaceutical and Medical Technology Companies. Responsibility for administering these funds lies with the organising body.

Hospital Dentistry Appointments

Mr Eastwood asked Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the waiting times for dentistry appointments in each hospital.

(AQW 29624/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available in the format requested. The Department collects the current waiting time for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment and the current waiting time for inpatient treatment, by specialty. For the purpose of this question, waiting times for dentistry appointments are taken to include the following specialties: Oral Surgery, Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry, Orthodontics, Dental/Oral Medicine Specialties and Special Care Dentistry. Hospitals may provide dentistry services in one or more of these specialties. The figures detailed in the tables overleaf are presented for the total waiting times of these specialties combined.

Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in a dentistry specialty, at 6th January 2014

Hospital/HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for a first Consultant-led Outpatient Appointment, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18	
RBHSC	71	24	49	27	20	39	230
School of Dentistry	786	435	436	160	98	6	1,921
Belfast HSCT	857	459	485	187	118	45	2,151
Northern HSCT¹	234	121	122	47	4	0	528
Ulster	312	207	60	23	5	8	615
South Eastern HSCT	312	207	60	23	5	8	615
Craigavon Area	107	64	76	55	11	23	336
Daisy Hill	71	49	58	22	2	1	203
Southern HSCT²	178	113	134	77	13	24	539
Altnagelvin	315	145	135	102	99	204	1,000
South West Acute	64	41	8	6	0	12	131
Western HSCT	379	186	143	108	99	216	1,131

Source: HSC Trusts

Number of patients waiting for inpatient admission with a consultant in a dentistry specialty, at 6th January 2014

Hospital/ HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for Inpatient Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26 - 30	>30	
RBHSC	45	27	14	7	2	4	99

Hospital/ HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for Inpatient Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26 - 30	>30	
School of Dentistry	49	81	12	5	0	0	147
Belfast HSCT	94	108	26	12	2	4	246
Northern HSCT¹	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Ulster	68	27	27	0	0	0	122
South Eastern HSCT	68	27	27	0	0	0	122
Southern HSCT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Altnagelvin	192	140	68	8	4	8	420
South West Acute	17	0	0	0	0	0	17
Western HSCT	209	140	68	8	4	8	437

Source: HSC Trusts

- 1 Dental services in the Northern HSC Trust are provided by visiting consultants from the South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts. However, Northern Trust has responsibility for these patients waiting times. The Northern HSC Trust have stated that they are unable to provide waiting times for each hospital as joint waiting lists are used, and patients could be treated at either Antrim, Braid Valley, Causeway or Mid Ulster Hospitals.
- 2 A first consultant-led outpatient appointment within the Oral Surgery specialty in Craigavon Area Hospital is provided by a visiting consultant from the South Eastern HSC Trust.

Prosecutions Resulting from the Horsemeat Scandal

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prosecutions have resulted from the horsemeat scandal.

(AQW 29630/11-15)

Mr Poots: To date, no one has been charged by the police, however the investigations are still ongoing. The Government recognised very early in the incident that there was likely to be complex international criminal activity involved, which is why the UK Police, SOCA and Europol were contacted at an early stage in the incident and the FSA and the police have been working jointly across the UK since February 2013.

Blood Donation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there is a probation on blood donation in respect of those recently in receipt of dental treatment; and whether a routine visit to the dentist in the previous 24 hours is sufficient to activate the prohibition.

(AQW 29634/11-15)

Mr Poots: The requirement of the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations (2005), as stated in the Guidelines for the Blood Transfusion Services in the UK, regarding dental treatment is that people must not donate blood if:

- a) it is less than seven days since root canal treatment, dental capping (crown or veneer), dental implants or having a tooth removed;
- b) it is less than 24 hours since a filling, scale and polish or other superficial treatments;
- c) all wounds are not healed;

- d) there is any infection or has been on antibiotics within the last seven days, or
- e) allogeneic human tissue (bone) has been used.

Dental extractions and other treatments can result in bacteria getting into the blood stream. The waiting times after treatment are to allow healing and for any bacteria that have entered the blood stream to be cleared.

Critical Care Building at the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total planned expenditure for the construction of the critical care building at the Royal Victoria Hospital; and for a breakdown of (i) building cost; and (ii) equipment cost.

(AQW 29643/11-15)

Mr Poots: In line with the approved capital costs for the Critical Care Building at the Royal Victoria Hospital, the total planned expenditure for the construction, including the costs for adapting the top 3 floors for Maternity facility, is detailed in the table below:

Total Planned Expenditure - Critical Care Building, R.V.H.

Description	Critical Care (Phase 2B)	Maternity Variation	Totals Combined
Building	£137,500,228	£7,702,349	£145,202,577
Equipment	£6,000,000	£480,000	£6,480,000
Totals	£143,500,228	£8,182,349	£151,682,577

Care Packages

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28910/11-15 and AQW 28911/11-15, how many patients within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area were unable to be discharged from hospital due to the required care package not being available for delivery by a private provider, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 29658/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients who were unable to be discharged from hospital due to the required care package not being available for delivery by a private care provider is not collected by the Department.

My Department currently has a key performance target (detailed below) to ensure that patients care needs are identified and assessed as swiftly as possible, and that they have prompt access to appropriate care to meet those needs in the most appropriate setting, within a suitable timescale.

“From April 2013, ensure that 90% of complex discharges from an acute hospital take place within 48 hours of the patient being assessed as medically fit for discharge, with no complex discharge taking longer than 7 days, and all non-complex discharges from an acute hospital taking place within 6 hours”.

Information on performance against this target for the Northern HSC Trust is detailed in the table below for each month in 2013.

Northern HSC Trust	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013
Complex <48 Hours	88.6%	91.0%	87.6%	89.3%	89.8%	93.5%	90.1%	92.9%	93.5%	91.7%	91.5%	90.3%

Northern HSC Trust	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013
Complex > 7 Days	8	3	7	3	8	5	10	7	2	9	8	5
Non-complex 6 Hours	94.6%	96.2%	96.5%	95.7%	96.1%	96.2%	96.4%	95.5%	96.4%	95.6%	95.6%	95.2%

During December 2013, 90.3% of complex discharges within the Northern HSC Trust took place within 48 hours of the decision to discharge, with 5 complex discharges took longer than 7 days and 95.2% of non-complex discharges taking place within 6 hours of the decision to discharge.

Turnaround Time for Ambulances

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the turnaround time for ambulances in (i) December 2012; and (ii) December 2013, broken down by hospital.
(AQW 29670/11-15)

Mr Poots: It should be noted that the NIAS do not capture information on the date/time of admission of patients to emergency care departments. As a consequence, information on turnaround times detailed in the response refers to the time between the ambulance arriving at the emergency care department and it 'clearing' the location. The crew will remain with the patient until they have been handed over to the relevant clinical personnel within the HSC Hospital environment. The ambulance turnaround time will include patient handover and other aspects such as the time to clean and replenish the ambulance for the next call.

Ambulance turnaround times for each Acute hospital in December 2012 and December 2013 are detailed in the tables overleaf. The information provided relates to all ambulance journeys, including urgent and routine patient journeys in addition to those resulting from emergency calls.

Ambulance Turnaround Times at Acute Hospitals in December 2012

Hospital	< 15 min	15 - 30 min	30 - 45 min	45 - 60 min	1 - 2 Hrs	2 - 3 Hrs	More than 3 Hrs	Total
Royal Victoria	171	695	1038	488	206	2	0	2,600
Ulster	97	619	826	354	162	0	0	2,058
Antrim Area	205	803	618	188	69	2	0	1,885
Craigavon Area	226	796	436	170	103	6	2	1,739
Altnagelvin	384	649	227	47	28	2	0	1,337
Mater	103	382	300	48	16	0	0	849
Causeway	215	415	132	27	8	0	0	797
Daisyhill	156	316	153	65	49	2	3	744
South West Acute	164	377	103	28	16	0	0	688
Belfast City	69	295	185	31	4	0	0	584
RBHSC	54	125	48	4	4	1	1	237
Total	1,844	5,472	4,066	1,450	665	15	6	13,518

Source: NIAS

Ambulance Turnaround Times at Acute Hospitals in December 2013

Hospital	< 15 min	15 - 30 min	30 - 45 min	45 - 60 min	1 - 2 Hrs	2 - 3 Hrs	More than 3 Hrs	Total
Royal Victoria	173	763	1143	560	187	6	1	2,833
Ulster	119	694	814	278	63	0	1	1,969
Antrim Area	253	851	427	141	145	20	6	1,843
Craigavon Area	324	1046	394	69	9	0	0	1,842
Altnagelvin	296	696	269	75	36	0	0	1,372
Mater	89	376	305	93	22	0	0	885
Causeway	134	367	156	44	38	2	0	741
Daisyhill	157	441	156	34	19	0	0	807
South West Acute	194	431	100	18	4	0	0	747
Belfast City	75	221	144	38	5	0	0	483
RBHSC	60	117	37	3	3	0	0	220
Total	1,874	6,003	3,945	1,353	531	28	8	13,742

Source: NIAS

Turnaround Time for Ambulances

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the target turnaround time for an ambulance when bringing a patient to hospital; and how many times this was exceeded in December (i) 2012; and (ii) 2013.

(AQW 29671/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present, there is no target turnaround time for ambulances at Northern Ireland hospital emergency departments (EDs). However, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) monitors the time taken for patients to be handed over to ED medical staff and for ambulances to be made ready for their next journey for a range of categories ie less than 15 minutes, 15–30 minutes, 31–60 minutes, 61–120 minutes and more than 120 minutes.

The table below shows performance in these categories at December 2012 and December 2013.

Category Minutes	Less than 15	15 - 30	31 - 60	61 - 120	More than 120	Total
December 2012	1,844	5,472	5,516	665	21	13,518
December 2013	1,874	6,003	5,298	531	36	13,742

Treatment of Cancer Patients

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy, Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy and Proton Beam Therapy for the treatment of cancer patients.

(AQW 29676/11-15)

Mr Poots: Intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) is provided to all suitable prostate cancer and an increasing number of head and neck cancer patients at the Northern Ireland Cancer Centre. Further capability will be added when new (planned) equipment is commissioned later this year.

Stereotactic ablative body radiotherapy (SABR) is a relatively new and highly specialist form of radiotherapy presently not routinely commissioned in Northern Ireland. However a pilot service is currently provided to Northern Ireland patients alongside existing arrangements to send patients to Leeds, Sheffield and London. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have plans to expand the pilot service.

Proton beam therapy is also a highly specialist service; it is currently unavailable UK wide. However, current plans are that this treatment will be provided at two specialist sites in England (London and Manchester) by 2018. Currently Northern Ireland patients are referred to specialist centres either in the United States, Germany or Switzerland and this arrangement is expected to continue for the foreseeable future; the arrangement will be reviewed in 2018 should UK provision become available.

The Health and Social Care Board's extra contractual referral (ECR) process provides a mechanism to consider requests for treatment that fall outside the range of services normally commissioned in Northern Ireland. Each request sent to the Board must be supported by the relevant Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust manager and clinical director.

The common position across HSC in the UK is that referrals to other countries should be controlled by prior authorisation, exercised by local health authorities. Because of the existing reciprocal arrangements with EU countries, where a referral outside the UK is clinically necessary, that referral would normally be made to a hospital in the EU before referrals would be initiated to non-EU countries.

A&E Services at the Causeway Hospital

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the pressures the Royal Hospital's Accident and Emergency department faced recently, whether he will take steps to ensure an adequate provision for A & E services is retained at the Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 29687/11-15)

Mr Poots: The delivery of emergency department services at Causeway Hospital is a matter for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The Trust has advised that the emergency department in the Causeway Hospital is an essential component of the unscheduled care response in the Northern Trust and maintaining emergency services in Causeway is a Trust priority. There have been improvements in the systems and flow design within the Causeway Hospital which have resulted in significant improvements in performance. The Trust is continuing to develop and stabilise the medical workforce in the emergency department to ensure the sustainability of this service.

Craigavon Area Hospital: Ambulances

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the ambulance divert which occurred on the 6 January 2014, how many ambulances were diverted from Craigavon Area Hospital; and to which hospital were they diverted.

(AQW 29694/11-15)

Mr Poots: The ambulance divert which occurred at Craigavon Area Hospital on the 6th January 2014, was in place between 5.40pm on 6th January 2014 and 8.14am on 7th January 2014. During this period, 12 ambulances were diverted from Craigavon Area Hospital to other Hospitals (table below).

Number of Ambulances Diverted from Craigavon Area Hospital to other Hospitals (6/7 January 2014)

Hospital Diverted to	Number
Daisyhill	10
Royal Victoria	1

Hospital Diverted to	Number
South West Acute	1
Total	12

Source: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS).

It is important to note that when a full 999 ambulance divert is in operation, the Command and Control records do not indicate that the ambulance would have gone to Craigavon Area Hospital, and then diverted to Daisyhill Hospital. However, they record that a 999 call was responded to where the patient had an assumed address within the Craigavon Area Hospital catchment area, but was taken to Daisyhill Hospital.

Craigavon Area Hospital

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many working hours were lost as a result of ambulances being diverted from Craigavon Area Hospital on 6 January 2014.
(AQW 29696/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) routinely monitors activity at Emergency Departments as part of the planning process to ensure patients are seen as quickly as possible. In the period 6-7 January 2014, NIAS diverted A&E ambulances to other hospitals in response to increased demand at Craigavon Area Hospital Emergency Department which was busier than usual. During this time, NIAS personnel were at all times appropriately employed. As there was no reduction in ambulance provision over the period, no working hours were lost.

CT Scanner in Craigavon Area Hospital

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times the CT scanner in Craigavon Area Hospital has broken down in the last six months; and how many patients had to be transferred to an alternative hospital for their CT scan.
(AQW 29697/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust advise that the CT scanner has broken down twice in the last six months. Five patients were transferred to Daisy Hill Hospital and one patient to the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Number of People Being Treated for Cancer

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in each constituency are currently being treated for (i) lung; (ii) throat; and (iii) mouth cancer.
(AQW 29713/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people currently being treated for cancer is unavailable. However, information is available on the number of patients diagnosed with (i) lung, (ii) throat and (iii) mouth cancer who subsequently received treatment within one year of diagnosis:

(i) The number and percentage of patients diagnosed with lung cancer (ICD-10* C33-C34) in N. Ireland in the years 2006 to 2010 who received treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy) within one year, by Parliamentary Constituency

Parliamentary constituency	Number of Patients		
	Total diagnosed	Number who received treatment (% of total)	
Belfast East	404	206	(51.0%)

Parliamentary constituency	Number of Patients		
	Total diagnosed	Number who received treatment (% of total)	
Belfast North	524	296	(56.5%)
Belfast South	315	196	(62.2%)
Belfast West	434	256	(59.0%)
East Antrim	253	151	(59.7%)
East Londonderry	235	147	(62.6%)
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	225	135	(60.0%)
Foyle	314	183	(58.3%)
Lagan Valley	235	123	(52.3%)
Mid Ulster	211	123	(58.3%)
Newry & Armagh	275	159	(57.8%)
North Antrim	238	128	(53.8%)
North Down	235	119	(50.6%)
South Antrim	245	150	(61.2%)
South Down	247	142	(57.5%)
Strangford	235	133	(56.6%)
Upper Bann	290	177	(61.0%)
West Tyrone	210	125	(59.5%)
Unknown	47	11	(23.4%)
Northern Ireland Total	5,172	2,960	(57.2%)

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR)

* For a listing and explanation of ICD10 topology or site codes see: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, World Health Organisation, Geneva.
Or view online at <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en#/II>

(ii) The number and percentage of patients diagnosed with mouth cancer (ICD-10* C03-C06) in N. Ireland in the years 2006 to 2010 who received treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy) within one year, by Parliamentary Constituency

Parliamentary constituency	Number of Patients		
	Total diagnosed	Number who received treatment (% of total)	
Belfast East	15	13	(86.7%)
Belfast North	18	16	(88.9%)
Belfast South	9	7	(77.8%)
Belfast West	15	11	(73.3%)
East Antrim	12	11	(91.7%)

Parliamentary constituency	Number of Patients		
	Total diagnosed	Number who received treatment (% of total)	
East Londonderry	10	7	(70.0%)
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	10	6	(60.0%)
Foyle	17	17	(100.0%)
Lagan Valley	6	4	(66.7%)
Mid Ulster	12	10	(83.3%)
Newry & Armagh	16	12	(75.0%)
North Antrim	15	12	(80.0%)
North Down	17	15	(88.2%)
South Antrim	11	8	(72.7%)
South Down	10	8	(80.0%)
Strangford	12	10	(83.3%)
Upper Bann	13	11	(84.6%)
West Tyrone	18	14	(77.8%)
Unknown	2	1	(50.0%)
Northern Ireland Total	238	193	(81.1%)

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR)

* For a listing and explanation of ICD10 topology or site codes see: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, World Health Organisation, Geneva.
Or view online at <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en#/I>

(iii) The number and percentage of patients diagnosed with throat cancer (ICD-10* C09-C13, C14.0) in N. Ireland in the years 2006 to 2010 who received treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy) within one year, by Parliamentary Constituency

Parliamentary constituency	Number of Patients		
	Total diagnosed	Number who received treatment (% of total)	
Belfast East	20	16	(80.0%)
Belfast North	26	21	(80.8%)
Belfast South	18	17	(94.4%)
Belfast West	24	17	(70.8%)
East Antrim	12	11	(91.7%)
East Londonderry	9	7	(77.8%)
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	10	6	(60.0%)
Foyle	12	8	(66.7%)
Lagan Valley	13	10	(76.9%)

Parliamentary constituency	Number of Patients		
	Total diagnosed	Number who received treatment (% of total)	
Mid Ulster	10	10	(100.0%)
Newry & Armagh	21	16	(76.2%)
North Antrim	17	14	(82.4%)
North Down	20	16	(80.0%)
South Antrim	8	7	(87.5%)
South Down	9	4	(44.4%)
Strangford	14	11	(78.6%)
Upper Bann	18	15	(83.3%)
West Tyrone	8	7	(87.5%)
Unknown	1	0	(0.0%)
Northern Ireland Total	270	213	(78.9%)

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR)

* For a listing and explanation of ICD10 topology or site codes see: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, World Health Organisation, Geneva.
Or view online at <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en#/I>

Training and Skilling of Emergency Doctors

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many meetings he has had with the Minister for Employment and Learning on the training and skilling of emergency doctors; and whether he has any plans to raise the shortage of emergency doctors with Ministerial colleagues at the Executive, in Dublin and London, and in Europe.

(AQW 29716/11-15)

Mr Poots: The training of junior doctors including doctors in emergency medicine is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA). My Department is very aware of the shortage of emergency doctors and we continue to work closely with NIMDTA and with Trusts on this issue. However, there is currently a national shortage of doctors in emergency medicine making it very difficult for Trusts to fill these vacancies.

I have previously raised the junior doctor vacancy issue with the Home Office, particularly in relation to the impact of the immigration rules on the recruitment of junior doctors from outside the EEA. Although there are no plans for Minister Farry and I to meet to discuss this specific issue my officials hold regular meetings with the Department for Employment and Learning on a range of strategic issues of mutual concern, including future planning of the medical workforce.

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Medical Consultant Vacancies

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many medical consultant vacancies exist in each department of the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and what measures are being taken to fill the vacancies.

(AQW 29735/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Trust has informed my Department that there are currently 30.5 medical consultant vacancies across the Trust. These vacancies have been broken down by Directorate in the table below:

Directorate	Consultant Vacancies
Acute	16
Primary Care and Older People Services	9
Womens & Childrens	4.5
Adult Mental Health & Learning Disability	1

The Western Trust is actively taking steps to fill these vacancies. Some posts have been advertised on several occasions. The Trust has recruited locum consultants into posts that have proved difficult fill. It has advised that 26.4 posts (out of the 30.5 vacancies) are currently filled by locum consultants.

Jobs in the Western Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether jobs in the Western Health and Social Care Trust are at risk in 2014/15 as a result of the Trust's savings plan for the current funding period.

(AQW 29738/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Trust, like other Trusts, is continuing to carry out detailed analysis of its financial position for 2013/14, taking account of emerging cost pressures and implementing, where possible, options to reduce expenditure which do not impact on front line services.

The scale of financial challenge facing my Department over the coming years is significant and in that context, all Health and Social Care Trusts are currently considering all options, including efficiencies and savings opportunities, to maximise the amount of funding available to meet identified needs.

I am committed to ensuring that the needs of service users and patients are placed at the centre of this process.

Music Therapy in Special Education

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Review of the Allied Health Professionals' Support for Children and Young People with Statements of Special Educational Needs in Special Schools and Mainstream Education has requested, or plans to consider, evidence from parents of children with the most complex needs on the inclusion of music therapy in special education.

(AQW 29769/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Review's focus is primarily on the services provided by Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Orthoptics and Podiatry for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN). In addition, it has been agreed that there will be an opportunity for engagement with representatives from other Allied Health Professions (AHP), including those providing music therapy, who work with children with SEN Statements.

Furthermore, the Public Health Agency will seek views on the provision of AHP services, including music therapy, from the parents of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs.

Allied Health Professional Input

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the need for additional allied health professional input and services to meet the needs of children with profound multiple learning difficulties and multiple complex needs is being included as part of the Review of the Allied Health Professionals' Support for Children and Young People with Statements of Special Educational Needs in Special Schools and Mainstream Education.

(AQW 29770/11-15)

Mr Poots: The review will focus on Allied Health Professions (AHP) services for all children with statements of special educational needs, including those with profound multiple learning difficulties and multiple complex needs. In phases 1 and 2 the level of AHP provision will be scoped for these children and will culminate with the identification of issues and recommendations for action. In phase 3 an agreed regional model and implementation plan will be drafted, based on the findings of the scoping exercise and recommendations for further action.

Royal Victoria Hospital Emergency Department

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what additional resources, including staff and finance, have been put in place in the Royal Victoria Hospital Emergency Department to deal with the impact of the early closures of Emergency Departments at the Lagan Valley and Downe Hospitals.

(AQW 29813/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following additional resources (contingency arrangements) have been put in place at the Royal Victoria Hospital:

- 6 additional inpatient beds;
- 2 additional emergency department nurses at weekends to cover 12-hour day time period both Saturday and Sunday;
- 2 additional emergency department senior doctors at weekends to cover 12-hour day time period both Saturday and Sunday;
- Consequential acute medicine, social work, radiology and laboratory activity.

In addition, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has increased the cover provided to the Royal Victoria Hospital site by a Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officer to assist with expediting patient transfers via ambulance.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Training

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the lifesaving potential of training greater numbers of Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service personnel in Large Animal Rescue techniques.

(AQW 29846/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) approach to providing emergency cover is based on a comprehensive analysis of risk. The assessment of training needs to ensure the availability of adequately trained personnel is an operational matter for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS). NIFRS places a strong focus on operational training to prepare staff for all of the challenges they face, including large animal rescue.

NIFRS currently have two dedicated Animal Rescue Teams based in Omagh and Newcastle. These teams provide full coverage across Northern Ireland with a specific focus on the rural communities. The Animal Rescue Teams have access to specialist equipment and use approved rescue techniques. In addition a number of officers are trained as Farm Animal Handling Awareness Officers and all station based personnel receive annual training in animal rescue with each fire station having its own animal rescue instructors.

Air Ambulance Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an up to date assessment of the current air ambulance service provided to the Health Service.

(AQW 30006/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has in place an air ambulance contract with a private provider for the transfer of adult and paediatric patients to and from Northern Ireland. This is a

planned service, initiated by individual Health and Social Care Trusts and is used primarily to transport seriously ill patients from a referring NI hospital to Belfast International Airport for onward transfer by dedicated aircraft to NHS services in Great Britain. It is also used to repatriate patients back to NI hospitals following treatment if they are deemed too unwell to travel by other means.

The framework scope and service specification for the contract sets out in detail the requirements the provider must meet in providing safe, responsive, value for money air transport and associated services to the population of Northern Ireland.

I have been assured by the HSCB that all aircraft involved in patient transfers are operated in full compliance with the current European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) regulations, which includes a certificate of airworthiness and that all maintenance is carried out in accordance with the Civil Aviation Authority requirements.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the funding rule, applicable in England and Wales, that Accident and Emergency departments receive only 30 per cent of the cost of treating patients admitted, over and above the number of patients treated in 2008-09, applies locally.

(AQW 30067/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no equivalent funding mechanism in place in Northern Ireland.

There are many measures in place in Northern Ireland to reduce/divert Accident and Emergency activity. These include; GP out of hours services; Co-location of GP out of hours with emergency departments; Emergency department related pathways (e.g. DVT protocols); Extra GP clinics in winter; NIAS treat and leave initiatives; and Public campaigns such as "Choose well".

Department of Justice

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Promotion Board

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to outline how Harry Maguire, a person convicted of the murder of Corporals Howes and Woods, recently sat on a promotion board within the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 29520/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): No external representative sits on Prison Service promotion boards. A number of staff applied for a temporary secondment to a project involving the Prison Service working in partnership with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and two community-based restorative practice groups – Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland. This was not a promotion opportunity.

In line with normal practice for secondments these staff were invited for an informal chat with a panel which comprised a senior NIPS manager, a senior PBNI manager and the Director of one of the two community-based groups.

Third Sector Organisations Funded by Department

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) all third sector organisations funded by his Department who provide services to the public; and (ii) the value of each contract.

(AQW 29544/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since its formation in April 2010 the Department of Justice, including its Agencies but not its arm's length bodies, has provided the following funding to third sector organisations who provide services to the public in each of the last three financial years:

Third sector organisation	Value of funding £k		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Barnardos	168	156	167
NI Prison Service Central Benevolent Fund	13	17	19
Challenge for Youth	40	-	-
Colin Early Intervention Partnership	-	-	25
Community Restorative Justice Ireland	50	50	50
Domestic Violence Helpline	97	105	110
Extern	385	347	342
Include Youth	90	89	88
Migrant Help	27	124	45
Mindwise	298	313	246
NIACRO	984	1,322	1,511
NI Crimestoppers	20	20	20
Northern Ireland Alternatives	50	50	50
NSPCC	384	435	426
Prison Fellowship NI Ltd	7	9	9
Prison Service Trust	298	302	294
Quaker Service	241	191	341
Respect	6	6	6
SLS Legal Publications	25	25	13
Victim Support Northern Ireland	2,213	2,180	2,147

In addition to the above, the Youth Justice Agency (YJA), an executive agency of the Department of Justice, runs a Small Grant Scheme for amounts up to £1,500 to support the work that local community and voluntary groups do with vulnerable and marginalised young people. The total amounts funded under this scheme are as follows:

	Value of funding £k		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
YJA Small Grant Scheme	111	203	154

Mixed Committals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the number of mixed committals held in each of the last five years, to detail how many (i) legal firms and (ii) counsel each equates to per year, to date. **(AQW 29567/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of distinct solicitors' firms and counsel in mixed committal proceedings for the period 2009-2013.

Year	Number of mixed committals	Number of solicitors' firms	Number of counsel
2013P	30	29	22
2012	24	29	23
2011	42	35	28
2010	32	29	15
2009	52	40	22

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

P Data currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Mixed Committals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cases heard or listed for hearing as a Mixed Committal in each of the last five years, and of these (i) how many were/are not legally aided; and (ii) how many were/are legally aided, including the cost of each.

(AQW 29590/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the requested format is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost

Legal Aid: Local Courts and Proceedings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether legal representatives defending in local courts and proceedings, particularly those funded by Legal Aid and in which high costs are accumulating, have a responsibility to inform clients of potential convictions if relevant evidence indicates guilt, or whether they can continue to put forward their client's denial in absence of the defence disproving or moving to disprove guilt, even though the outcome is inevitable and delay will contribute to increasing costs which could be avoided.

(AQW 29591/11-15)

Mr Ford: The responsibilities of legal representatives towards their clients are regulated by the Law Society of Northern Ireland and the Bar Council.

Subject to the Assembly's wider legislative programme, I intend to introduce a Justice Bill in the first half of 2014. The Bill will propose placing a statutory duty on a defence representative to make clients who are guilty of an offence aware of the benefits of admitting their guilt at an early stage.

Legal Aid Payments

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the highest ten amounts paid, and to whom, in Legal Aid payments for the year ending 31 March 2013, including the average annual amount paid to each person/firm.

(AQW 29602/11-15)

Mr Ford: Top ten legal aid payments and average payments in 2012/13.

Ranking	Description	Highest Payments	Average Gross Payment	Average Net Payment
1	Kevin Winters & Co Inc Krw Law Llp	2,439,301	508	357
2	McConnell, Kelly & Co	1,620,474	897	678

Ranking	Description	Highest Payments	Average Gross Payment	Average Net Payment
3	Madden & Finucane 11	1,465,712	845	610
4	Mckenna Sweeney Mckeown	1,414,116	731	551
5	Trevor Smyth & Co	1,216,970	675	520
6	Mr P Lyttle	1,070,029	4,350	3625
7	Donnelly & Wall	1,023,396	910	680
8	Higgins, Hollywood, Deazley	945,675	842	851*
9	Mccann & Mccann	857,726	631	475
10	John Reavey	780,561	2,455	1948

* The total payments for this firm include a recoupment of an interim payment in respect of disbursement.

Notes:

- The figures tabled are gross figures which are subject to tax liability.
- Payments are made retrospectively for work completed. They can reflect payments in respect of cases conducted over a number of years but which were paid in the same year.
- Average payments have been calculated by dividing the total payment made by the number of payments made.
- Net average payments reflect the professional fee paid to each individual/firm, exclusive of disbursements and VAT.

On 23 December 2013, the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission published details of the 100 solicitor practices and 100 barristers receiving the highest payments from legal aid in Northern Ireland during the financial year 2012/13. Supporting notes were published alongside the NILSC's Disclosure of payments. These can be found on the Commission's website at www.nilsc.org.uk.

Informed Warnings in the Criminal Justice System

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the status and genesis of Informed Warnings in the criminal justice system; (ii) the distinctions with adult cautions; and (iii) the use of informed cautions to date.

(AQW 29604/11-15)

Mr Ford: An informed warning is a formal reprimand administered by the PSNI on the direction of the Public Prosecution Service. It is not a criminal conviction but is recorded on a person's criminal record for 12 months. Informed Warnings were an alternative to prosecution used by the police, the use of which transferred to the PPS when it was set up in 2005.

Adult cautions are also formal reprimands administered by the PSNI on the direction of the PPS. A caution is not a conviction but is recorded on a person's criminal record for five years if an adult, and for 30 months if a youth.

Both Informal Warnings and Adult Cautions require an admission of guilt and details of the disposal remain available to criminal courts after the periods stated.

The Public Prosecution Service has provided the data below on the number of cautions and informed warnings issued from 2007 to December 2014

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2013/ 2014 (to end Dec)
Cautions	6678	7367	7252	7078	5438	3495
Informed Warnings	2865	2158	2242	1669	958	519

Body Parts Controversy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the actions taken and the current situation relating to the body parts controversy which arose in 2012.

(AQW 29610/11-15)

Mr Ford: The review of retained human tissue by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published in June 2012 included a number of recommendations directed towards the PSNI, Office of the Police Ombudsman, Coroners Service for Northern Ireland, State Pathologist's Department and Department of Justice.

Public confidence in the procedures for management of human tissue is important and so I requested Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to carry out a review of progress against the recommendations of the ACPO audit. HMIC published its report in July 2013 and the report is available on the DOJ website.

The HMIC report acknowledged the progress made by the agencies in updating their practices and procedures. However, it noted that further work was needed to ensure a consistent approach across all of the justice agencies. The relevant agencies are currently progressing those recommendations and I have committed to a further review of progress against the recommendations being carried out during the summer.

Convictions for Cannabis Cultivation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to cannabis factories operated by Chinese nationals and the convictions and cases currently within the court system, whether any evidence of (i) human trafficking; (ii) forced labour; and/or (iii) illegal gangmaster practice has been discovered.

(AQW 29627/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice does not hold this information. The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPSNI) have advised that information is not kept in a form which would enable it to be examined without a significant exercise. They have confirmed, however, that when taking decisions as to prosecution, prosecutors will apply the PPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Human Trafficking and if it is considered that a suspect has committed an offence as a direct result of their having been trafficked then this will be a strong public interest factor mitigating against prosecution.

I understand that the PPSNI has exercised prosecutorial discretion not to prosecute in a number of cases where the alleged perpetrator was believed to be a victim of human trafficking, including cases of cannabis cultivation.

The Department of Justice has commissioned research on all the cases of potential victims of human trafficking that have been referred into the National Referral Mechanism from Northern Ireland, in order to identify any issues that need to be addressed. We will be examining any evidence relating to the prosecution of victims which that research might reveal.

Finally, the cultivation of cannabis is an illegal activity, defined in legislation within The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and therefore falls outside the remit of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority.

Guidance for Mixed Committals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29450/11-15, whether guidance has been issued to staff of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service from any other agency or Department in relation to the listing of mixed committals, and if so, to detail (i) the content; (ii) the reasons for such guidance; and (iii) when it was issued.

(AQW 29628/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) has not issued guidance to staff from any other agency or Department in relation to the listing of mixed committals.

Cost of Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost of Legal Aid for the defence of Barry McCarney in the Millie Martin murder trial, broken down by (i) solicitor; (ii) junior counsel; and (iii) senior counsel; and to clarify if this matter will be appealed.

(AQW 29629/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total cost of legal aid for the defence of Barry McCarney in the Millie Martin murder trial, broken down by (i) solicitor; (ii) junior counsel; and (iii) senior counsel is as follows:

Solicitor	£167,029.92
Junior Counsel	£29,748.12
Senior Counsel	£121,085.51
Total	£317,863.55

The matter has been appealed but the appeal has not yet been heard.

Summary Charge: Form 1 Mechanism

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to outline the circumstances in which, a summary charge, which is subject to a six month limitation, can be proceeded outside that timeframe; and whether the Form 1 mechanism is available in respect of a charge sheet process, or only in respect of an unserved summons.

(AQW 29632/11-15)

Mr Ford: Under Article 19 of the Magistrates' Courts (NI) Order 1981 the magistrates' court does not have jurisdiction to deal with a summary offence unless the complaint was made within 6 months from the time when the offence was committed or ceased to continue.

In broad terms, a complaint is deemed to have been made when a summons is signed by a lay magistrate or, in charge sheet cases, when the case is first listed in court. A complainant may choose to raise a formal complaint, known as a Form 1, before a lay magistrate to ensure that the statutory time limit is complied with.

The statutory time limit for summary offences applies whether proceedings are brought by summons, charge sheet or Form 1. If the Form 1 is used it is normally followed by a summons not by a charge.

Where there is a time limit for an offence, the prosecution must prove, if the issue arises, that the time limit was observed. The time limit does not however apply to an indictable offence or to a hybrid offence. Nor does it apply where a specific time limit is set down by any enactment.

The time limit applies to the making of the complaint and not to the serving of the summons. There is no jurisdictional time limit for the service of a summons on foot of a complaint.

Summary Charge: Form 1 Mechanism

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many summary proceedings have failed to proceed in the last twelve months as a result of the summons not being served within the limitation period.

(AQW 29633/11-15)

Mr Ford: Under Article 19 of the Magistrates' Courts (NI) Order 1981 the magistrates' court does not have jurisdiction to deal with a summary offence unless the complaint was made within 6 months from the time when the offence was committed or ceased to continue.

In broad terms, a complaint is deemed to have been made when a summons is signed by a lay magistrate or, in charge sheet cases, when the case is first listed in court. A complainant may choose to raise a formal complaint, known as a Form 1, before a lay magistrate to ensure that the statutory time limit is complied with.

The statutory time limit for summary offences applies whether proceedings are brought by summons, charge sheet or Form 1. If the Form 1 is used it is normally followed by a summons not by a charge.

Where there is a time limit for an offence, the prosecution must prove, if the issue arises, that the time limit was observed. The time limit does not however apply to an indictable offence or to a hybrid offence. Nor does it apply where a specific time limit is set down by any enactment.

The time limit applies to the making of the complaint and not to the serving of the summons. There is no jurisdictional time limit for the service of a summons on foot of a complaint.

Maghaberry Prison: Prison Officers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29468/11-15, to detail when prison officers last lost control of a wing or section of a prison.

(AQW 29657/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison Officers last lost control of an area of Maghaberry Prison on 21st June 2011. During that incident of mass indiscipline, prisoners set fires in Lagan House recreation room and yard. The incident lasted for approximately seven hours before staff regained control of the area.

Reforms to Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the estimated savings following the introduction of the reforms to Legal Aid.

(AQW 29688/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice has developed a comprehensive programme of legal aid reforms aimed at improving access to justice, bringing legal aid expenditure within budget and improving governance.

Reforms to criminal legal aid, already introduced, when fully implemented will achieve estimated savings of £20million; other savings will be achieved from further planned reforms to both civil and criminal legal aid.

A further reform to Crown Court Fees has been subject to consultation. If fully implemented, it would deliver further saving of up to £5.6million. In addition, my Department has undertaken consultations on a number of proposals including reforms to publicly funded legal Representation in the Civil and Family Courts, changes to Financial Eligibility for Civil and Criminal Legal Aid and proposals to introduce standard fees in the Civil Courts. If fully implemented these reforms would save up to a further £18 million per year.

All of these projects will contribute to my strategic objective of bringing legal aid expenditure within budget.

Number of Successful Prosecutions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to tackling rural crime, to detail the number of successful prosecutions and value of equipment recovered in 2013.

(AQW 29717/11-15)

Mr Ford: Datasets held by my Department do not contain information on the location and circumstances in which offences were committed. It is not, therefore, possible to identify convictions resulting from rural crime. Similarly, information on the value of equipment recovered through the successful prosecutions of such crimes is not held by my Department.

Timescale for the Introduction of a Statutory Right for Victims

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the timescale for the introduction of a statutory right for victims to be able to tell a court how a crime affected them.

(AQW 29736/11-15)

Mr Ford: I plan to legislate in the forthcoming Justice Bill to give victims of crime a statutory entitlement to make a written victim personal statement. Subject to the agreement of the Executive, and the Assembly's legislative timetable, I intend to introduce this legislation in the early part of this year.

A new formalised process for submitting victim personal statements was introduced in December 2013. These statements give victims, or their representatives, the opportunity to make the court aware of how a crime has affected them. Where a case goes to court and a person pleads or is found guilty, victim personal statements can be used before sentencing to make clear to the judge the harm caused by the crime.

Victims Funding

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, following the conviction of Bronislav Rybensky for human trafficking and controlling prostitution and Lyle Lamont for controlling prostitution, whether the funds seized at the scene of the crimes have been placed into a victims fund, specifically for those who were trafficked and/or exploited in the case.

(AQW 29747/11-15)

Mr Ford: This matter remains under police investigation.

Non-Northern Ireland Nationals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of Non-Northern Ireland nationals that have been convicted of (i) human trafficking; (ii) controlling prostitution or any similar related offence; (iii) rape or a similar related sexual offence; (iv) murder; and/or (v) manslaughter; and of these, how many have been recommended for deportation on release, or have since been deported.

(AQW 29749/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information relating to prosecutions and convictions in respect of human trafficking offences is collated and included in the annual Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking (IDMG) Report. There have been three human trafficking convictions in Northern Ireland in 2012 and 2013. None of the individuals convicted in each of these cases were UK nationals.

Convictions databases held by my Department do not contain information on whether or not an offender is a "Non-Northern Ireland" national. It is therefore not possible to provide the exact figures requested for each of the crimes specified in the question. Instead, numbers for all convictions in relation to the crimes specified have been provided.

The latest published convictions data relates to 2009. Information in relation to the latest three years available, 2007-2009, is included in the table below.

Convictions for specified offences, 2007-2009

	2007	2008	2009
Human trafficking	0	0	0
Controlling prostitution	0	3	3
Rape	15	16	22
Murder	18	12	24
Manslaughter	12	13	7

Notes:

1. Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.
2. The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.

Deportation is a matter which falls under the remit of the Home Office.

Magilligan Prison Complex

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current timescale of the (i) commencement; and (ii) completion of the replacement Magilligan Prison complex.

(AQW 29802/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following my updates to the Assembly on March 19th and October 21st 2013, NIPS Officials continue their work in developing the plans for all the projects outlined in the Estate Strategy including that of the rebuilding of Magilligan.

Following Department of Finance and Personnel approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case for Magilligan's redevelopment, NIPS Officials are in the process of developing the Outline Business Case (OBC). The future programme is dependent on the OBC being approved and capital funding being made available. Until the OBC is approved and capital funding made available, I am unable to provide any further details of the timetable.

Prisoners Released for Christmas Parole

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of prisoners released for Christmas parole in each of the last five years; and of these, how many prisoners failed to return to prison.

(AQW 29860/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of prisoners released under the Christmas Home Leave Scheme in each of the last five years, and of these the number who failed to return to prison, is detailed in table A below:

Table A

Calender Year	No. of prisoners released	No. of prisoners who failed to return at the appropriate time or who breached bail conditions
2009	76	0
2010	57	1
2011	87	3
2012	72	3
2013	92	3

Prisoners who breached their leave conditions or failed to return to prison at the appropriate time were posted unlawfully at large (UAL). All were subsequently returned to prison.

Serious Case Review Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, following the judgement on 16 January 2014 and the subsequent dismissal of the appeal against conviction and sentence brought by Thomas Ward, whether he will publish the report of the Serious Case Review in respect of handling and monitoring following his release from custody for a similar attack, and his arrest and charge of the second attack.

(AQW 29921/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Court of Appeal has delivered its judgment and once the statutory time limit for any remaining avenues of appeal has passed the PPANI Strategic Management Board will be in a position to consider the publication of the conclusions of the report in this case.

Orange Halls and Personnel

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the threat to Orange Halls and personnel resulting from the deputy First Minister's claiming the UVF and Orange Order are one and the same in Belfast.

(AQW 29982/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not for me as Minister of Justice to make any assessment of threat. At recent meetings neither the Chief Constable nor the Secretary of State raised any specific concerns regarding this issue.

Prosecutions and Convictions for Drug Related Offences: Upper Bann

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of prosecutions and convictions for drug related offences in the Upper Bann constituency, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 30010/11-15)

Mr Ford: Drugs offences may be prosecuted under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Medicines Act 1968, the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 and the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

There were 66 convictions for drug related offences in 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available), where the known address provided for the offender was within the Upper Bann constituency. It is not possible to provide prosecution data.

Note:

3. Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.
4. The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.

Department for Regional Development

20mph Zones

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 13221/11-15, how many 20mph zones have been implemented in (i) 2012; and (ii) 2013; and how many are planned to be implemented before 2014.

(AQW 29155/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I can confirm eight 20 mph zones were implemented during 2011/12, and a further 14 during 2012/13. One further 20 mph zone is due to be implemented during 2013/14.

Closure of Barrack Street in Belfast

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the benefits that have resulted from the closure of Barrack Street in Belfast to through traffic.

(AQW 29509/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The closure of Barrack Street, Belfast to through traffic derived from the 'Belfast On The Move' strategic review of traffic within Belfast City Centre. Roads Service had previously been aware of local residents' concerns over the volume and nature of through traffic in this street and took the opportunity to address those concerns within the overall scheme proposal.

Whilst there has been no formal assessment carried out on the specific benefits of the closure of Barrack Street, it is considered the stopping-up has returned the area to being a residential street for the benefit of all those who live there.

Repair of the A2 Whitechurch Road in Ballywalter

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timescale for the repair of the A2 Whitechurch Road in Ballywalter, which subsided as a result of the recent tidal surge.

(AQW 29512/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service has assessed the damage at Whitechurch Road, Ballywalter as a result of the recent tidal surge. Design work will soon be completed and it is anticipated the repair work will take up to three months, given the extent of the damage.

Programme for Government 2011-15: Pupils that Cycle to School

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development how they are ensuring that the Executive meets the Programme for Government 2011-15 target to increase the number of pupils that cycle to school.

(AQW 29531/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Programme for Government 2011-15 makes a commitment to 'by 2015 create the conditions to facilitate at least 36% of primary school pupils and 22% of secondary school pupils to walk or cycle to school as their main mode of transport'. In order to deliver this commitment my Department, in partnership with the Public Health Agency, is funding a three year Active School Travel Initiative which involves delivering a programme of cycle and walking skills training to pupils in 180 schools across Northern Ireland. The programme is being delivered by Sustrans and its objective is to encourage school children to adopt cycling and walking as their main mode of travel to school.

A robust programme of monitoring and evaluation has been developed by my Department's Statistics and Research Branch to measure achievement of the PfG targets and provide improved information on the progress made under the Active School Travel Initiative.

I have also established a Cycling Unit within my Department to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. In addition, my Department continues to invest in the Safer Routes to School programme which is an initiative aimed at encouraging the use of sustainable transport options to school such as walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing to school. We are also exploring opportunities to work with other Departments to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities at participating schools.

My Department continues to work with other stakeholders in the forthcoming Giro d'Italia Big Start to ensure that it provides a lasting legacy for cycling among our school children. We are actively involved in the schools sub-group which is chaired by the Department of Education.

Moneydig Pumping Station

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what base maintenance is planned for Moneydig pumping station.

(AQW 29546/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it plans to upgrade the Moneydig Wastewater Treatment Works as part of the Rural Wastewater Investment Programme and work is expected to be completed by March 2015.

Moneydig Pumping Station

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development when Moneydig pumping station is expected to reach its population equivalent.

(AQW 29547/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that Moneydig Wastewater Treatment Works has already surpassed its design population equivalent (PE). The current Works has a design PE of 44 while the actual PE discharging to the Works is 61. NIW plans to upgrade the Works under the Rural Wastewater Investment Programme and it is expected that this will be completed by March 2015. The upgrade will increase the capacity to 100 PE.

Free Services Offered by the New Bloomberg Associates Group

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has considered availing of the free services offered by the new Bloomberg Associates Group in relation to the development of public spaces and improved pedestrian and cycling participation and their experience in New York City.

(AQW 29556/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have advised my officials to liaise with Belfast City Council regarding the details of Bloomberg Associates Group as this would appear to represent a better match to the potential wide and varied support offered by the group for cities around the world.

In relation to improved facilities for walking and cycling I will seek to explore best practice examples both worldwide and nearer to home as we develop a workable and achievable means to promote both as alternative and sustainable modes of travel.

Departmental Cycling Unit

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development when the first meeting of the departmental cycling unit will be held.

(AQW 29557/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Cycling Unit is a work group within my Department which is developing an ongoing programme of work as it aims to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. Staff within the Cycling Unit meet internally on a daily and ongoing basis and have met with various other stakeholders since the creation of the Unit in November 2013.

The Cycling Unit looks forward to meeting with the Committee for Regional Development and the All Party Group on cycling in due course.

Eye Level Cycling Traffic Lights

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has considering introducing eye level cycling traffic lights which were approved by the Department for Transport in December 2013.

(AQW 29558/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am aware the Department for Transport has issued a site-specific authorisation for the use of eye-level cycle traffic lights at Bow Roundabout in London for a trial period.

My officials will review the outcome of the trial before making recommendations on their use here.

Dunhill Road, Coleraine: Potential Traffic Problems

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 22367/11-15, to outline the reasons for the announcement of the further potential traffic problems over the course of 2014 at the same location on the Dunhill Road, Coleraine due to more work being carried out.

(AQW 29601/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) previously laid a high voltage (33kv) underground cable along the Northern side of Dunhill Road to serve Dunmore Wind Farm. A second Wind Farm, known as Dunbeg Wind Farm, requires a similar service which, for technical reasons, cannot be laid in the same trench or within three metres of the Dunmore cable.

In order to minimise traffic disruption, the new cable will be laid on the Southern side of Dunhill Road using Temporary Traffic management arrangements, similar to those used during the previous works. No works will be undertaken during public or bank holidays and special consideration will be given to traffic management during major public events throughout the period. The works are expected to be completed by the end of July 2014.

Roads Service is also aware of imminent plans by Firmus Energy to lay approximately 400 metres of gas main along Dunhill Road to service local quarries and other customers, if requested. My officials have met with both utility companies involved and through regular progress meetings will ensure the works are co-ordinated in order to minimise inconvenience to road users, affected residents and businesses, and implemented efficiently.

In addition to the usual press releases, Firmus Energy intends to make a special presentation to Coleraine Borough Council regarding the specific details of its proposed works.

Flooding on Adopted Roadways

Mr Campbell asked Minister for Regional Development to outline the steps he will take, following the recent severe weather, in assessing the need for improvements to road infrastructure to help prevent flooding on adopted roadways.

(AQW 29603/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department's road drainage systems are the first line of defence from flooding on adopted roadways with the primary purpose of removing surface water to prevent flooding of the road itself. Roads Service has a well-established system of maintenance, which includes cyclic inspections of roadways, including gullies, footways and adjacent seawalls and, where necessary, implementation of improvements to the infrastructure, taking account of the available funding.

To help reduce the impact of run-off from the adopted road network, all new housing development projects are required to provide separate foul and storm water drainage systems. In most instances the storm water run-off from a site, post-development, must be no greater than the existing storm water run-off and in many cases this can only be achieved by the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems, which attenuate surface water to prevent flooding.

My Department has also created a Flood Investment and Planning Group, chaired by my Water Policy Division with membership from NI Water, Roads Service and the Rivers Agency. This group aims to help mitigate flooding by providing a co-ordinated approach to the investigation of multi –agency flooding issues including proposing potential solutions, prioritising investment, agreeing responsibilities and funding proposals, and ensuring joint responses including making the case for investment.

The Member may also be aware the PEDU 'Review of Response to Flooding June 2012' recommended that Rivers Agency, Roads Service and NI Water work with their parent departments to review current flood defence expenditure priorities and report to the Executive on their adequacy to meet the potential threats over the next 10 years. This review was completed and the Executive noted the requirement for an additional targeted programme of £120m over the next 10 years and agreed that it should be prioritised in the next iteration of its Investment Strategy.

Electric Car Charging Points

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the frequency of use; and (ii) income generated from each electric car charging point.

(AQW 29622/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The usage for each publically accessible ecar Charge Point in Northern Ireland is detailed in the attached table.

To incentivise uptake, no charge has as yet been made for electricity used at ecar Charge Points. Therefore no income has been generated.

Fast Charge Points (22kW AC)

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC01	Riverdale	Riverdale, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 1LB	March 2012	
SC02	Linenhall Street DRD Car Park	Linenhall Street, Armagh, BT61 7DW	March 2012	5
SC03	Hope Street North Car Park	Hope Street North/Bruce Street, Belfast, BT12 5ED	March 2012	19
SC04	Palace Demense	The Palace Demense, Armagh, BT60 4EL	March 2012	15
SC05	Bagenal's Castle	Castle Street, Newry Co Down BT34 2BY	March 2012	5
SC06	Railway Yard Car park	Railway Yard, Off Dukes Street Roundabout Londonderry, BT47	March 2012	6
SC07	Strand Road Car Park	Strand Road, Londonderry, BT48	March 2012	5
SC08	Dublin Road	Dublin Road on-street, Belfast, BT6 8ES	March 2012	3
SC09	Central Station	East Bridge Street, Belfast, BT1 3PB	March 2012	13
SC10	Basin Walk Car Park	Basin Walk, Newry, Co Down BT34 1DW	March 2012	33
SC11	Quay Lane North	Quay Lane North, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 6AG	March 2012	5
SC12	Eden Street	Eden Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 7EG	March 2012	13
SC13	DRD Car Park Main Street	Main Street, Belleek, Co Fermanagh BT93 3FX	March 2012	18
SC14	Narrow Gauge Road Larne	Narrow Gauge Road, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 1XB	March 2012	3
SC15	Lonsdale Street DRD Car Park	Lonsdale Street, Armagh, BT61 7LL	March 2012	

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC16	Wellington Street	Wellington Road, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74	March 2012	37
SC17	DRD Car Park Queen Street	Queen Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 7JR	March 2012	8
SC18	Down/Market/Cross Street	Cross Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 7DX	March 2012	7
SC19	Adelaide Street	Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GB	March 2012	72
SC20	Agnew Street Larne	Agnew Street, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 1RF	March 2012	3
SC21	Lower Crescent	Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT 7 1NR	March 2012	22
SC22	DRD Car Park Little Victoria Street	Little Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7JH	March 2012	17
SC23	Little Donegall Street	Little Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2JD	March 2012	18
SC25	Carlisle Road Car Park	Carlisle Road, Londonderry, BT48 6JW	March 2012	4
SC26	Templemore Leisure Centre	Buncrana Road, Londonderry, BT48 7QL	March 2012	17
SC27	Victoria Market Car Park	Queens Quay, Londonderry, BT48 7AZ	March 2012	10
SC28	Bridge Street	Bridge Street, Newry, Co Down BT35 8AN	March 2012	19
SC29	DRD Car Park Main Street	Main Street, Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh BT94 1DW	March 2012	
SC30	Hill Street	Hill Street, Newry, Co Down BT34 1AR	March 2012	11
SC31	DRD Car Park Cross Street	Cross Street, Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh BT9 20J	March 2012	12
SC32	Monaghan Street	Monaghan Street, Newry, Co Down BT35 6BB	March 2012	35
SC33	Cromac Street Car Park	Cromac Street, Belfast, BT2 8JN	March 2012	32
SC34	The Diamond	The Diamond, Londonderry, BT48 6HN	March 2012	28
SC35	Cairns Hill Park and Ride	Cairnshill Road/Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 6RG	March 2012	26

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC36	Carnlough, Harbour Road/ Garron Road	Carnlough, Harbour Road/ Garron Road Co Antrim	March 2012	5
SC37	Canal Court Hotel	Merchant's Quay, Newry, Co Down BT35 8HF	March 2012	10
SC38	South West College	Burn Road, Cookstown, Co Tryone BT80 8DN	March 2012	23
SC39	Bishop Street Car Park	Bishops Street, Londonderry, BT48 6PT	March 2012	
SC40	Cathedral Road Recreation Centre	Cathedral Road, Armagh, BT61 7QX	March 2012	
SC41	Newry Train Station	Newry Train Station Car Park Co Down	March 2012	3
SC42	DRD Car Park Dunluce Avenue	Dunluce Avenue, Portrush, Co Antrim BT56 8DW	June 2013	
SC43	Sixmile Leisure Centre	Ballynure Road, Ballyclare, Co Antrim BT39 9YU	June 2013	0
SC44	The Valley Leisure Centre	The Valley Leisure Centre, 40 Church Road, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim BT36 7LJ	June 2013	1
SC45	DRD Car Park Benson Street	Benson Street, Lisburn, Co Down BT28 2AA	June 2013	44
SC46	DRD Car Park Castle Street	Castle Street, Antrim, Co Antrim BT41 4JE	June 2013	
SC47	Seven Towers Leisure Centre	Trostan Avenue, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT43 7BL	June 2013	1
SC48	DRD Car Park Beverley Road	Beverley Road, Carnmoney, Co Antrim BT36 6QD	June 2013	2
SC49	DRD Car Park Waterside	Waterside, Coleraine, Co Londonderry BT51 3DP	June 2013	3
SC50	DRD Car Park Townhead Street North	Townhead Street North, Ballymoney, Co Antrim BT53 6BE	June 2013	
SC51	DRD Car Park St. Lurachs Road	St. Lurachs Road, Maghera, Co Londonderry BT46 5JE	June 2013	
SC52	DRD Car Park Castle Street	Castle Street, Ballycastle, Co Antrim BT54 6AS	June 2013	
SC53	Catherine Street Car Park	Catherine Street, Limavady, Co Londonderry BT49 9DB	June 2013	

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC54	DRD Car Park	Farmley Road, Glengormley, Co Antrim BT36 7TY	June 2013	1
SC55	Slieve Donard Hotel	Downs Road, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0AH	June 2013	7
SC56	Junction 1 Shopping Centre	Junction One Shopping Centre, 111 Ballymena Rd, Antrim, BT41 4LL	June 2013	3
SC57	Roe Park Resort	Drumrane Road, Limavady, Co Londonderry BT49 9LB	June 2013	
SC58	DRD Car Park Lower Lansdowne Road	Lower Lansdowne Road, Portrush, Co Antrim BT56 8AP	June 2013	47
SC59	Car Park Glenburn Road	Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, Co Down BT17 9AQ	June 2013	10
SC60	Supevalu, Ballymena Rd, Ballymoney	Supervalu, Ballymena Rd, Ballymoney, Co Antrim BT53 7AB	June 2013	1
SC61	DRD Car Park Dublin Road	Dublin Road/Bridge Street, Antrim, BT41 4DA	June 2013	
SC62	Omagh Sports Forum	The Grange/Mountjoy Rd, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT79 7EG	June 2013	1
SC63	Riversdale Leisure Centre	Lisnafin Park, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 9DG	June 2013	
SC64	DRD Car Park Castle Street	Castle Street, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 1DD	June 2013	
SC65	The Fir Trees Hotel	Dublin Road, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 9EA	June 2013	
SC66	DRD Car Park Maguiresbridge	Maguiresbridge, Co Fermanagh, BT94 4RZ	June 2013	2
SC67	DRD Car Park Campsie Road	Campsie Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT79 0AE	June 2013	
SC68	DRD Car Park Canal Basin	Dock Street, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 8EE	June 2013	1
SC69	Car Park Main Street	Main Street, Castlederg, Co Tyrone BT81 7AT	June 2013	
SC70	Newtownstewart 2000	17 Moyle Road, Newtownstewart, Co Tyrone BT78 4AP	June 2013	
SC71	DRD Car Park Main Street	Main Street, Dromore, Co Down BT78 3AD	June 2013	

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC72	Car Park Cornmill	Main Street/Lineside, Coalisland, Co Tyrone BT71 4LP	June 2013	
SC73	DRD Car Park Magowan Buildings	DRD Car Park, Magowan Buildings, Woodhouse St, Portadown Co Armagh BT62 1JG	June 2013	3
SC74	Moneymore Recreation Centre	Moneyhaw Road, Magherafelt, Co Londonderry BT45 7XJ	June 2013	
SC75	Rushmere Shopping Centre	Central Way, Craigavon, Co Armagh BT64 1AA	June 2013	3
SC76	DRD Car Park Scotch Street South	Scotch Street South, Dungannon, Co Tyrone BT70 1BD	June 2013	
SC77	Lurgan Park and Ride	Lough Road, Lurgan, Co Armagh BT66 6JB	June 2013	14
SC78	Glenavon House Hotel	Cookstown Road, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8JQ	June 2013	
SC79	DRD Car Park Fair Green	Duke Street, Portadown, Co Armagh BT62 3PF	June 2013	
SC80	The Burnavon Theatre	Burn Road, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8DN	June 2013	2
SC81	DRD Car Park Union Place	Union Place, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8NP	June 2013	
SC82	Brownlow Community Hub	Craigavon Leisure Centre, Brownlow Rd, Craigavon, Co Armagh BT65 5DL	June 2013	
SC83	Tandragee On-Street	Market Street, Tandragee, Co Armagh BT62 2BW	June 2013	
SC84	Barbican Filling Station Newcastle	Dundrum Road, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 OLN	June 2013	
SC85	DRD Car Park Union Street	Union Street, Magherafelt, Co Londonderry BT45 6DF	June 2013	2
SC86	DRD Car Park Meadow Lane East	Meadowlane East, Craigavon, Co Armagh BT62 3TN	June 2013	1
SC87	DRD Car Park The Square	The Square, Crossgar, Co Down BT30 9EE	June 2013	37
SC88	Church Street Kilrea	Church Street, Kilrea, Co Londonderry BT51 5QU	June 2013	1

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC89	DRD Car Park Shimna Road	Shimna Road, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0AS	June 2013	17
SC90	Benone Tourist Complex	Benone Ave, Limavady, Co Londonderry BT49 0LQ	June 2013	
SC91	Ballee Road Park & Share	Ballee Road, Ballymena, Co Londonderry BT42 2HD	June 2013	
SC92	Bloomfield Shopping Centre	South Circular Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7HB	June 2013	24
SC93	Galgorm Manor Hotel Ballymena	136 Fenaghy Road, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 1EA	June 2013	
SC94	Antrim Forum Leisure Complex	Lough Road, Antrim, Co Antrim BT41 4DQ	June 2013	
SC95	Ulster American Folk Park	2 Mellon Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 5QU	June 2013	
SC96	DRD Car Park Brooke Street	Brooke Street, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 5HD	June 2013	
SC97	Galgorm County Hall, Ballymena	Sourhill Road, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT43 1QF	June 2013	
SC98	DRD Car Park Harrier Way	Main Street, Ballyclare, Co Antrim BT39 9AA	June 2013	
SC99	Dunsilly Park and Ride	Lisnevenagh Road, Co Antrim, BT41 2JH	June 2013	
SC100	DRD Car Park Lisburn Street North	Lisburn Street North, Ballynahinch, Co Down BT24 8BL	June 2013	7
SC101	DRD Car Park Upper Main Street	Upper Main Street, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 8AU	June 2013	
SC102	Dundonald Cinemaplex	Old Dundonald Road, Castlereagh, Co Down BT16 1XT	June 2013	6
SC103	Park and Ride Victoria Street	Victoria Street, Carrickfergus, Co Antrim BT38 8AQ	June 2013	10
SC104	Meadowlane Shopping Centre	Moneymore Road, Magherafelt, Co Londonderry BT45 6PR	June 2013	
SC105	Robinson Centre	Montgomery Road, Belfast BT6 9JD	June 2013	11
SC106	Ratkeltair House	Ratkeltair House, Market St, Downpatrick, Co Down, BT30 6AJ	June 2013	

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC107	Antrim NIR Park and Ride Station Road	Station Road, Antrim, BT41 4AB	June 2013	
SC108	Main Street Limavady	Main Street, Limavady, Co Londonderry BT47 0ET	June 2013	2
SC109	Roe Valley Leisure Centre	Roe Valley Leisure Centre, 9 Greystone Road, Limavady, Co Londonderry BT49 0ND	June 2013	
SC110	Strabane Park and Ride Railway Street	Railway Street, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 8EQ	June 2013	
SC111	Townsend Street Car Park	Townsend Street, Banbridge, BT32 3LF	June 2013	
SC112	Church Street	Church Street, Saul Link, Co Down Downpatrick, BT30 6EH	June 2013	
SC113	The Quay, Strangford	The Quay, Strangford, Co Down BT30 7LL	June 2013	2
SC114	Hilton Templepatrick Hotel	Hilton Templepatrick Castle Upton Estate, Templepatrick, Co Antrim BT39 0DD	June 2013	
SC115	Crumlin Community Centre	Main St Crumlin, Co Antrim, BT29 4UR	June 2013	1
SC116	Logans of Cloughmills	Logans of Cloughmills, 235 Frosses Road, Cloughmills, Co Antrim BT44 9PU	June 2013	3
SC117	Dublin Rd Castlewellan	Main Street, Castlewellan, Down, BT31 9DQ	June 2013	8
SC118	Gallows Street Car Park	Gallows Street, Banbridge, Co Down BT25	June 2013	
SC119	Cookstown Leisure Centre	Cookstown Leisure Centre, 78 Fountain Rd, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8QF	June 2013	
SC120	Randalstown	Porthlenone Road, Randalstown, Co Antrim BT41 3EH	June 2013	1
SC121	Greencastle St	Greencastle St, Kilkeel, Co Down, BT34 4QD	June 2013	1
SC122	Oak Shopping Centre	Oaks Road, Dungannon, Co Tyrone BT71 4NA	June 2013	
SC123	Ulster Transport Museum Cultra	Bangor Road, Holywood, Co Down BT18 0EU	June 2013	5

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC124	Ballygawley Park and Ride	Tullyvar Road, Dungannon, Co Tyrone BT70 2	June 2013	
SC125	Lisburn Street on-street	Lisburn Street, Hillsborough, Co Down BT26 6AB	June 2013	
SC126	Donard Park	Donard Park, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0SE	June 2013	4
SC127	Stormont Hotel	Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3LP	June 2013	
SC128	Ivanhoe Hotel	Ivanhoe Inn & Hotel, 556 Saintfield Rd, Castlereagh, Co Down BT8 8EU	June 2013	9
SC129	The Quays Shopping Centre	The Quays Shopping Centre, Newry, Co Down BT35 8QS	June 2013	1
SC130	Havelock Place	Havelock Place, Warrenpoint, Newry, Co Down BT34 3NE	June 2013	5
SC131	The Outlet Shopping Centre	Bridgewater Park, Banbridge, Co Down BT32 4GJ	June 2013	
SC132	Eastside Park and Ride	Eastside Park and Ride, Middlepath St, Belfast BT5 4BG	June 2013	2
SC133	Park and Ride Crevenagh Road	Crevenagh Road, Omagh, Co Trrone BT78 1ND	June 2013	1
SC134	Edfield Way, Fivemiletown	Car Park, Edfield Way, Fivemiletown, Co Tyrone BT75 0QN	June 2013	1
SC135	Lough Neagh Discovery Centre	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve, Craigavon, Co Armagh BT66 6NJ	June 2013	9
SC136	Mourne Esplanade Kilkeel	Mourne Esplanade, Kilkeel Leisure Centre, Co Down BT34 4DB	June 2013	
SC137	Quay Street Car Park	Quay Street, Bangor, Co Down BT20 5ED	June 2013	2
SC138	Castle Street	Castle Street, Portaferry, Newtownards, Ards, Co Down BT22 1NZ ?	June 2013	1
SC139	Sainsbury's Car Park	Kennedy Centre, 564-568 Falls Road, Belfast, BT11 9AE	June 2013	1
SC140	Spar Car Park, 46 Main Street	Spar Car Park, 46 Main Street, Derrylin, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT92 8JW	June 2013	
SC141	Jordanstown Park and Ride	Lynda Avenue, Co Antrim BT37 0NX	June 2013	20

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC142	Railway Place Car park	Railway Place, Coleraine, BT52 1PQ	June 2013	
SC143	Craigadick Park and Ride	Craigadick Park & Ride, Glenshane Rd/Tobermore Rd A6 & A29, Maghera, BT46 5DR	June 2013	
SC144	Templepatrick Park and Ride	Templepatrick Park and Ride, A6 Belfast Rd/Paradise Walk, Co Antrim BT39 ODD	June 2013	
SC145	Park and Ride Toome Bypass	Moneynick Road A6, Toomebridge, Co Londonderry BT41 2JH	June 2013	
SC146	Giants Causeway Park and Ride	Main Street, Bushmills, Co Antrim BT57 8QB	June 2013	2
SC147	Mossley West Park and Ride Newtownabbey	The Glade, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim BT36 5NN	June 2013	
SC148	Joey Dunlop Centre Ballymoney	33 Garryduff Road, Ballymoney, Co Antrim BT53 7DB	June 2013	1
SC149	Draperstown	St Patricks Street, Draperstown, Co Londonderry BT45 7AL	June 2013	
SC150	Chapel Road	Chapel Road, Dungiven, Co Londonderry BT47 4RT	June 2013	
SC151	Larne Leisure Centre	Tower Road, Larne, Co Antrim BT32 1AB	June 2013	
SC152	New Road Glenarm	New Road, Glenarm, Co Antrim BT44 0AA	June 2013	5
SC153	Car Park Fairhill Shopping Centre	Thomas Street, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT43 6UF	June 2013	
SC154	DRD Car Park Harryville Henry Street	Henry Street, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 3AH	June 2013	
SC155	Castledawson Roundabout	Castledawson Road Park and Ride, Co Londonderry	June 2013	
SC156	Brunswick Cinemaplex Pennyburn Ind est	Brunswick Moviebowl, Brunswick Lane, Londonderry BT48 0LU	June 2013	6
SC157	Downshire Place	Downshire Place, Banbridge, Co Down BT32 3DF	June 2013	

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
SC158	Ballygally Castle Hotel	274 Coast Road, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 2QZ	June 2013	
SC159	Plumbridge	Main St, Plumbridge, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT79 8AA	June 2013	
SC160	Ballymena NIR Park and Ride	Galgorm Road, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 1AD	June 2013	
SC161	Dobbies Garden World	Saintfield Road, Lisburn, Co Down BT27 5PG	June 2013	1

Rapid Charge Points (50kW DC)

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
RC01	M1, Junction 15 Rapid Charger	Donnelly Motor Group Garage, 59 Moy Rd, Dungannon, Co Tyrone BT71 7DT	March 2012	58
RC02	Glenshane Pass	Glenshane Tourist Services, Jamesie's Garage, 31 Glenshane Rd, Maghera, Co Londonderry BT46 5JZ	March 2012	136
RC03	Fiveways	Fiveways Shops and Service Station, 101 Armagh Rd, Newry, Co Down BT35 6PW	March 2012	222
RC04	Portrush Rapid Charger	Causeway Street, Portrush, Co Antrim BT56 8JE	August 2012	115
RC05	Phoenix Service Station	Phoenix Service Station, 14 Antrim Rd (Queen St), Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 2BJ	June 2013	99
RC06	Larne Rapid Charger	Topaz Service Station, Unit 1A Larne Business Pk, Redlands Rd, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 1AY	June 2013	67
RC07	Texaco Garage, Junction 1 International Outlet	Ballymena Road, Antrim, BT41 4LQ	June 2013	50
RC08	Barbican Centra A1	Halfway Road, Banbridge, BT32 4ET	June 2013	37
RC09	Fermanagh Rapid Charger	Topaz Service Station, 236 Irvinestown Rd, Trory, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 6DN	June 2013	36

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Approximate Date Installed	Usage to 31/12/2013
RC10	Omagh Rapid Charger	Beltany Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 5RA	June 2013	8
RC11	Derry-Londonderry Rapid Charger	Maxol Service Station, Waterside, 29 Glendermott Rd, Londonderry, BT47 6BG	June 2013	20
RC12	A7 Rapid Charger	Bell's Spar, 7 Saintfield Rd, Crossgar, BT30 9HY	June 2013	12
RC13	Shane Retail Park	Boucher Road, Belfast, BT12	June 2013	61
RC14	Belvoir Rapid Charger	Maxol Service Station, Belvoir, 60 Milltown Rd, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast, BT8 7XP	June 2013	56

Opportunities for School Children to Cycle

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the steps his Department is taking to facilitate the opportunities for school children to cycle to and from school.

(AQW 29640/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department, in partnership with the Public Health Agency, is funding a three year Active School Travel Initiative to deliver a programme of cycle and walking skills training to pupils in 180 schools across Northern Ireland. The programme is being delivered by Sustrans and its objective is to encourage school children to adopt cycling and walking as their main mode of travel to school.

A robust programme of monitoring and evaluation has been developed by my Department's Statistics and Research Branch to measure achievement of the PfG targets and provide improved information on the progress made under the Active School Travel Initiative.

I have also established a Cycling Unit within my Department to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. In addition, my Department continues to invest in the Safer Routes to School programme which is an initiative aimed at encouraging the use of sustainable transport options to school such as walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing to school. We are exploring opportunities to work with other Departments to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities at participating schools.

My Department continues to work with other stakeholders in the forthcoming Giro d'Italia Big Start to ensure that it provides a lasting legacy for cycling among our school children. We are actively involved in the schools sub-group which is chaired by the Department of Education.

Improvements to the A6: Funding

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 28511/11-15, to detail whether a finance alternative to Executive funds could be secured to fund improvements to the A6.

(AQW 29675/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As advised in AQW 28511/11-15, the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21 sets out plans to augment Executive funds by accessing alternative finance for some projects. The plans include a £390 million package of high-priority road schemes, which would include improvements to the A6. This package may be a Revenue Funded Investment (RFI) initiative through which the private sector would finance, construct and maintain the assets over a defined period, typically for 25 to 30

years. However, a commitment to fund the revenue consequences of such a road package will be required from the Executive.

Executive funding, whether it is from capital or resource budgets, is required to support the improvements to the A6. The UK Government's policy of increasing capital funding at the expense of revenue funding makes RFI relatively less attractive in terms of value for money and affordability. The Executive is continuing to explore the potential role of Revenue Finance in the delivery of the Investment Programme, and the Department will continue to advance road schemes through the statutory processes so as to be able to make use of whatever funding is available in future years.

It should be noted that the Government could not borrow from the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EIB would, however, be a finance option for private sector suppliers in the case of potential RFI schemes.

Cregagh View Residential Development, Cushendun

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29416/11-15, whether he has asked departmental officials to keep the situation under review; and to detail the stage at which enforcement action would be taken.

(AQW 29742/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm I have asked my officials to keep the situation at Cregagh View, Knocknacarry under review.

Enforcement action is usually taken when the development has progressed sufficiently to be classified as a backlog site. This is normally when 80% of the dwellings have been completed and occupied for over one year, whereas only 8 out of 24 have been completed on this site.

Alternatively, action under the Private Streets Order can be considered, if at least one-half of the dwellings on both sides of the road are completed. This, however, is currently not the case on this site.

Street Light Replacement Schemes: Newry and Armagh

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the rationale behind the street light replacement schemes in local housing developments across Newry and Armagh; and (ii) how he will address the concerns of local residents that the light output from the new units is inadequate.

(AQW 29825/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The street lighting replacement schemes in the Newry and Armagh areas are part of an ongoing programme throughout Northern Ireland to replace those street lighting systems which have reached, or are nearing, the end of their safe structural or electrical lives.

The replacement lighting schemes are designed to conform fully to the relevant current British Standard and British Standard Euronorm recommended lighting levels, distributions and uniformities. These standards are currently BS5489-1 and BS EN 13201-2 and they also apply equally to lighting installations on new roads and housing developments. Checks are also carried out following installation to ensure that the designed levels of lighting have been achieved.

However, if local residents have particular concerns about lighting levels at specific locations, they should notify officials from my Department's Roads Service who will carry out further investigations.

Resurfacing of the Drumardan Road, Portaferry

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timescale for the resurfacing of the Drumardan Road, Portaferry.

(AQW 29951/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service plans to commence resurfacing approximately 600 metres of Drumardan Road before the end of February 2014. This section of the road is in particularly poor condition and therefore warrants attention now.

Roads Service had originally planned to resurface the entire length of the road but, given that NI Water proposes to lay a replacement watermain along Drumardan Road, the scale of the resurfacing will be reduced until after the watermain has been laid.

Upon completion of the works carried out by NI Water, and the subsequent maintenance period, resurfacing of the remainder of Drumardan Road will be given consideration, subject to the availability of funding at that time.

Department for Social Development

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: All-Trades Contract

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the contractor that is currently completing the work in each district for the All-Trades contract; and (ii) the reason for any change of contractor.

(AQW 29536/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The table below, provided by the Housing Executive, gives details of the contractor completing work in each Housing Executive district and the reason for any change of contractor.

Area	District	Old Contractor	New Contractor	Reason for Change
Belfast	Belfast 1& 3 (West)	Mel Davison Construction	DLO	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Belfast District 2 East	Garrivan O'Rourke	DLO *	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Belfast Dist 4	DLO	DLO	
	Belfast Dist 5 Shankill	Mel Davison Construction	DLO	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Belfast Dist 6 North	Garrivan O'Rourke	DLO	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Belfast Dist 7 South	Mel Davison Construction	DLO	Original Contractor went into Administration
South East	Castlereagh	ESE Ltd	ESE Ltd	
	Lisburn Antrim Street	Garrivan O'Rourke	DLO *	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Lisburn Dairy Farm	Mel Davison Construction	DLO *	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Bangor, Newtownards	H & A Mechanical Services Ltd	H & A Mechanical Services Ltd	
	Downpatrick	ESE Ltd	ESE Ltd	

Area	District	Old Contractor	New Contractor	Reason for Change
South	Armagh / Banbridge	PK Murphy	PK Murphy	
	Lurgan/ Brownlow/P'Down	Mel Davison Construction	DLO	Original Contractor went into Administration
	Fermanagh(4&5)	PK Murphy	PK Murphy	
	Dungannon	PK Murphy	PK Murphy	
	Newry (1-5)	Bayview Contracts	Bayview Contracts	
North East	Newtownabbey 1 & 2	CFM	CFM	
	Ballymena, Carrick, Larne	H & A Mechanical Services Ltd	H & A Mechanical Services Ltd	
	Antrim	PK Murphy Construction Limited	PK Murphy Construction Ltd	
	Ballycastle/ Ballymoney	CFM	CFM	
	Coleraine	DLO	DLO	
	Larne	H & A Mechanical Services Ltd	H & A Mechanical Services Ltd	
West	Magherafelt/ Limavady	CFM	CFM	
	Omagh / Cookstown	CFM	CFM	
	Strabane	Robinson Ferry Construction Ltd	Robinson Ferry Construction Ltd	
	Londonderry 1,2,3	Omega Mechanical Services Ltd	Omega Mechanical Services Ltd	

* These contracts are currently the subject of secondary competitions and new contractors will be appointed in due course.

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.

Disability Living Allowance Entitlement: Appeals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have successfully appealed a decision to (i) refuse; and (ii) reduce their Disability Living Allowance entitlement, in each year since June 2011.

(AQW 29568/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Appeals Service does not routinely record the successful outcome of Disability Living Allowance appeals in relation to refused or reduced entitlement. The Chairman of The Appeals Service records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision*.

Below is a breakdown of more advantageous decisions made in each year since June 2011.

1 June 2011 – December 2011	852
1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012	1,469
1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013	1,309

* A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made

Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 29124/11-15 and given that the examining criteria is unchanged, to detail the comparative statistics for (i) the three years prior to; and (ii) since Atos Healthcare took over the medical examinations in June 2011 of (a) successful first time applicants; and (b) successful renewals.

(AQW 29596/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The tables below show the success rate for Disability Living Allowance new claims and renewals from 2008 to date.

Year	DLA New Claims Success Rate	DLA Renewals Success Rate
2008	48%	79%
2009	52%	81%
2010	53%	81%
2011	58%	83%
2012	60%	83%
2013	59%	85%

The variations in success rates will be due to the nature and type of applications received in any particular year. It is important to note that entitlement to Disability Living Allowance is determined by Decision-Makers in the Social Security Agency who consider and weigh up all the available evidence in reaching a decision. This includes information on the claimant's application form and reports from Health Care Professionals who the claimant has identified on the form and/ or in a small number of cases the Medical Service Provider is requested to complete a report. This approach 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 in June 2011.

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Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Central Heating Systems

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 28936/11-15, whether a tenant could be informed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive that it is their, or their agents, responsibility to repair an airlock in their central heating system; and where the responsibility for any future damage to the system or to property would lie should work was to be completed by the tenant or their agent.

(AQW 29661/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has explained that should a tenant report an airlock in a heating system which was installed by the Housing Executive, they request their heating contractor to inspect and determine the cause of the airlock and carry out any necessary repair. They confirm that the only instance where clearing an airlock is the tenant's responsibility is where the tenant has

installed their own heating system which has not been adopted by the Housing Executive, or where the tenant has made modifications to the existing heating system. In such cases the Housing Executive would advise the tenant they are also responsible for any future damage to the system or property.

The Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail how many (i) complaints; and (ii) convictions have resulted from The Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

(AQW 29667/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department does not hold the information in the exact format requested. Responsibility for enforcing the Private Tenancies Order falls to Council environmental health departments. The tables below detail the information, which is reported to my Department by Councils on a quarterly basis.

Table (i) details the number of complaints/disputes that did not result in court action and Table (ii) details the number of cases where court action has been taken by Councils.

Table (i)

	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	April- Sept 2013	Total
Disputes/ complaints that did not result in court action being taken.	Not collected	30*	105**	175	184	210	87	791

* Collected from October 2008 only in relation to harassment or illegal eviction.

** Collected from October 2009 in relation to all offences.

Table (ii)

	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	April- Sept 2013	Total
Failure to provide a statement of tenancy terms.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to provide a rent book.	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Failure to comply with notice of unfitness or notice of disrepair	0	2	1	3	5	1	0	12
Causing an obstruction.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Failure to comply with a Certificate of Fitness	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3

	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	April- Sept 2013	Total
Causing harassment or illegal eviction	1	3	4	3	1	5	2	19
Failure to provide information about ownership of dwelling house.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total								38

* Collected from October 2008 only in relation to harassment or illegal eviction.

** Collected from October 2009 in relation to all offences.

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.

Meeting with P K Murphy Construction Ltd

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development why a request for a meeting with him on behalf of P K Murphy Construction Ltd, on 9 May 2012, was refused.

(AQW 29682/11-15)

Mr McCausland: When I announced on 9 May 2012 that I had asked the Housing Executive to review their specification for the supply and fitting of double glazing, I also advised that the Housing Executive should hold further double glazing installations until the review was completed, though where a contractor had a contract in place with a supplier for the delivery of frames and cancellation would lead to nugatory expenditure, these contracts could proceed.

PK Murphy Construction Ltd then requested a meeting with me about the suspension of double glazing units that were due to be installed. As I had already agreed what category groups and double glazing schemes could proceed and had also asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position, I decided that a meeting at that time was not required.

Meetings with the Minister

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development why a request for a meeting with him on behalf of the contractor Paddy McIlhatton, on 11 May 2012, was refused.

(AQW 29684/11-15)

Mr McCausland: When I announced on 9 May 2012 that I had asked the Housing Executive to review their specification for the supply and fitting of double glazing, I also advised that the Housing Executive should hold further double glazing installations until the review was completed, though where a contractor had a contract in place with a supplier for the delivery of frames and cancellation would lead to nugatory expenditure, these contracts could proceed.

Daithi McKay MLA then requested a meeting on behalf of Mr Paddy McIlhatton to discuss the suspension of the double glazing scheme. As I had agreed what category groups and double glazing schemes could proceed and had also asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position, I decided that a meeting at that time was not required.

Meetings with the Minister

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development why a request for a meeting with the Minister requested by an Ulster Unionist MLA on behalf of Super Window Systems Ltd on 20 June 2012 was refused; and a meeting requested by a DUP representative on 29 June 2012 was granted.

(AQW 29685/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In June 2012 Mrs Sandra Overend, MLA, requested a meeting on behalf of Super Seal Window Systems Ltd to discuss the situation regarding the company's double glazing contracts. However, as I had previously written to Mrs Overend MLA, on 31 May 2012, confirming that the six double glazing contracts with Super Seal Window Systems Ltd could proceed, I decided that a meeting would not be required at this time.

I subsequently then received a request from Dr William McCrea MP to meet with Super Seal Window Systems Ltd. I agreed to this meeting as this was to discuss the review of the specification and savings relating to the alternative type of hinges and casement windows which were being proposed.

Abacus Housing Consortium

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development what procurement the Abacus Housing Consortium has (i) tendered for; and (ii) awarded, since forming as a group of housing associations.

(AQW 29724/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Details of all procurements that Abacus Housing Group has (i) tendered for; and (ii) awarded, since forming as a group of housing associations is detailed in the table below:

Abacus Housing Consortium: Procurement Activity Summary as at January 2014

Procurement Area	Lead Association	Tender Status	Participants
Development: Architect led integrated Design Team	Oaklee	Tendered and awarded March 2011	Clanmil & Oaklee on joining Abacus
Development: Quantity Surveying Services	Clanmil	Tendered and awarded March 2011	Clanmil & Oaklee on joining Abacus
Development: Architect led integrated Design Team	Helm	Tendered and awarded March 2011	All original Abacus members
Development: Quantity Surveying Services	Helm	Tendered and awarded March 2011	All original Abacus members
MTC Response Maintenance Contract		Tender. Procurement halted Feb 13	All Abacus member except Helm and Ark HAs
Lift (Servicing & Maintenance)	Oaklee	Tendered and awarded June 2011	Oaklee procured with Accord Group.
Fire Alarm, Emergency Lighting, Fire Equipment, roller shutters & smoke vents (Servicing & Maintenance)	Helm	Tendered awarded June 2011	Helm, Open Door, Wesley, Ark hearth & Ulidia
Boiler & TMV (Servicing and Maintenance)	Helm	Tendered but Halted October 2013	All Abacus members
EPCs	Helm	Tendered and awarded August 2013	All Abacus members

Procurement Area	Lead Association	Tender Status	Participants
MTC Response Maintenance Contract B	Oaklee	Tender ongoing return Feb 2014	Oaklee, SUHA, Ark & Ulidia only
Fire Alarm, Emergency Lighting & Fire Equipment (Servicing & Maintenance)	Oaklee	Tender ongoing return Feb 2014	All Abacus members
Adaptations Consultancy Services	Oaklee	Tender ongoing return Feb 2014	All Abacus members

Abacus Housing Consortium

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development why the Abacus Housing Consortium terminated the procurement for Heating Systems, Service, Response Maintenance and planned Maintenance/Replacement in October 2013 after starting the process in November 2012.
(AQW 29725/11-15)

Mr McCausland: An OJEU advertisement was published on 19 October 2012 on behalf of 10 Abacus members for the provision of mandatory heating systems service, response maintenance and planned maintenance works, plus additional discretionary works. Following due process a contract award letter was issued on 19 July 2013, but the decision was challenged by an unsuccessful tenderer before the 'standstill' period had expired.

Abacus engaged Carson McDowell (Solicitors) to assist with the procurement process and they in turn provided legal advice in relation to the challenge received. A number of meetings of the procurement group facilitated by Carson McDowell took place through the months of August and September to consider the options available to Abacus, culminating in the issuing of a set aside application to the Courts. The set aside hearing had originally been scheduled by the court for 14 October 2013 but was subsequently postponed at the request of the plaintiff until 24 October 2013.

An affidavit from the plaintiff was received on Thursday 10 October 2013 and the Chief Officers Group met on Friday 11 October 2013 and Monday 14 October 2013 to consider next steps. As before, the legal advisers provided an overview of the options available with respective merits. After a lengthy debate it was clear that Abacus members had different views as to the costs and benefits of sustaining the defence to the challenge received. As a consequence and without the necessary consensus the procurement process could not continue. The competition was then formally terminated at the end of October 2013. Abacus members are currently exploring new competitions to deliver best value for money and ensure excellent service to tenants.'

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department is on target to spend the full budget allocation of the Boiler Replacement Scheme.
(AQW 29757/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Boiler Replacement Scheme commenced on the 1st September 2012 with a total budget of £12m, allocated by the NI Executive over the three financial years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15. In addition, £6m match funding has been secured from the European Regional Development Fund for the final two years of the scheme.

In the 16 months up to the end of December 2013, almost £7m of the total funding allocation has been spent which indicates that my Department is on target to spend the full budget allocation.

Repossessions Taskforce

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the repossessions taskforce.
(AQW 29759/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I recognise that further action is needed to address the issue of repossessions, and possibly the impact of negative equity, in Northern Ireland to help alleviate the impact of this distressing situation for many households here.

I have agreed draft Terms of Reference for the Taskforce and invites have issued to the proposed members. Officials await responses to these invites before arranging the inaugural meeting of the Taskforce for mid-February.

Repossessions Taskforce

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development whether the repossessions taskforce will be in a position to liaise with lenders to ensure that repossessions are only undertaken as a last resort.
(AQW 29760/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Yes, engagement with lenders will be key in tackling the issue of repossessions and I am pleased to confirm that the Council of Mortgage Lenders have agreed to participate in the Housing Repossessions Taskforce.

Repossessions: American Model of Principal Reduction

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development whether the repossessions taskforce will give consideration to the American model of Principal Reduction.
(AQW 29761/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The objective of the Taskforce, outlined in the Housing Strategy Action Plan, is to engage with stakeholders and identify actions to mitigate the impact of repossessions and, where possible, prevent them occurring in the first place.

The Taskforce will draw on the comprehensive knowledge and experience of its members to consider a range housing initiatives and mitigation measures from across other jurisdictions to determine their suitability for adoption in Northern Ireland.

Abolition of the Percentage Threshold Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the changes to statutory sick pay in light of the abolition of the Percentage Threshold Scheme.
(AQW 29859/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Following a major Government review of the sickness absence system the Percentage Threshold Scheme (PTS) will be abolished from 6 April 2014 as it has been found to provide a disincentive for employers to effectively manage sickness absence. The funding from the PTS will be recycled into providing a Health and Work Service (HWS) scheme which will support a proactive approach to sickness absence management. The HWS will provide an alternative to the compensation currently provided by the PTS by helping employers to better manage sickness absence and provide interventions to help get employees back to work more quickly. Interventions costing up to £500 a year per employee will be exempt from tax.

As a consequence, the regulation requiring employers to keep specific SSP records to support claims under the PTS will also be abolished. Employers will still be required to produce SSP records to show they are meeting their legal SSP obligations but will have the freedom to keep records in a more flexible manner, better suited to their organisation. Claims for reimbursement of SSP (paid for sickness periods up to 5 April 14) will still be able to be made by employers until the close of the 2015/16 tax year.

Claimants of Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Social Development whether claimants of Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, who are in face to face assessments and tribunals, are entitled to have those meetings recorded, as is the case in England, Scotland and Wales; and if not, why this is the case.

(AQW 29986/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Claimants of Employment and Support Allowance may request that their medical assessment is recorded. However requests can only be agreed with the prior consent of the examining healthcare professional. The recording can only take place if stringent safeguards have been put in place to ensure the recording is complete and accurate. The recording must be made by a professional operator, on equipment of a high standard, properly calibrated by a qualified engineer immediately prior to the recording being made. The equipment must also have the facility for reproduction so that a copy can be retained by all parties. The responsibility for meeting the costs of the recording rests with the claimant.

In a small number of Disability Living Allowance cases, a decision-maker in the Social Security Agency will request an Examining Medical Practitioner report to help them determine eligibility to the benefit. The Examining Medical Practitioner report gathers 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 and the vast majority of these reports are completed in the claimant's home. It is not a medical assessment. Given the nature of an EMP report they have never been recorded in Great Britain and the same arrangement applies in Northern Ireland.

There is legislative provision for formal note taking in benefit appeal tribunals to support the decision making process. Regulation 55(1) of The Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 stipulates that a record of the proceedings at an oral hearing, which is sufficient to indicate the evidence taken, shall be made by the Chairman or a member sitting alone in an appeal tribunal in such medium that he may determine. Currently the practice is for a hand written note to be taken. Parties to the proceedings may take a note of the hearing with the permission of the Tribunal.

A pilot project on the recording of benefit appeals is at a preliminary planning stage and the scope has not yet been agreed. Therefore it is not possible to give a commencement date for the pilot. My previous answer to AQW 27407/11-15 refers.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Assembly: Resources

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission for their assessment of whether the Assembly is adequately resourced to hold the Executive to account.

(AQW 29582/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires that "the Assembly Commission shall provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes". This legislative requirement guides the Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy, business planning and risk management processes.

The Assembly Commission's budget for the four financial years from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015 was set within the constrained budget position for the Northern Ireland Block as part of the wider Spending Review 2010 exercise.

While the Spending Review 2010 settlement saw a cut in the Assembly Commission's budget of 8.9% in cash terms, the Commission took the view that it could deliver the services required for the

Assembly's purposes (including holding the Executive to account) within the agreed Spending Review 2010 settlement. The budget allocation is reviewed annually to ensure that it is sufficient to meet the Assembly's needs.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 24 January 2014

(AQW 27675/11-15)

There are a total of 116 buildings in the NICS and Agency estate that have showers available for cyclists. Provision of additional shower facilities are planned in a further 2 buildings.

There is currently no plan to provide shower facilities throughout the NICS estate for cyclists as it is a matter for the Department with premises officer responsibility to consider the appropriateness of such facilities in a particular building.

In existing buildings for which my Department has premises officer responsibility, where circumstances allow, where space is available, it is appropriate to do so and budget constraints permit, shower facilities are provided.

(AQW 29426/11-15)

Details of my Department's expenditure on street lighting in each Council district, in each of the last five years, are provided in the table below:

Council	2008-09 £'000	2009-10 £'000	2010-11 £'000	2011-12 £'000	2012-13 £'000
Antrim	703	799	807	734	1,360
Ards	999	822	866	608	1,066
Armagh	822	514	947	1,203	764
Ballymena	1,449	993	872	1,250	1,114
Ballymoney	282	338	438	538	307
Banbridge	552	273	469	770	615
Belfast	3,530	3,290	3,592	3,577	3,830
Carrickfergus	457	636	316	692	439
Castlereagh	936	706	712	553	752
Coleraine	2,306	1,052	1,316	1,466	1,169
Cookstown	399	392	392	455	412
Craigavon	1,143	2,454	1,286	2,126	1,148
Derry	1,748	2,075	1,759	2,415	2,438
Down	994	588	505	1,137	825
Dungannon & South Tyrone	739	682	659	741	695
Fermanagh	1,014	725	749	1,058	868
Larne	399	377	298	519	470
Limavady	481	387	495	489	395
Lisburn	1,935	1,346	1,016	888	962
Magherafelt	480	446	1,040	466	432

Council	2008-09 £'000	2009-10 £'000	2010-11 £'000	2011-12 £'000	2012-13 £'000
Moyle	206	176	166	222	177
Newry & Mourne	1,299	1,016	1,263	786	1,111
Newtownabbey	1,206	1,759	1,246	1,627	1,412
North Down	1,164	1,048	1,008	1,086	1,079
Omagh	817	860	632	786	757
Strabane	660	586	648	636	582

(AQW 11512/11-15)

I and the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive met with representatives of Turkington Holdings Ltd on 16 April 2012 to discuss double glazing specifications in Housing Executive properties in relation to the Glass and Glazing Federation's guidelines 'The Good Practice Guide for the Installation of Replacement Windows and Doors'.

I also met with Fusion 21 on 23 April 2012 to discuss generally their procurement model. Fusion 21, in early May 2012, then raised the issue of the Housing Executive's double glazing programme with my officials who advised that, as this was an operational matter for the Housing Executive, they should contact the Housing Executive's Head of Procurement to discuss this.

I also met with DUP colleagues Ian McCrea, Mervyn Storey and Paul McLean on 15 May 2012 to discuss issues they had about the manufacture of double glazing units.

I also met with Superseal on 27 September 2012.



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