

Written Answers to Questions

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 30 May 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Bright Start Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what provisions are being made for childcare for children with disabilities through the Bright Start Strategy.

(AQW 29229/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Key First Action 6 of the first phase of the Bright Start Childcare Strategy aims to improve the quality of childcare services for children with a disability and to make these services more accessible. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Health and Social Care Board have established a Steering Group to identify a number of pilot initiatives in support of this Key Action. The Steering Group has agreed the following pilots:

- A pilot small grant scheme to enable registered childcare providers to purchase specialist equipment or make adaptations to their premises that will help them meet the childcare needs of children with disability;
- a disability awareness training programme aimed at childcare providers and extended family members who could provide childcare support for children with a disability and/or complex needs;
- a pilot grant scheme to support school holiday childcare for children with disability and/or complex needs.

Centralised Procurement and Delivery Agency

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the proposed new centralised procurement and delivery agency.

(AQW 31043/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This is a matter for the Minister of Finance and Personnel and we would refer you to the answer he gave to AQW 30915/11-15 on 28 February.

Breaches of Equality Schemes

Ms McGahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the requests made to the Equality Commission that it use its powers of investigation, under Paragraph 11 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, for alleged breaches of equality schemes, including (i) the name of the public authority concerned; (ii) the nature of the alleged breach; (iii) the date on which the request was submitted and the date on which the Commission took a decision; (iv) the action taken by the Commission, including whether an investigation was initiated; and (v) the outcome of any investigation.

(AQW 31991/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have asked the Chief Executive of the Equality Commission to respond directly to you on this matter as we do not have a role in determining when the Equality

Commission uses its powers of investigation under Paragraph 11 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Under that paragraph, the Equality Commission may conduct an investigation where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme. That decision is within the Commission's own discretion.

Derry's One Plan

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the job creation target and additional Gross Value Added as contained in Derry's One Plan is on schedule.

(AQW 33034/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Data for 2012/13 indicates that 1,180 jobs were promoted/created and the 2012/13 target was achieved.

Data for 2013/14 is still being collated and analysed, with verified information expected by end June 2014. Initial provisional information is indicating that good progress is being made towards achievement of the 2013/14 target.

Taken in aggregate, the additional Gross Value Added (GVA) forecast in the One Plan, assuming full implementation, was an additional £500 million over the life of the Plan to 2020. Early annual GVA figures were predicted to be low as the infrastructure and catalyst projects were put in place, with the full benefits expected in the mid to later phases. The external economic environment within which the One Plan has been delivered is significantly more difficult than that modelled in 2010, so the GVA as initially forecast will be very challenging to achieve. Nevertheless, important progress has been made to date and this will be sustained through further work on Ebrington, Fort George and other developments in the city.

Social Investment Fund: Derry Zone

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when monies from the Social Investment Fund will be released for projects in the Derry Zone.

(AQW 33146/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In February 2014 we announced 2 projects for the Derry/Londonderry Social Investment Fund Zone, Invest in Play and the Community work programme. The Department is working with Lead Partners to agree the Letters of Offer, following which, funding will be released.

Invest in Play and the Community Work Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Invest in Play and the Community Work Programme are the only projects to be funded by the Social Investment Fund in the Derry Zone.

(AQW 33147/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Social Investment Fund has an £80 million budget which has been allocated across all 9 zones. As a result, 3 projects from the Derry/Londonderry Zone area plan have been prioritised by the Steering Group, in line with the allocated budget.

The 2 projects referred to have been announced for funding following business case approval. Invest in Play is a capital cluster to improve play facilities with a value of £1.75m at the following locations: Ballyarnett, Ballymagroarty and Daisyfield.

The Community Work Programme is a revenue project to improve employment with a value of £3.3m. It will provide long-term placements targeted upon those on the margins but especially the young (under 25 years) long-term unemployed.

The third project being considered for funding, subject to business case approval, is the Capital Cluster Pitches project. It is intended to increase health and wellbeing with an anticipated value of £4.5m. Final decisions on this and any resulting impact on funding for other projects within the area plan will only be taken on completion of the business case approval process.

Unite Against Hate Campaign

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, following a recent spate of hate crime, what action they are taking to initiate the Unite Against Hate campaign.

(AQW 33365/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We condemn all racist attacks and deplore the attempts by anyone to exclude ethnic minorities from full participation in local society. An inclusive and diverse community is a richer one.

'Together: Building a United Community' is the Executive's Good Relations Strategy and, along with the new Racial Equality Strategy, will provide a robust and effective framework to tackle hate crimes.

Building a united, shared and reconciled community is a clear commitment within the Programme for Government. The Executive has committed to deliver a range of measures to build good relations through the Together: Building a United Community Strategy, and in turn create the conditions to progress further towards a prosperous, peaceful and safe society.

The Unite Against Hate Campaign was developed and launched in 2009 as a multi-agency response to the growing issue of hate crime, with the aim of reducing the number of incidents, and challenging the underlying attitudes which lead to such incidents in the first place.

Consideration is currently being given to how Unite Against Hate or a variant thereof can best be developed within the context of Together: Building a United Community to broaden and deepen its reach and build on its achievements to date.

Age Discrimination Legislation

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the introduction of age discrimination legislation with regard to the provision of goods, facilities and services.

(AQO 6075/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are currently considering the scope of the proposed legislation and the implications of the various options available to us for taking this matter forward.

The intention is that the legislation will prohibit treatment that amounts to unfair discrimination, without removing any of the protections and privileges currently available to different age groups. When we are satisfied that policy proposals have been developed to achieve the intended outcome, we will submit them to full public consultation.

Internet Safety Strategy

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on developing a cross-departmental internet safety strategy.

(AQO 6080/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Recognising that the issue of internet safety is an area of increasing concern for parents, professionals and society in general, OFMDFM has been in discussion with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the development of an overarching, strategic and co-ordinated approach to e-safety.

At present, the arrangements for taking forward the development of an overarching strategic approach to child internet safety are under consideration. This is to ensure that the most effective mechanism for the development of a cross-departmental approach to internet safety is established.

Civil Contingency Planning

Miss M McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on civil contingency planning.

(AQO 6082/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A number of significant enhancements have recently been agreed and implemented to increase our collective capability to respond to a wide range of civil emergencies. New arrangements have been put in place to enhance the effectiveness of the Civil Contingencies Group NI (CCG), the principal strategic emergency preparedness body for the public sector. This has led to a number of important advancements in the areas of communications, emergency response and recovery, and meeting the needs of people most vulnerable to the impacts of civil emergencies.

In addition, OFMDFM obtained Executive approval in February this year to a number of measures to enhance civil contingencies arrangements at the local level. These provide for the:

- establishment of 4 additional Sub-Regional Civil Emergencies Preparedness Groups (SCEPGs) which between them cover the rest of the region outside of Belfast; Belfast Resilience already provides this function for the Belfast area;
- establishment of a CCG Sub-Group to oversee the work of the SCEPGs;
- establishment of a CCG workstream to identify the need to formalise the district council civil contingencies role and to consider how this could be done. This work will include consideration of the need for wider civil contingencies legislation; and
- presentation of a draft Memorandum of Understanding which sets out how district councils should discharge their civil contingencies role at sub-regional level and how CCG member organisations should support councils in the execution of that role.

OFMDFM is working with key stakeholders to implement these new arrangements.

In addition to these preparedness measures, there are also well established and tested structures and protocols at regional and local level for responding to all types of emergencies. These were used to very good effect during the coastal flooding emergency of January 2014 as well as in the response to the Spring Blizzard of 2013 when the NI Central Crisis Management Arrangements led by our Department were invoked and CCG convened in emergency mode to deal with the latter.

The philosophy is however one of continuous improvement, and so OFMDFM will continue to work with stakeholders through the auspices of CCG to identify opportunities to further strengthen our collective capability in this important work.

Sexual Orientation Strategy

Ms Ruane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Sexual Orientation Strategy.

(AQO 6083/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Public consultation on the development of a Sexual Orientation Strategy was launched via a number of press advertisements on 14 March 2014.

A consultation document to help inform the development of the Strategy is available online at <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/developing-a-sexual-orientation-strategy-consultation-document.pdf> and is accompanied by an online survey. The document and survey are available in hard copy on request.

The consultation process will enable OFMDFM to gather information, evidence and public opinion on what the Sexual Orientation Strategy and associated Action Plan should include.

The process will last for 12 weeks ending on 6 June 2014.

Corporation Tax

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on discussions with the British Government on the devolution of corporation tax powers.

(AQO 6139/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Government will make its decision on whether to devolve responsibility for Corporation Tax in the autumn, with an announcement to be made no later than the 2014 Autumn Statement. The Government has previously indicated that if it did decide to devolve responsibility for the rate of Corporation Tax, then a stand-alone Bill would be introduced in the normal way with the aim of it becoming law before the prorogation of Parliament, prior to the 2015 General Election. This is a very tight timescale and we have previously highlighted the need for an early decision to the Secretary of State. In the meantime, preparatory work is ongoing in respect of the development of the proposed technical design of a devolved regime and officials are liaising with Treasury counterparts on that. This will inform the content of the necessary legislation and follows on from the previous work by the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Horizon 2020: Farming

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail her Department's plans to maximise the use of Horizon 2020 to develop and use science and technology for the benefit of farming.
(AQW 33428/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Horizon 2020 is a significant funding stream for Research and Development and I am keen that the agri-food sector maximises drawdown and achieves the full benefit of this. That is in line with industry aspirations set out in "Going for Growth".

The bulk of local agri-food research is currently driven by the universities and our NDPB, The Agri-Food and Bioscience Institute (AFBI). H2020 seeks to embed research and development in European economies and so there is a challenge for us to increase the involvement of local industry if we are to avail of the opportunities.

In order to help the industry face this challenge my Department is currently funding a facilitator dedicated to encouraging and supporting local researchers and companies to make H2020 applications. While the post is funded by DARD, the postholder, David McCleery, is based in AFBI.

AFBI is a dedicated local research facility which can help the local agri-food and rural industries grow and expand into new markets. It therefore makes sense that the Facilitator for the agri-food sector is based at AFBI - as this is where they can be most effective in securing additional EU research funding.

David provides specialist advice and assistance to academics and businesses in this area. He has organised a number of workshops, held a series of one-to-one meetings, facilitated stakeholder discussions as well as providing a brokerage function to connect potential partners and support consortia development. His wider activities are directed at the promotion of opportunities to potential applicants, capacity development locally to support new participants to engage with H2020 funding and forging linkages with key EU decision makers involved in agri-food research and innovation funding. This post complements existing support services and will provide help to any research organisation regardless of location.

In addition, the Department has a Research Challenge Fund (RCF). The aim of the RCF is to encourage industry and public sector research establishments to collaborate on innovative, high quality, pre-commercial research and technological development projects. These projects will have the potential to further the sustainability and competitiveness of the north's agri-food and rural enterprises.

The key objectives of the RCF are:

- a) To improve the competitiveness of rural enterprises and create wealth from the research base;
- b) To increase the number of rural enterprises engaging in effective research and development - including those participating for the first time – and the level of private sector expenditure on R&D;
- c) To increase the level of collaboration between the north's rural enterprises and the local, national and international research base; and
- d) To increase collaboration and effective cooperation between rural enterprises.

While there is no direct close over between the RCF and Horizon 2020, we see it as a stepping stone to allow industry to realise the opportunities the research and innovation offers and empower them to potentially engage in Horizon 2020 in the future.

If the agri-food sector is to grow we also recognise that we need the researchers available to undertake the necessary work. I am delighted therefore that my Department has been able to increase the number of PhD studentships it offers from 8 to 12 this year. These studentships are awarded for research projects in Agriculture or Food related subjects. This has the dual benefit of developing/maintaining a research capability in Agri-food and providing research of benefit to DARD and the agri-food industry in a cost effective manner. This research capability is important to the economy as it leads to increased innovation, productivity and competitiveness.

All these initiatives together will, I hope, assist the agri-food industry to engage in research and innovation and ultimately provide benefits in economic growth.

Local Poultry Industry

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is aware of the frustration felt by the local poultry industry at delays in providing planning approval for new poultry sheds; and whether she has had discussions with the Minister of the Environment regarding this issue.
(AQW 33514/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is aware of some delays to planning applications for new poultry sheds and my officials have raised this issue with the Department of Environment (DOE). DOE has advised that it created a dedicated planning team to process planning applications for Moy Park poultry houses across the north of Ireland, with the aim of reducing processing times for these applications. This team meets regularly with the NI Environment Agency (NIEA) and Moy Park to resolve issues at an early stage.

DOE has further advised that any delays in processing planning applications to date are centred mainly on the utilisation of poultry litter. Poultry litter has a high nutrient content and needs to be appropriately managed when spread on farmland as a fertiliser. As an intensive sector which imports feedstuff, the poultry industry contributes to the phosphorus surplus of local agriculture and this requires that adequate control measures are in place to mitigate any potential associated environmental impacts. Discussions continue on an ongoing basis between Moy Park, DOE Planning, NIEA and other consultees to resolve these issues as they arise.

Discussions are also ongoing between my officials, DOE officials and the European Commission on the next Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) for 2015 to 2018. The Commission has an interest in the poultry sector expansion plans and is seeking assurances that adequate control measures will be put in place to mitigate any potential associated environmental impacts.

Designation of the Areas of Natural Constraints: Consultation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 30307/11-15 and her statement at the Ministerial briefing to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development on 18 Feb 2014 that "it was always part of the plan" to hold a further consultation on the Designation of the Areas of Natural Constraints, to detail when the consultation will commence.
(AQW 33551/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department published an update on designation of Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) in December 2013. This information included initial maps showing the agricultural land that may be defined as being naturally constrained according to the methodology set out in Regulation (EU) No1305/2013 (the Rural Development Regulation) and EU Commission guidelines.

Since the publication of this information, my officials have held discussions with EU Commission officials on some of the outstanding technical aspects and are awaiting further clarification.

The Rural Development Regulation allows Member States until 1 January 2018 to designate Areas of Natural Constraint at the latest. If support to these areas continues to be provided via the Rural Development Programme (Pillar II), we can continue with the current designation until that date. Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 (the Direct Payments Regulation) requires designation by 2015 should any support scheme for these areas be funded from Pillar 1. Once a decision is made on future support for these areas, the timescale for designation, and the associated consultation on the issues involved, will become clearer.

Financial Remuneration

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 33498/11-15, what action her Department will take if financial remuneration was made without the associated claim having been submitted to her Department.

(AQW 33679/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As indicated in my earlier reply, I am unaware of any circumstances whereby financial remuneration could be made, under the schemes in question, without an associated claim having been first submitted. As such, if you would like to furnish details of any such cases I will investigate this matter fully.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Bailiffs: Powers of Seizure

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 33192/11-15, how many times bailiffs have exercised their powers in respect of seizure in each of the last five years.

(AQW 33605/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The table below provides details of when bailiffs have exercised their powers of seizure in the cases reported in AQW 33192/11-15:

Year	Seizures
2011	Case 1 - 2 rods and 2 reels
	Case 2 - 2 rods and 2 reels
2013	Case 1 - 3 rods, 3 reels, 1pike over 4kg and 5 trout
	Case 2 - 3 rods and 3 reels
	Case 3 - 3 rods and 3 reels
2014	Case 1 (pending) - no seizure

Arts/Cultural Facilities

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action she has taken to ensure that sufficient arts and cultural facilities are available for future screen and television productions.

(AQO 6211/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am not aware of any limitations to arts or culture infrastructure which have hindered or could hinder film productions here, or any evidence that the arts and cultural sector is not supportive of film production.

NI Screen has been extremely successful in attracting a growing number of high profile productions to the north of Ireland in recent years. For example, even aside from the phenomenally successful Game of Thrones, we have seen the filming of City of Ember, Your Highness, Dracula Untold, Hunger, The Fall and Oscar winning short film The Shore. The film industry has contributed approximately £121m to the local economy over the last four years. This highlights the quality of what we have to offer as a location.

NI Screen has implemented key multi-channel campaigns to showcase the benefits of the North as a centre for independent film, television and new media production, selling our location, funding opportunities and facilities to the global screen industry, and will continue to do so throughout the course of its new strategy 'Opening Doors'. It has recently announced that the feature film High-Rise, featuring Sienna Millar and Jeremy Irons, will begin filming in Co. Down in July.

In terms of facilities available to productions, NI Screen offers a brochure detailing not only Titanic Studios, but other diverse studio and build spaces such as The Linen Mill (Co. Down), KBL Mill in Ballyclare, and Kilroot, which was used in the feature film Hunger.

Due to the growing success and expansion of the film industry in the north, NI Screen, in conjunction with Invest NI, is currently looking into options to increase the available infrastructure, in particular with regard to sound stages, to maximize our ability to attract future productions.

City of Culture: Legacy

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the UK City of Culture legacy programme in the North West.

(AQO 6207/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In November 2013 I announced that my Department will establish a strategic focus on cultural development in the North West to tackle significant socio economic need. My officials are finalising a bid to the Executive to support this and build on the success of City of Culture.

I have already directed around £2M of funding to support high profile initiatives between January and March 2014. This included the return to Derry of Other Voices and the continuation of other music and digital skills activities, as well as sports investment and the development of cultural strategies for disadvantaged areas within the City.

A Departmental team for the North West has been established to coordinate and support cultural led approaches to social and economic development. A DCAL North West office is in place and a permanent location is currently being considered. DCAL Roadshows in Strabane, Coleraine and Limavady have engaged communities across the North West.

The bid to the Executive will also support setting up a new delivery structure to take forward key activities and to pursue longer term funding for sustainable creative and cultural interventions. I am establishing a stakeholder group, which I will chair, to shape initial policy and strategic direction.

A new oversight group to coordinate and support cultural activity in the North West will also be set up. A range of Departments and other organisations will be invited to sit on the Group.

Earlier this month, I followed through on my commitment to host an All Ireland Creative Industries conference in Derry. Once again this provided an opportunity to highlight the success of City of Culture and the North West's role as a national and international driver for the Creative Industries and wider innovation. Key broadcasting and industry leaders participated in the conference and over 400 people, including 150 local schoolchildren, attended the event in the Millennium Forum.

Edward the Bruce

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans her Department has to mark the 700th anniversary of the landing of Edward the Bruce in Larne.

(AQO 6212/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The MAG Ulster-Scots Academy which is funded by my Department commissioned the Ulster Historical Foundation to research the 700th anniversary of Edward the Bruce in Ireland and recommend how it could be developed as a tourism initiative.

The Foundation made several recommendations including the development of a travelling exhibition, tourism trail and mobile app. The potential for a series of high profile events to coincide with the anniversary of key milestones in the 1315 invasion campaign, such as the Landing at Larne in May, the Coronation of Edward Bruce as King of Ireland at Carrickfergus in June, the Battle of Connor (outside Antrim) in September and his eventual death and burial at Faughart in Co Louth were also identified.

On the basis of this research, my Department has made funding available for a partnership project between the MAG Ulster-Scots Academy, the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ulster Historical Foundation to produce a Bruce tourism trail map and app, interpretative signage on trail sites and a travelling exhibition.

My officials will also be undertaking discussions with local councils, the Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland regarding the development of commemorative events. The 700 year anniversary presents an excellent opportunity to maximise the tourism potential for the north-south and east-west connections and capitalise on the worldwide interest in the Bruce story generated by the anniversaries of the Bruce invasion of Ireland and the Battle of Bannockburn.

Musical Instruments for Bands

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the Arts Council's Musical Instruments for Bands scheme.

(AQO 6213/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The North has a long standing tradition for music making and there is a significant interest in bands across both main cultural traditions.

My Department's funding in support of bands purchasing musical instruments is disbursed through the Arts Council's Musical Instruments for bands scheme.

The £200k which is made available annually is fully utilised, suggesting a continued demand for this scheme.

I believe the scheme increases the quality of music making in the community by helping bands avail of new musical instruments to encourage the legacy of musical enjoyment and learning from generation to generation.

Ulster-Scots/Orange Groups: Funding

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding has been allocated to Ulster Scots and Orange cultural groups for events during 2014.

(AQO 6214/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department, through its Cultural Awareness Strategy has allocated up to £37,500 in 2014 to the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to bring forward the objectives of the strategy which aims to build understanding of cultural traditions in the north of Ireland and contribute to a shared and better future.

The Ulster-Scots Agency, which is jointly funded by my Department and the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, has approved applications from a number of Ulster-Scots groups under its various schemes totalling £286.5k as follows - £91k for festivals; £193k for music and dance tuition; and £2.5k for Burns Night events.

The Agency has not yet assessed applications for its summer school grants scheme but has estimated a figure of £54k will be allocated to this programme.

The Arts Council has also awarded £37k to Ulster Scots and Orange Cultural Groups.

Department of Education

Literacy and Numeracy and Inspection Exchanges

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what joint work is ongoing on an east west basis on (i) literacy and numeracy; and (ii) inspection exchanges.

(AQW 33419/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): There is a Bi-lateral Concordat between my Department and the Department for Education in England. The Concordat establishes an agreed framework for co-operation between the Departments on all matters in relation to specific business areas.

My Department recognises the importance of co-operation in order to meet our policy and business objectives. I have detailed below joint work which is ongoing on an east west basis:

- My Department liaises with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DfBIS) on European matters.
- There is on-going liaison and communication regarding policies on qualifications, at official level with England and Wales. Whilst the 3-jurisdiction relationship has changed in recent years from joint decision making with the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation to parallel decision making, the qualification regulators nevertheless meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is preparing a new Education Policy Outlook publication, to be published every two years following the first edition in January 2015. The publication will cover trends in education policy and details of education policy reforms. It will be accompanied by a series of Policy Outlook country profiles documenting each OECD member country's policy landscape. My Department is currently engaging with DfE, as are colleagues in Scotland and Wales, to inform OECD's drafting of a UK country profile.
- Causeway is a British-Irish youth exchange programme which aims to strengthen and improve relationships between young people, and those who work with them, right across Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England and the north of Ireland. Funding is provided by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (Dublin), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (London) and the Department of Education (through the Youth Council).
- At the eleventh British Irish Council summit in September 2008, the Council adopted Early Years Policy as a new work sector with the Welsh Government as the lead administration. This area of work brings together policy officials from each Member Administration. There are currently four areas of focus of this Workstream:
 - Collaboration between all agencies concerned with health, education and social services to provide a 'joined-up' service for children and their parents/carers and to make better use of resources;
 - Transition arrangements (between home and child care settings, and then to school) to improve outcomes;
 - The early years work force; and
 - Evaluation and obtaining better value for money.

Recent meetings have discussed improving quality, data sharing and workforce development in the Early Years sector.

- Arrangements for inspection exchanges have been put in place between the inspectorates from the north of Ireland, the south of Ireland, Scotland and Wales to facilitate exchanges during the 2013/2014 academic year. In February 2014, the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) Managing Inspector for Primary joined an inspection in Scotland and arrangements are in place for a member of the Education Inspectorate in Scotland to join ETI inspections during May 2014.

The ETI will be contacting Estyn (the inspectorate in Wales) in the near future to make arrangements for school inspector exchanges in the 2014/2015 academic year.

In relation to literacy and numeracy, specific programmes are being implemented to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy particularly in socially disadvantaged areas however this has not required any joint work on an east west basis.

On-Going Work with England

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what joint work is ongoing on an east west basis on any subject matter within the responsibility of his Department.

(AQW 33420/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is a Bi-lateral Concordat between my Department and the Department for Education in England. The Concordat establishes an agreed framework for co-operation between the Departments on all matters in relation to specific business areas.

My Department recognises the importance of co-operation in order to meet our policy and business objectives. I have detailed below joint work which is ongoing on an east west basis:

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In relation to literacy and numeracy, specific programmes are being implemented to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy particularly in socially disadvantaged areas however this has not required any joint work on an east west basis.

Clintyclay Primary School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in the light of recent developments at Clintyclay Primary School, what legislation takes precedence in a decision on the future of the school.
(AQW 33439/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the time of writing, no Development Proposal (DP) for Clintyclay Primary School either to close or to transform has been published. However I understand the managing authority intends to publish a Development Proposal for the closure of the school and the Board of Governors has requested that a Development Proposal be published seeking Controlled Integrated status.

The legislation pertaining to this matter is covered within the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 (as amended) and the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order.

My Officials will liaise with Departmental Solicitor's Office to ensure that the appropriate legislation is applied in relation to both instances.

Clintyclay Primary School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in the light of recent developments at Clintyclay Primary School, what process will be used to determine the appropriate legislation to be used to arrive at a decision on any development proposal.
(AQW 33440/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the time of writing, no Development Proposal (DP) for Clintyclay Primary School either to close or to transform has been published. However I understand the managing authority intends to publish a Development Proposal for the closure of the school and the Board of Governors has requested that a Development Proposal be published seeking Controlled Integrated status.

The legislation pertaining to this matter is covered within the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 (as amended) and the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order.

My Officials will liaise with Departmental Solicitor's Office to ensure that the appropriate legislation is applied in relation to both instances.

Students from the Islamic Faith

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education what provision is made within schools to allow students from the Islamic faith to pray.
(AQW 33480/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Department's policy on schools and Collective Worship, it is open to schools to make arrangements to cater for pupils of different faiths/beliefs, this includes provision for students from the Islamic faith to pray. The department does not hold information on the provision that individual schools provide, this is a matter for Principals and Board of Governors to determine with the support of the Education & Library Boards.

Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education for an update on the progress of Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt's application for a new build.

(AQW 33492/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: While I hope to be in a position to make a wider announcement on new builds in the near future, the process to assess options for inclusion in that announcement has not yet concluded. As part of this process, I will examine the case for capital investment across the schools' estate and proposals for Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt will be considered along with other priorities.

Drumragh Integrated College: Lisanelly Campus

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 31460/11-15, and given the travelling time required for pupils from Drumragh Integrated College to engage with pupils within the Lisanelly Campus and the subsequent loss of learning time, whether children from the College have equal access to shared learning to those children in the Lisanelly Campus. [R]

(AQW 33500/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As I set out in my previous answer, Drumragh Integrated College is a member of Omagh Area Learning Community (ALC). Under the Entitlement Framework all pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16 are guaranteed equality of access to a minimum number of courses that should be economically relevant and individually engaging, with clear progression pathways. This is regardless of the school they attend or where they live.

To deliver this, schools are working together on an area basis to offer courses on a collaborative and shared basis, and are used to making timetabling and transport arrangements to facilitate this. I would therefore expect all schools within Omagh ALC to build on existing good practice for the benefit of all pupils in the area, particularly when schools are located in close proximity as with Drumragh and the Lisanelly Campus.

Pre-School Places in Dundonald

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education for an update on his specific plans to address the shortage of pre-school places in Dundonald.

(AQW 33533/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) of each Education and Library Board is responsible for ensuring there is sufficient pre-school provision in its local area. The South Eastern Education and Library Board PEAG, which is responsible for the provision of pre-school places in the Dundonald area, has advised that a new provider has been admitted to the Pre-School Education Programme for the 2014/15 school year and it does not anticipate any shortfall of provision in the Dundonald area.

This information was made available to parents of children who were unplaced at the end of stage 1 when they were invited to submit further preferences for consideration during stage 2 of the process.

Letters advising parents of the outcome of stage 2 will be issued on 30 May 2014.

Home Education

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education whether there has been a study to assess the differences in later educational outcomes between children who received their pre-school education in a controlled or maintained setting and those whose pre-school education was delivered in a voluntary or private setting; and if not, whether his Department will consider commissioning such a study.

(AQW 33535/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Effective Pre-School Provision in Northern Ireland Project (EPPNI) was a longitudinal research study of children's progress and development from age three to eleven years, and how progress related to their pre-school centre experience and family background.

In its findings at the end of Key Stage One the study noted, among other things, that high quality pre-schooling was related to better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children.

At the end of Key Stage Two Mathematics and English found that there was clear evidence of positive pre-school effects persisting to the end of Key Stage Two for children who attended a nursery school/class or playgroup.

Copies of both Reports are available in the Assembly Library.

The Chief Inspector's Report provides evidence of high quality provision. In light of that my focus is on continuing to improve the quality of pre-school provision, irrespective of where it is delivered. Learning to Learn, which was published last year, sets out a series of actions intended to support all children having equal opportunities to achieve their potential through high quality early years education and learning experiences.

Southern Education and Library Board's Autism and Intervention Service

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education when the current moratorium on public sector jobs in the Southern Education and Library Board's Autism and Intervention Service, under the umbrella of Children and Young Persons Services, will be lifted, given that it was introduced awaiting the implementation of Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 33537/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: May I make clear that Vacancy Control is not a moratorium on jobs, rather the policy advises that employing authorities should avoid creating new posts, unless there is an inescapable requirement to ensure service delivery, and that arising vacancies should initially be filled in a temporary capacity only.

The purpose of the Vacancy Control policy remains extant – to protect staff in posts which may, as a result of future restructuring, be considered to be redundant.

The Department has continuously reviewed the policy to take account of the issues that have arisen as a result of the enforcement of vacancy control for much longer than originally anticipated.

I have agreed to undertake a further review of the policy and I am considering a paper outlining the views of the Association of Education and Library Boards. I will also be seeking input from other RPA affected education sector bodies and trade union colleagues. However, it will not be possible to lift vacancy control completely until the way forward for the restructuring of education administration is known.

Rossmars Special School, Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build project for Rossmars Special School, Limavady.

(AQW 33572/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Rossmar Special School, Limavady was one of the 18 schemes I announced in June 2112 for capital investment.

The Economic Appraisal (EA) for the project has been approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) appointed consultants in April 2014.

Currently discussions are ongoing between WELB Officers, Rossmar School and the consultants to finalise the accommodation needs.

Drumragh Integrated College in Omagh

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education on what basis his Department offered to retake the decision prior to the hearing of the judicial review on the development proposal submitted by Drumragh Integrated College in Omagh.

(AQW 33587/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Prior to the school applying for this judicial review, I had agreed to retake the decision in relation to the development proposal submitted by the school. Having reflected on the case, I accepted that consideration of the statutory duty, as outlined in Article 64 of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, was not given the appropriate weight in the case presented. In retaking the decision I will want to ensure that the duty is given appropriate weight and that the points made in the recent judgement are taken into consideration.

I recognise my duties in relation to integrated and Irish medium education and have instructed my officials to continue to look for steps and measures that will encourage and facilitate Irish-medium and integrated education.

Staff Seconded to EASIT

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of staff still seconded to EASIT, including their associated work streams, salaries and contractual arrangements.

(AQW 33589/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The creation of ESA remains a Programme for Government target.

However, in advance of the agreement necessary to progress the Education Bill, the ESA Implementation Team has recently been reduced. A core team has been retained as an integral part of DE to:

- Plan for the impact of the new local government boundaries from April 2015, if ESA has not been established;
- Assist with planning and implementing necessary budget efficiencies;
- Support a number of regional programmes that have been identified as Ministerial priorities including School Development, Governor Support and ICT Modernisation;
- Update HR policies and procedures for the education sector; and
- Be ready to implement ESA following the necessary agreement.

ESAIT has reduced from 29.3 FTE staff plus the CEO Designate in 2013 to the current team of CEO Designate plus 15 FTE seconded staff. In addition, ESAIT no longer incurs the costs associated with staff in the SEELB who were supporting the implementation of a new finance system.

The ESA CEO Designate is currently acting as Interim CEO of the SELB and 7 of the team are also engaged in work to support DE and the ELBs in a number of areas.

Seconded staff are on temporary contracts until April 2015. ESAIT salaries currently total £790,000.

Enrolment into Primary School

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to review the admission criteria used for enrolment into primary school.

(AQW 33606/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Setting of admissions criteria is the sole responsibility of each school's Board of Governors. They must, by law, set admissions criteria that can distinguish between applicants down to the last available place.

I have no current plans to impose particular admissions criteria, through regulation, upon schools' Board of Governors. They remain the admissions authority within the Open Enrolment process.

Language Support Arrangements in Primary Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 33216/11-15, to detail the main categories of support delivered under this funding scheme over the last three years.

(AQW 33610/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Regional Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) offers support to schools in four main areas: pastoral care; curriculum access; language acquisition; intercultural education. This support is tailored to the specific needs of the school.

IDS develops and delivers training for teachers and classroom assistants, providing resources and follow up support.

It provides translated documents and an interpreting service for schools to ensure effective home-school communication.

Draft Northern Ireland Elective Home Education Policy

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education what engagement his Department has had with families that educate their children at home during the consultation on the draft Northern Ireland Elective Home Education Policy.

(AQW 33614/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Legislation places specific responsibilities on parents and on the five Education and Library Boards in the area of the education of children other than at school including those who are educated at home. The Boards have directly prepared guidance which reflects those legislative responsibilities and they are currently consulting on this guidance.

As part of that consultation I have made clear that I expect them to ensure engagement with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible including young people and their families and to ensure also that the feedback they receive is considered very carefully in reviewing the draft guidance.

The Boards have adopted a range of methods to facilitate engagement and consultation with all those who have an interest in Elective Home Education. I understand that each Board has written to the parents of all children who have notified them that they are presently electing to home educate their children and also to other key stakeholders to advise of the consultation exercise. Further details are provided in each Board's Consultation Strategy document. This is published on each Board's websites alongside their draft guidance and the Boards will also make this available in various formats upon request.

I have made clear that I will wish to review each Board's guidance once it has been subject to consultation and reviewed and refined in response to the engagement that has taken place.

Home Education

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the draft joint policy on elective home education published by the five Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 33619/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Legislation places specific responsibilities on parents and on the five Education and Library Boards in the area of the education of children other than at school including those who are educated at home.

The Boards have directly prepared guidance which reflects those legislative responsibilities and they are currently consulting on this guidance. The consultation process provides an opportunity for views and ideas to be provided to the Boards on how they best strike the balance between ensuring that the rights and needs of children themselves are appropriately protected and facilitating parental preference for home education.

As Education Minister my focus is on ensuring the needs of children and young people are met. Therefore, I have made clear that I expect the Boards to ensure engagement with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible including young people and their families as part of that consultation and to ensure also that the feedback they receive is considered very carefully in reviewing the draft guidance.

I have also made clear that I will wish to review their guidance once it has been subject to consultation and reviewed and refined in response to the engagement that has taken place. Commissioners in the South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to detail the salaries of the Commissioners in the South Eastern Education and Library Board; and how this compares to the Board members that the Commissioners replaced.

(AQW 33624/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the total amount, including expenses and other costs, paid to the Commissioners since their appointment is as follows:

Financial Year	Total amount paid
2006/07	81,472
2007/08	108,637
2008/09	79,472
2009/10	83,717
2010/11	76,935
2011/12	73,774
2012/13	78,336
2013/14	61,756

In comparison, the total cost of the Board members for the year immediately preceding their replacement (2005-06) was £75,820.

Reconstitution of the Education and Library Boards

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to outline his plans for the reconstitution of the Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 33625/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the absence of the political agreement necessary to advance the Education Bill to establish the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), I have instructed Department of Education officials to cease work on ESA, and focus on work required to make education administration compatible with the changes to local councils, that take full effect from 1 April 2015. I intend to bring a paper to the Executive shortly, to identify the way forward.

To help provide continuity and leadership during the transitional period, I have also asked all existing ELB members, including the SEELB Commissioners, to accept an extension of their current term of appointment until 31 March 2015.

Development Proposals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to list (i) the development proposals submitted within the last twelve months; (ii) the decisions taken on these proposals; (iii) the proposals still awaiting a decision; (iv) the number of teaching and other school posts that have been (a) lost; and (b) created as a result of these decisions; and (v) the number of (a) surplus places removed; and (b) additional places allocated in each sector.

(AQW 33626/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) 62 Development Proposals (DPs) have been published since 1 June 2013.
- (ii) I have taken a decision on 24 DPs. 23 have been approved and one has not approved. These are listed in Table 1 below.
- (iii) The remaining 38 DPs are at various stages in the DP process. These are listed in Table 2 below.
- (iv) (a) (b) None of the proposals I have approved in this period take effect until August/September 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter. I am therefore unable to advise on the number of teaching and other school posts that have been lost or created as a result of these decisions.
- (v) (a) (b) Table 1, in addition to details of the school sector, includes the number of places added or removed in respect of each of the DPs I have approved.

Table 1: Decisions on Development Proposals

DP No.	School ref	School	ELB area	Date published	School Type	Management Type	Reason for DP	Decision	Date of Decision	Places Added	Places Removed
239	403-6285	The Good Shepherd PS	SEELB	11/06/13	Primary	Maintained	Decrease enrolment	Approved	07/10/13		480
240	403-6480	St Kieran's PS	SEELB	11/06/13	Primary	Maintained	Decrease enrolment	Approved	07/10/13		125
219	103-0194	Holy Cross Boy's PS	BELB	13/06/13	Primary	Maintained	Decrease Enrolment	Approved	21/08/13		116
273	303-3313	St Bernard's PS, Glengormley	NEELB	13/06/13	Primary	Maintained	Increase enrolment	Approved	17/01/14	102	
274	303-6139	St MacNissi's PS, Glengormley	NEELB	13/06/13	Primary	Maintained	Increase enrolment	Approved	17/01/14	35	
247	203-6389 203-2510	St Anne's Girls PS, Strabane Barrack Street Boys PS, Strabane	WELB	01/08/13	Primary	Maintained	Amalgamate	Approved	09/12/13		0
245	403-6081 403-6134	St Lukes PS St Marks PS	SEELB	05/08/13	Primary	Maintained	Amalgamate	Approved	28/11/13		611
293	501-6391	Bush PS	SELB	02/09/13	Primary	Controlled	Open - Nursery Unit	Approved	16/01/14	26	
294	503-6504	St Patrick's PS, Dungannon	SELB	02/09/13	Primary	Maintained	Open - Nursery Unit	Approved	16/01/14	26	
291	542-0056 523-0070 523-0088	St Michael's GS, St Mary's HS and St Paul's Junior HS	SELB	02/09/13	Secondary Grammar	Voluntary and Maintained	Amalgamate	Approved	27/02/14		120

DP No.	School ref	School	ELB area	Date published	School Type	Management Type	Reason for DP	Decision	Date of Decision	Places Added	Places Removed
277	321-0233	Ballee Community HS	NEELB	01/10/13	Secondary	Controlled	Close	Approved	21/05/14		525
275	303-3311 303-0625	Glenravel PS & St Mary's PS	NEELB	08/10/13	Primary	Maintained	Amalgamate	Approved	24/02/14		0
276	303-2285	St Patrick's and St Joseph's PS	NEELB	09/10/13	Primary	Maintained	Increase enrolment	Approved	04/03/14	29	
247	426-0281	Shimna Integrated College	SEELB	09/10/13	Secondary	GMI	Increase enrolment	Approved	19/02/14	140	
295	503-6061	St Colman's PS, Annacorney	SELB	14/10/13	Primary	Maintained	Increase enrolment	Approved	16/01/14	27	
296	523-0160	St Brigid's HS, Armagh	SELB	14/10/13	Secondary	Maintained	Close	Approved	06/03/14		450
297	542-0268	St Patrick's GS, Armagh	SELB	14/10/13	Secondary Grammar	Voluntary	Increase enrolment	Approved	06/03/14	490	
278 279 280	321-0200 321-0279	Monkstown Community School & Newtownabbey Community HS	NEELB	15/10/13	Secondary	Controlled	Amalgamate	Approved	28/02/14		650
298	501-2635	Aughor Central PS	SELB	18/11/13	Primary	Controlled	Increase enrolment	Approved	14/03/14	35	
299	501-6178	Donacorney PS	SELB	18/11/13	Primary	Controlled	Increase enrolment	Approved	27/02/14	28	
300	504-6137	Seagoe PS, Portadown	SELB	18/11/13	Primary	Other Maintained	Increase enrolment	Not Approved	06/05/14		
287	321-0208	Dunclug College	NEELB	26/11/13	Secondary	Controlled	Increase enrolment	Approved	21/05/14	240	

Table 2 Development Proposals Not Yet Decided

DP No.	School ref	School	ELB area	Date published	School Type	Management Type	Reason for DP
243	401-6002	Kilcooley PS	SEELB	12/09/13	Primary	Controlled	Decrease enrolment
244	401-1670	Clandeboyne PS	SEELB	12/09/13	Primary	Controlled	Decrease enrolment
282 283 284	304-0451 301-0760	Kilcoan PS Mullaghdubh PS	NEELB	07/11/13	Primary	Other Maintained & Controlled	Amalgamate
249	203-2687	St Macartan's PS	WELB	07/11/13	Primary	Maintained	Close
250	203-6186	St Dymphna's PS	WELB	07/11/13	Primary	Maintained	Increase enrolment
248	406-6644	Millennium Integrated PS	SEELB	19/11/13	Primary	Grant Maintained Integrated	Open - Nursery Unit
249	406-6644	Millennium Integrated PS	SEELB	19/11/13	Primary	Grant Maintained Integrated	Increase enrolment
248	223-0254	Immaculate Conception College	WELB	10/12/13	Secondary	Maintained	Close
301	503-6567	Holy Trinity PS	SELB	16/12/13	Primary	Maintained	Open - Nursery Unit
251	201-2227	Drumahoe PS	WELB	07/01/14	Primary	Controlled	Open - Nursery Unit
251	403-6036	St Malachy's PS	SEELB	08/01/14	Primary	Maintained	Open - Nursery Unit
250	403-6618	Christ the Redeemer PS	SEELB	09/01/14	Primary	Maintained	Increase enrolment
252 253 254 255	203-2277 203-2300 203-3707	Craigbrack PS Listress PS Mullabuoy PS	WELB	22/01/14	Primary	Maintained	Amalgamate
256	223-0085	St Mary's HS	WELB	22/01/14	Secondary	Maintained	Close
252	461-0085	Down HS	SEELB	05/02/14	Preparatory	Controlled	Close

DP No.	School ref	School	ELB area	Date published	School Type	Management Type	Reason for DP
220	101-0323	Edenbrooke PS	BELB	13/02/14	Primary	Controlled	Open – Learning Support Centre
221	101-6485	Glenwood PS	BELB	13/02/14	Primary	Controlled	Open – Learning Support Centre
302	504-6699	Gaelscoil Eoghain	SELB	17/02/14	Primary	Other Maintained	Open - Nursery Unit
281	301-0816	Randalstown Central PS	NEELB	24/02/14	Primary	Controlled	Open - Nursery Unit (convert reception)
304	506-6657	Phoenix IPS	SELB	18/03/14	Primary	Grant Maintained Integrated	Open - Nursery Unit
257	204-6638	Gaelscoil Ui Dhocartaigh	WELB	27/03/14	Primary	Irish-medium	Open - off site Irish Medium Unit
305	503-6110	St Joseph's PS	SELB	14/04/14	Primary	Maintained	Open – Learning Support Centre (Autism)
253	401-6235	Downpatrick PS	SEELB	05/05/14	Primary	Controlled	Change Learning Support Centre from medium learning difficulties provision to generic provision.
288 289 290	342-0032 341-0033	Coleraine Academical Inst. & Coleraine HS	NEELB	07/05/14	Secondary Grammar	Voluntary and Controlled	Amalgamate
291	321-0300	Coleraine College	NEELB	07/05/14	Secondary	Controlled	Increase enrolment

DP No.	School ref	School	ELB area	Date published	School Type	Management Type	Reason for DP
307	503-6001 503-1516 503-1325	St Mary's PS Moneydarragh PS St Joseph's PS	SELB	19/05/14	Primary	Maintained	Amalgamate
308	503-1163	St Brigid's PS	SELB	19/05/14	Primary	Maintained	Increase Enrolment
309	503-1148	St Patrick's PS	SELB	19/05/14	Primary	Maintained	Increase Enrolment
310	503-1695	St Mary's PS	SELB	19/05/14	Primary	Maintained	Increase Enrolment
311	503-3025	St Patrick's PS	SELB	19/05/14	Primary	Maintained	Increase Enrolment
312	503-1080	Clintyclay PS	SELB	19/05/14	Primary	Maintained	Close

Teacher Exemption at Secondary Level Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the need for the teacher exemption at secondary level education.

(AQW 33627/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The responsibility for the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 lies with OFMDFM. Article 71 of the Order governs the teachers' exemption.

I have previously stated that there should be no change to the teachers' exemption without a full public consultation, which should preferably take place once the future of education administration has been determined.

Schools on the Lisanelly Site

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education to outline the plans for a single sixth form for all the schools on the Lisanelly site.

(AQW 33638/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are currently no plans for a single sixth form for the schools moving to the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus. The schools will retain their own sixth forms with the intention that there will be significant educational sharing on the campus for appropriate year groups.

Peace IV Funding

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has submitted a funding application to Peace IV funding for their Programme for Government 2011-15 commitment to shared education.

(AQW 33639/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Peace IV programme is still under development and has not yet completed its public consultation. Consequently Peace IV is not open for applications.

Area Based Planning

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education how many school places have been (i) created; and (ii) removed since the establishment of Area Based Planning.

(AQW 33640/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) Since Area Based Planning commenced I have approved Development Proposals to create a total of 2,980 school places; 1,524 primary places, 1,040 post primary places and 416 statutory nursery places.
- (ii) In the same period I have approved Development Proposals to remove 9,131 school places; 4,091 primary places, 4,988 post primary places and 52 statutory nursery places.

Lisanelly Campus

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education to detail the ownership arrangements for each school site on the Lisanelly campus.

(AQW 33641/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The ownership of the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus in Omagh rests with the Department of Education. My officials will work with the relevant school managing authorities regarding any legal arrangements necessary to ensure the effective operation of the individual schools involved on the site.

Department for Employment and Learning

Learning Zone: North West

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures are being considered to develop a cross border Learning Zone in the North West.

(AQW 33040/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): I am committed to working collaboratively with the relevant Government Ministers in the Republic of Ireland to identify and develop opportunities for co-operation that will be of mutual benefit to both jurisdictions. In that regard I recently met with Ruari Quinn, Minister for Education and Skills, when the issue of learning provision in the North West was discussed. Statistical information collated by my Department shows that there is a significant and continuing flow of further education students from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland, particularly in the North West area. As a result of my discussions with Minister Quinn, it was agreed to produce a joint interim paper on cross border further education issues for consideration by Ministers in a North South Ministerial context in June.

DEL offers full undergraduate student support for Northern Ireland domiciles enrolled in ROI higher education institutions. This includes a non-means-tested registration fee loan of €2,500, a means-tested maintenance grant up to £3,475, and a non-means-tested maintenance loan up to £4,840. Depending on their circumstances such students may also be eligible for certain other means-tested financial help such as childcare allowances, parent's learning- and adult dependents' grant. Non-means-tested Disabled Students' Allowances are also available. This full package of support is available to Northern Ireland domiciles attending UK higher education institutions and those in ROI, but in no other EU member state or country.

My Department is committed to promoting cross-border cooperation on research between third level institutions. Through the US-Ireland Research and Development Partnership, we have agreed to support thirteen projects to date in nanotechnology, sensor technology, energy/sustainability and telecommunications representing a total investment locally of almost £4 million. Furthermore, Richard Bruton TD (Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in the Republic of Ireland) and I

recently launched a new research partnership between DEL and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). The new “DEL/SFI Investigators Programme Partnership” will support collaborative projects involving universities from both jurisdictions to undertake internationally peer-reviewed, leading edge discovery and fundamental research.

Employment Service Advisers from my Department and the Department of Social Protection’s Employment Service in the Republic of Ireland work together as part of the EURES Cross Border Partnership; this encourages and supports labour mobility on a cross border basis, providing information for workers, jobseekers and employers. DEL has well established links with the Department for Social Protection on a number of fronts, sharing developments in policy, programmes and service delivery and exploring opportunities for cooperation.

Review of Youth Training

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail why the Skills for Life and Skills for Work Level 1 strands of Training for Success have been excluded from the scope of the Review of Youth Training.

(AQW 33530/11-15)

Dr Farry: The review of youth training will examine level 1 provision in the context of progression. I fully recognise that clear progression pathways and support mechanisms are vital for young people to progress from the entry level and level 1 options into the new youth training offer, just as the new youth training offer will facilitate entry into further education and training at level 3 and above, and will consider how best to achieve this.

Pending the outcome of the Review the Department continues to be fully inclusive, delivering all levels of provision, including a range of initiatives delivered at entry level and level 1 through the Training for Success strands Skills for Life and Skills for Work Level 1, and through Pathways to Success, the department’s strategy for young people who are not in education, employment or training. Therefore, whilst the review is not examining provision at entry level and level 1, it should be viewed as only one specific part of the wider learner pathways available to young people in Northern Ireland.

As with the current Training for Success programme, future provision at entry level and level 1 must ensure that training provides high levels of pastoral care, support, encouragement and concern for the holistic welfare and development of the participant.

The review of youth training is also being undertaken in tandem with the development of the United Youth offer. Again, this offer will seek to provide a fully inclusive framework of education and training opportunities and progression routes for young people across all levels.

Skills for Life and Skills for Work

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what plans he has to review provision within the Skills for Life and Skills for Work Level 1 to ensure that it is of an equally high quality to the refreshed Level 2 training offer.

(AQW 33531/11-15)

Dr Farry: Contracts for the delivery of the Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work Level 1 strands of the Department’s Training for Success programme are due to run until 31 March 2016.

Consideration of future provision will take account of the work being carried out on the review of youth training (level 2 provision) and the development of the United Youth offer; both of which seek to provide a fully inclusive framework of education and training opportunities and progression routes for young people across all levels.

It is likely that the personal and development needs of young people who have disengaged from learning and/or have significant barriers to education, training or employment will continue to be central to future provision, as will high levels of pastoral care, support, encouragement and concern for the holistic welfare and development of the participant.

The quality and performance of the current provision will continue to be monitored by my Department in partnership with the Education and Training Inspectorate. A programme of regular and robust reviews of Suppliers' performance is in place with the aim of ensuring consistently high standards of delivery, outcomes and value for money.

Graduate Program

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning following completion of the Graduate Program how many people have secured full time employment, in each of the last 3 years.
(AQW 33538/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department currently offers two programmes which aim to develop the employability skills of graduates in Northern Ireland: The Graduate Entry to Management (INTRO) Programme; and The Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP).

INTRO has been offered as part of my Department's Leadership and Management suite since 2007, and provides graduates at degree/ HND level with 3 weeks' off-the-job training in essential management skills (leadership and team building, managing people, finance, marketing, business excellence, and strategic planning) and a 21-week salaried placement where they undertake a measurable Business Improvement Project with a host employer, while continuing to receive mentoring support and guidance.

The Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) was introduced in January 2010 as part of Steps to Work, my Departments main adult return to work programme.

The table attached at Annex A provides details of the number of graduates completing the INTRO Programme, the percentage of those who secured full-time employment following completion, and the budget/ resources allocated in each of the last three years; whilst Annex B provides the same detail in respect of the GAP Programme.

INTRO

Financial Year	INTRO completers	Number that secured full-time employment on completion	Percentage that secured full-time employment on completion	INTRO spend
2011/12	109	101	93%	£308,829
2012/13	75	69	92%	£239,762
2013/14	57*	51	89%	£598,802**

* 160 graduates received funded places on the INTRO Programme during the 2013/14 financial year. The remainder of participants are due to complete at various stages throughout 2014.

** An increase in the level of funding, from £2,250 per graduate to £3,050 per graduate, as of 1 April 2013, and an increase in participation from 100 starters to 160 starters resulted in a significant increase in spend during 2013/14 in comparison with previous years.

GAP

Financial Year	GAP completers	Number that secured full-time employment on completion	% Leavers moving to employment on completion	GAP Spend
2011/12	135	80	59%	£386,000
2012/13	250	140	56%	£506,000

Financial Year	GAP completers	Number that secured full-time employment on completion	% Leavers moving to employment on completion	GAP Spend
2013/14 (to December 2013)	185	Not currently available*.	Not currently available.	£614,000

* The latest date for which employment data is available for the GAP Programme is currently 31 March 2013.

Graduate Program

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have completed the Graduate Program, in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 33539/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department currently offers two programmes which aim to develop the employability skills of graduates in Northern Ireland: The Graduate Entry to Management (INTRO) Programme; and The Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP).

INTRO has been offered as part of my Department's Leadership and Management suite since 2007, and provides graduates at degree/ HND level with 3 weeks' off-the-job training in essential management skills (leadership and team building, managing people, finance, marketing, business excellence, and strategic planning) and a 21-week salaried placement where they undertake a measurable Business Improvement Project with a host employer, while continuing to receive mentoring support and guidance.

The Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) was introduced in January 2010 as part of Steps to Work, my Departments main adult return to work programme.

The table attached at Annex A provides details of the number of graduates completing the INTRO Programme, the percentage of those who secured full-time employment following completion, and the budget/ resources allocated in each of the last three years; whilst Annex B provides the same detail in respect of the GAP Programme.

INTRO

Financial Year	INTRO completers	Number that secured full-time employment on completion	Percentage that secured full-time employment on completion	INTRO spend
2011/12	109	101	93%	£308,829
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2013/14 (to December 2013)	185	Not currently available*.	Not currently available.	£614,000

* The latest date for which employment data is available for the GAP Programme is currently 31 March 2013.

Graduate Program

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the departmental budget and resources allocated to the Graduate Program, in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 33540/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department currently offers two programmes which aim to develop the employability skills of graduates in Northern Ireland: The Graduate Entry to Management (INTRO) Programme; and The Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP).

INTRO has been offered as part of my Department's Leadership and Management suite since 2007, and provides graduates at degree/ HND level with 3 weeks' off-the-job training in essential management skills (leadership and team building, managing people, finance, marketing, business excellence, and strategic planning) and a 21-week salaried placement where they undertake a measurable Business Improvement Project with a host employer, while continuing to receive mentoring support and guidance.

The Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) was introduced in January 2010 as part of Steps to Work, my Departments main adult return to work programme.

The table attached at Annex A provides details of the number of graduates completing the INTRO Programme, the percentage of those who secured full-time employment following completion, and the budget/ resources allocated in each of the last three years; whilst Annex B provides the same detail in respect of the GAP Programme.

INTRO

Financial Year	INTRO completers	Number that secured full-time employment on completion	Percentage that secured full-time employment on completion	INTRO spend
2011/12	109	101	93%	£308,829
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2013/14 (to December 2013)	185	Not currently available*.	Not currently available.	£614,000

* The latest date for which employment data is available for the GAP Programme is currently 31 March 2013.

Steps to Work

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 33212/11-15, to detail the employers who utilised Steps to Work between 1 January 2014 and 8 May 2014.

(AQW 33595/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Steps to Work programme's contracted suppliers use an extensive range of employers from all sectors, including public, private and community and voluntary, when sourcing work experience and subsidised employment placement opportunities to help participants gain the skills and experience sought by employers.

In managing the programme the Department's systems are geared towards capturing performance data at a high level. These systems do not systematically capture data at the level of the individual employer. Consequently, the Department does not retain the specific details of each work placement and host employer at the level needed to provide the detailed information sought.

As set out in AQW 33212, I can reaffirm that the information sought on Steps to Work is not gathered in a format that would facilitate the provision of validated statistical data broken down by employer or political party during the period 1 January 2014 to 8 May 2014.

Individuals on Job Seekers Allowance: Canvassing

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 33212/11-15, can he clarify that the guidance is to be reissued on 8 May 2014.

(AQW 33609/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm that the Youth Employment Scheme staff guidance was revised on 8 May 2014 to specifically exclude placements involving any activity that is likely to be seen as indoctrinating participants or as promoting a particular political, religious or other controversial viewpoint. My Department would consider canvassing to be a political activity.

Operational staff in Jobs & Benefits offices and Jobcentres, responsible for the delivery of the Youth Employment Scheme, were advised of this amendment to guidelines by email on 8 May 2014. The key message was that future YES placements must not include canvassing for elections as part of a placement activity.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Report**

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether his Department has received and assessed the recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development Regional Development Working Paper 2013/20 'The Case of Ireland - Northern Ireland - Regions and Innovation: Collaborating Across Borders'; and to outline the actions that will be taken to implement the Report's recommendations.

(AQW 33390/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): My Department has received and is currently reviewing a copy of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Regional Development (OECD) Working Paper 2013/20 'The Case of Ireland – Northern Ireland – Regions and Innovation: Collaborating Across Borders'.

Non-Disconnection of Prepaid Customers on all Bank and Public Holidays

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why Power NI do not have a consistent policy of non-disconnection of prepaid customers on all bank and public holidays.

(AQW 33471/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have been advised by Power NI that it's published Code of Practice on Services for Prepayment Meter Customers confirms that, besides night and weekends, the extension of credit covers 1 January, 17 March, 12 July and 25 December. Variable times and dates such as May and August holidays are not covered.

Department of the Environment

Vacancies and Agency Staff

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) vacancies; and (ii) agency staff in his Department, broken down by grade.

(AQW 32518/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): The number of current vacancies that DOE plan to fill at 19 May 2014 is set out in the attached tables and includes both General Service and Analogous Grades. Figures are provided in Full Time Equivalent (FTE).

Agency staff filling posts at Administrative Officer and Administrative Assistant levels include those filling temporary posts that will end when the DVLA centralises vehicle licensing work in Swansea.

Sum of FTE

Grade	Total
Administrative Assistant	3
Support Grade Band Level 2	2
Administrative Officer	9.9
Executive Officer 2	11
Executive Officer 1	4
Staff Officer	12
Staff Officer Accountant	1
Deputy Principal	3
Deputy Principal Accountant	1
Grade 7	1

Grade	Total
Grade 6	2
Grade 5	1
Professional Technical Officer	4
Higher Professional Technical Officer	6
Senior Professional Technical Officer	16
Information Communication Technician Level 3	6
Information Communication Technician Level 4	1
Technical Grade 1	5
Traffic Examiner	3
Senior Traffic Examiner	1
Scientific Officer	8
Higher Scientific Officer	6
Senior Scientific Officer	9
Principal Scientific Officer	2.8
Industrial	3
Ranger	3
Curatorial E	2
Grand Total	126.7

Agency staff currently engaged in the Department as detailed in the table below.

Count of FTE

Grade	Total
Administrative Assistant	40
ANPR Operator	6
Administrative Officer	61
Conservation Architect	5
Curatorial E	1
Curatorial F	1
Deputy Principal Accountant	1
Information Communication Technician Level 3	2
Information Communication Technician Level 5	1
Investigation officer	7
Personal Secretary	3
Ranger	35

Grade	Total
Scientific Officer	24
Support Grade Band Level 2	3
Staff Officer Accountant	1
Grand Total	191

Lough Neagh Special Protection Area: Mineral Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment when his Department became aware that the extraction of minerals from Lough Neagh Special Protection Area was taking place without planning permission.

(AQW 33401/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department is aware that this activity predates the current planning system and has been ongoing since the 1930s. The issue has been raised in previous years but the decision at that time was not to pursue enforcement action, however this decision is now being revisited in consultation with the NIEA.

Quarries: Environmental Protection Noise Pollution Responsibilities

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of the Environment how many quarries (i) are currently; and (ii) have been subject to legal enforcement by local authorities under Environmental Protection noise pollution responsibilities in each of the last five years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 33406/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Individual District Councils are responsible for dealing with complaints about noise from premises including quarries under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Councils report noise complaints statistics to the Department annually under the following six categories: industrial; commercial and leisure; domestic; transport; noise in the street; and construction. The Department is not however able to disaggregate those complaints from quarries that lead to legal enforcement from the statistics provided.

The latest Noise Complaint Statistics report (2011/12) is available on the Department's website

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/noise_complaints_statistics_report_2011_2012.pdf

Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment when the process, undertaken by the Head of the Civil Service on civil service work being undertaken by staff who currently work in the Driver and Vehicle Agency, will be completed.

(AQW 33430/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In conjunction with the Finance Minister, and with the support of the Executive, I wrote to all Ministers asking each department to seek to identify what functions could be relocated to Coleraine to be undertaken by the DVA staff who will become surplus as a consequence of the decision by the Department for Transport in London to centralise vehicle registration and licensing in Swansea.

Following initial replies from Ministers, meetings have been taking place at official level with some departments. Minister Hamilton and I will provide an update to the Executive by the end of this month that will also set out proposals for further action.

The letter sent jointly with the Finance Minister also asked Ministerial colleagues to agree to the immediate application of controls on the recruitment and promotion of staff until the needs of surplus of staff in the DVA have been addressed. These measures are now in place.

Executive Giro d'Italia Legacy Action Plan

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will advocate the inclusion of a target of 50 per cent of all Primary 6 pupils to have completed on-road cycle training as part of the Executive Giro d'Italia Legacy Action Plan.

(AQW 33450/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department will continue to offer the Cycling Proficiency Scheme (CPS) to all primary schools within Northern Ireland and encourage school Principals to engage with the scheme. The scheme is focussed on road safety aspects of cycling, in line with my Department's responsibilities, and is currently being enhanced in line with the conclusions of a recent review.

I recognise the benefits for children of completing on-road cycle training. However, participation in CPS, and the use of optional on-road module within it, remains a decision for individual school Principals. My officials will therefore continue to work closely with the education sector, and the Department for Regional Development which leads on Active Travel, to ensure that the encouragement of cycling is taken forward in ways which take full account of road safety issues.

Lough Neagh Special Protection Area: Sand Extraction

Mr Agnew asked Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 32997/11-15; (i) what assurances he can give that no EU Directives are being breached by the continuing unregulated sand extraction taking place in Lough Neagh Special Protection Area; (ii) and whether he has given clearance for the unauthorised extraction to continue in the absence of any planning permissions or an Environmental Impact Assessment.

(AQW 33458/11-15)

Mr Durkan: This matter is the subject of an ongoing investigation and accordingly the information that I can provide is limited. However, I can assure you that any consent issued in regard to extraction will be in accordance with the EIA and Habitats Directives.

Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme Certificates

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 32872/11-15, to detail the eight Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme certificates granted by his Department, including the dates of each application and when they were granted.

(AQW 33460/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A table detailing the information requested is attached.

ALCS No.	Name & Site address	Date applied for	Date Certificate Issued	Other Information
49	Norman Emerson & Sons Ltd Kinnego House, 1 Annoloiste Rd, Lurgan	9 Feb 2004	Not issued	A certificate was not issued as the Discharge Consent for Water was outstanding. The Company, on advice from their accountants subsequently withdrew their application on 14 November 2005.
51	Norman Emerson & Sons Ltd, Ardmore Readymix, 118 Ardmore Rd, Lurgan	9 Feb 2004	18 Nov 2004	The Company, on advice from their accountants subsequently withdrew their application on 14 November 2005.

ALCS No.	Name & Site address	Date applied for	Date Certificate Issued	Other Information
99	A E Mulholland & Sons, Derryclone Rd, Gawleys Gate, Craigavon, BT67 OBP	20 May 2004	12 Apr 2005	
100	Mulholland Bros. (B&S) Ltd, 17 Shore Rd, Ballinderry Upper, Lisburn BT28 2LQ	2 Aug 2004	17 Nov 2004	
125	Cemex (NI) Ltd, Toomebridge Sand Depot, 30 Creagh Rd, Toomebridge BT41 3SE	17 May 2004	26 Jan 2005 re-issued 16 Oct 2007	Certificate re-issued due to change of Company name from Readymix (NI) Ltd to Cemex (NI) Ltd.
137	Northstone (NI) Ltd Sandybay Site, 19 Shore Rd, Upper Ballinderry BT28 2LF	23 June 2004	17 Nov 2004 re-issued 4 Jul 2006	Certificate re-issued due to change of ownership from Scott (Toomebridge) Ltd to Northstone (NI) Ltd.
138	Northstone (NI) Ltd, Ballyginniff Site, Loughview Rd, Crumlin, Co Antrim BT29 4EE	23 June 2004	17 Nov 2004 re-issued 4 Jul 2006	Certificate re-issued due to change of ownership from Scott (Toomebridge) Ltd to Northstone (NI) Ltd.
139	Northstone (NI) Ltd, Hutchinson's Site, Creagh Rd, Toomebridge,Co Antrim BT41 3SD	23 June 2004	17 Nov 2004 re-issued 4 Jul 2006	Certificate re-issued due to change of ownership from Scott (Toomebridge) Ltd to Northstone (NI) Ltd.

Lough Neagh Special Protection Area: Lignite

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 32561/11-15, whether his Department is aware of, has received any reports on, any evidence of lignite being disturbed from the bed of Lough Neagh Special Protection Area as part of the process of unregulated sand extraction.

(AQW 33482/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is not aware of any lignite being disturbed from the bed of the Lough Neagh Special Protection Area.

Habitats Regulations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 30253/11-15, to specify the concerns relating to the Habitats Regulations; and why he has not yet made his announcement.
(AQW 33483/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of the concerns previously raised by the member in relation to the review of extant planning permissions as required by the Habitats Directive and associated guidance.

I can confirm that I have instructed officials to produce updated advice and guidance for staff on the Habitats Regulations and a training programme will also be delivered as part of Capacity Building for Reform/Transfer.

In addition, in the light of the Mills report and ongoing work within the Department, I have established a Minerals Working Group (MWG) comprising relevant officials from Planning and NIEA, including the Environmental Crime Unit, to consider issues such as:

- legacy and systemic issues, including the Department's approach to enforcement of minerals related cases;
- resource and structural issues including how Minerals cases should be dealt with post transfer of planning functions in 2015;
- co-ordination and working relationships within relevant parts of the Department and with key stakeholders
- putting the correct structure, resources and procedures in place to ensure compliance with obligations under European Environmental Directives.

The MWG will produce a draft Action Plan to address these issues for my consideration and I will make an announcement in due course. Further to my previous answer (AQW 29460/11-15) it is my intention that this Action Plan will include the review of extant permissions on a phased basis.

Single Tier Taxi Proposals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment how many reports have been carried out into the draft proposals related to the single tier taxi proposals; and to detail (i) the name and date of each report, including whether they were compiled by his Department or independently; and (ii) the cost, or estimated cost, of each report.

(AQW 33508/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has not compiled any reports on its proposals for a single tier taxi licensing system except those compiled as a part of the normal policy development process, regarding which I would refer the member to my answers to AQWs 32974/11-15 and 33194/11-15. My Department has not commissioned any external reports on this matter.

Comparative Study of Taxi Regulation in Europe

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the Comparative Study of Taxi Regulation in Europe which found that of the thirteen European countries examined who had adopted the Single Tier System, the majority have reverted to the original system.

(AQW 33509/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My officials have studied this report. The report concludes that the taxi industry, and its regulation, varies significantly between countries. The conclusion states that those countries which have introduced total deregulation have reintroduced some measure of regulation; and that current regulatory trends are towards quality requirements rather than quantity regulations.

These moves are completely in line with my approach, under the Taxis Act 2008, where the proposed regulatory regime focuses on key aspects such as driver testing and training, and consumer protection measures such as maximum fares, and meters and receipt printers.

The provisions in the Act have been the subject of considerable review and consideration dating back to the 2002 Taxi Review, which informed the original 2005 Proposals for Public Consultation that ultimately led to the Taxis Act. This included consideration of the experience of how taxis are regulated in other jurisdictions, particularly in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Netherlands. This helped ensure that the policy proposals consulted upon were evidence-based, focused on outcomes, forward-looking and joined-up and that they met Northern Ireland's requirements.

The responses to the 2005 consultation indicated that the two tier system in Belfast worked poorly in practice and was unsustainable: the tiers overlapped and there was confusion amongst the public, making the system difficult to enforce.

Since then, the Department's policy position in relation to single tier has consistently been supported by clear majorities in public consultations (most recently by 84% in the 2011 consultation) and by the Consumer Council, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and Disability Action.

Single tier licensing will support and consolidate taxi operator licensing, which was introduced on 1 September 2012. Moving to a one tier system will mean that consumers will find increased availability of taxis to use, offer them greater choice in which taxis they can choose to use and help to reduce confusion around what activities classes of taxis are permitted to undertake. It will also enable DVA to take more effective enforcement against illegal taxi activities which is an issue those in the taxi industry as a whole are very concerned about.

The regime being implemented therefore appears to me to align with the trends being reported internationally, whilst being closely based on what is right for this jurisdiction.

Public Service Vehicles (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1985

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 33317/11-15, whether the line in Regulation 49 of the Public Service Vehicles (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1985 which states that any person to be carried for hire in the vehicle refers to any and all vehicles and not just that of the driver in question.

(AQW 33599/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Further to my answer to AQW 33317/11-15 and for the avoidance of any doubt, I can confirm that regulation 49 (Touting) of the Public Service Vehicles Regulations (NI) 1985, which is a public domain document, provides that:

"A person employed as driver of a vehicle shall not by touting, calling out or otherwise, importune any person to be carried for hire in the vehicle."

Definition of an Active Farm: Planning Applications

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the definition of an active farm used by Planning NI when considering planning applications.

(AQW 33611/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Policy CTY10 of Planning Policy Statement 21: 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' permits a dwelling on a farm subject to a number of criteria, including that the farm business is currently active and has been established for at least six years. The policy contains a definition of 'agricultural activity' which is 'the production, rearing or growing of agricultural products including harvesting, milking, breeding animals and keeping animals for farming purposes or maintaining the land in good agricultural and environmental condition'.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Equal Pay Claims

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the outstanding PSNI, and other staff, equal pay claims.

(AQW 29153/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): You are aware that there is no legal liability within the PSNI, or the NIO, in the way in which there was an equal pay liability in the NICS that gave rise to the settlement. However, mindful of the strength of feelings that exists in relation to this matter, I have explored ways in which the moral argument that has been raised could be recognised in some way. I have recently circulated a paper to my Executive colleagues outlining a recommendation that will result, I hope, in a satisfactory resolution of the issue for this group of staff. The recommendation, and any expenditure of resources, will require the agreement of the Executive.

Equal Pay Claims

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when a decision will be made regarding outstanding equal pay claims of PSNI and other staff.

(AQW 33246/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I refer you to my response provided to AQW 29153/11-15 also asked by you, which provides an update on this matter.

Accessing Pension Funds

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an assessment of (i) the Chancellor's planned changes to over 55 year olds accessing the funds in their pensions; and (ii) how this may affect the local economy.

(AQW 33288/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The proposed change to enable over 55s to access their pension funds is a matter for HM Treasury.

Vacant Posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) location; and (ii) number of vacant posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service at (a) Administrative Assistant; (b) Administrative Officer; (c) Executive Officer II; (d) Executive Officer I; (e) Staff Officer; and (f) Deputy Principal grades, in each Government Department.

(AQW 33389/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The information requested is set out in the following table.

AQW 33389/11 - Location & Number of Vacant Posts in the NICS at AA, AO, E01, E02, E01, SO & DP at 13 May 2014 ***

	AA	Location	AO	Location	E01I	Location	E01	Location	SO	Location	DP	Location	
DARD	3	1 Coleraine		1 Antrim		1 Armagh		1 Londonderry		1 Newry		2 Belfast	
		2 Stormont	2	1 Stormont	5	1 Londonderry	10	1 Omagh	5	4 Stormont	7	5 Stormont	
DCAL	0		0		1	Belfast	0.85	Belfast	1	Belfast	2	Belfast	
DE	2	Bangor	2	1 Bangor	2	Londonderry	2	Bangor	0		1	Bangor	
				1 Londonderry									
*DEL	0.5	Belfast		1 Antrim		2 Antrim		1 Ballymena		16 Belfast		Belfast	
				6 Belfast		1 Armagh		20.6 Belfast		1 Enniskillen			
				1 Cookstown		1.64 Ballymoney		1 Dungannon		1 Larne			
				1 Lisburn		2 Banbridge		0.6		1 Newtownabbey			
				1 Londonderry	11	19.8 Belfast	24.85	0.65				10	
				1 Omagh		2 Dungannon		Magherafelt					
						1 Enniskillen		1					
						1 Limavady		Newtownards					
						1 Newtownabbey							
DETI	2	Belfast	1	Belfast	4	3 Belfast	0		2	Stormont	1	Stormont	
				1 Stormont		1 Stormont							
DFP	2	Belfast		Belfast		1 Bangor		Belfast		6 Belfast		1 Bangor	
					10	1 Ballymena	6			1 Londonderry	5	4 Belfast	
				18		7 Belfast							
						1 Londonderry							
DHSSPS	1	Stormont	1	Stormont	1	Stormont	1	Stormont	1	Stormont	1	Stormont	

	AA	Location	AO	Location	E01I	Location	E01	Location	SO	Location	DP	Location
DOE	3	1 Ballymena	12.9	0.5 Ballymena	12	1 Ballymena	6	2 Belfast	19	18 Belfast	5	Belfast
		1 Belfast		7.8 Belfast		3 Belfast		1 Coleraine				
		1 Lisburn		2 Coleraine		7 Coleraine						
				2 Craigavon		1 Eastern Region						
		0.6 Londonderry										
DOJ	0		2	1 Belfast	0		2	Stormont	4	1 Antrim	1	Stormont
				1 Londonderry				2 Belfast				
								1 Londonderry				
DRD	1	1 Belfast	1.5	1 Enniskillen	3	2 Belfast	4	Belfast	6	4 Belfast	1	Belfast
				0.5 Ballymena		1 Downpatrick		2 Craigavon				
				#3 Belfast		Omagh		Belfast				
*DSD	0		5	*1 Londonderry	1		4		4		2	1 Banbridge
				*1 Omagh						1 Belfast		
*OFMDFM	0		0		0			1 Belfast	1	Belfast	1	Belfast
PPS	0		9	5 Belfast	8	7 Belfast	0		0		0	
				3 Foyle		1 Newry						
				1 Lisburn								
Total	14.5		65.4		78.44			61.7	69.0		37.0	
Total Vacancies							326.04					

Notes

- * **DEL** 13.1 of the vacancies listed (0.5 AA, 3 AO, 3 EO2, 2.6 E01, 3 SO and 1 DP) are currently on hold awaiting the outcome of staffing reviews.
- * **DSD** *Administrative Officer post which is time-bound due to the Reform of Local Government.
- # One of these Administrative Officer posts is time-bound within Child Maintenance Service
- * **OFMDFM** The vacancies listed are those in the general service grades that the Department is actively seeking to fill at 13 May 2014. Two of the vacancies listed are due to be filled on 19th May.

HGV Road Users Levy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel who has local responsibility for the enforcement and collection of the HGV Road Users Levy.

(AQW 33399/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The HGV Road User Levy was introduced by the Department of Transport who are responsible for making the necessary arrangements for its enforcement and collection. My Department has no responsibility in this regard.

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what evaluation his Department has made regarding value for money of funding of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCOTENS); and the decision to further renew its funding by the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning.

(AQW 33403/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department has not made any evaluation regarding the funding of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South, nor on the decisions of other departments to renew funding for it. My Department would not engage in decisions of this nature and scale unless they were the subject of a bid for additional funding to it, or if it deemed the funding to be novel or contentious.

Cycle to Work Scheme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the procurement method used to appoint contractors to supply bicycles to employees under the Cycle to Work scheme.

(AQW 33495/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There was no procurement involved in the NICS Cycle to Work scheme. The NICS does not appoint contractors to supply bicycles to employees for the Cycle to Work scheme: staff can select the cycle and qualifying equipment from any cycle retailer – provided the retailer can furnish a written quotation and invoice.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Beechlea Care Home, Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether issues surrounding the school attendance rates of children resident in Beechlea care home, Enniskillen have been identified; and what action has been taken to increase their attendance rates.

(AQW 33392/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I have been assured by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that the education of all looked after children is a priority for the Trust.

Arrangements for the promotion of the education of children accommodated within Beechlea children's home are set out in its Statement of Purpose and Function and will be dependent on the needs of each young person. As part of the pathway planning process, the education of each young person is discussed and agreed at the first planning meeting and subsequent review meetings. In addition, every looked after child is required to have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which establishes effective recording and reporting practices and is a transferable account of the young person's needs, support and progress in education.

Residential staff, and key workers in particular, liaise closely with schools through the appointed looked after children support teacher and with Education & Welfare officers or home tutors to monitor the young person's progress and try to resolve any difficulties that occur.

Finally, by way of the Adoption and Children Bill due to be introduced in the Assembly next year, it is proposed to amend the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 to include a specific duty to promote the educational achievement of all looked-after children.

Specialist Clinics on Skin Disease Complaints

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses are qualified to take specialist clinics on skin disease complaints.

(AQW 33414/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of nurses qualified to take specialist clinics on skin disease is not held by the Department, therefore the figures below have been provided directly by Health and Social Care Trusts.

Health and Social Care Trust	No. of Nurses Qualified (Headcount)
Southern	18*
South Eastern	2
Western	2
Northern	3
Belfast	3.46 (whole time equivalent)

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

* 18 staff nurses participate in nurse led Dermatology clinics with varied autonomy

Whilst the number of nurses qualified to take specialist clinics varies across the region, Nurses can also build up experience in Skin Disease through the course of their daily duties.

Specialist Treatment of Skin Diseases

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses are being trained for specialist treatment of skin diseases.

(AQW 33416/11-15)

Mr Poots: Across the region a number of nurses have already completed the Queens University Short course in dermatology and the Nurse Prescribing course. There are currently no nurses in training for specialist treatment of skin diseases.

Specialist Skin Disease Nurses

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision is in place to cover specialist skin disease nurses when they are absent from work.

(AQW 33418/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts employ a range of measures to ensure continuity of service as far as practically possible. Measures include:-

- Staff rotating across the specialty
- Teams adjust their work patterns to absorb elements of the work of an absent colleague

It is recognised, however, that in some cases when dermatology clinical nurse specialists are absent from the workplace, cover cannot be provided, as a workforce with the skills and competencies to practise at this level is not readily available to recruit for temporary work.

The Health and Social Care Board is supporting the ongoing expansion of services and, through Local Commissioning Groups, are working with the Trusts to reduce ongoing reliance on waiting list initiatives and create a more sustainable service for the longer term.

Health and Social Care Payroll Functions

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 33079/11-15, AQW 33008/11-15 and AQW 33007/11-15, to detail the additional costs incurred on the further expert support for the Health and Social Care payroll functions.

(AQW 33422/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department approved further expert support in April 2014 amounting to £123,600 for the HSC payroll functions over the coming months. This will provide additional resource to help with the familiarisation of the new HRPTS system and will also help payroll staff and managers develop solutions to a number of technical issues.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the introduction of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership would have on the ability of local commissioning groups to resist legal challenges from US health companies in the event of a contractual dispute.

(AQW 33461/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a trade agreement that is presently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. Negotiations began in July 2013 with the fifth round of talks taking place in Arlington, Virginia, from 19-23 May 2014.

The potential agreement aims at removing trade barriers in a wide range of economic sectors to make it easier to buy and sell goods and services between the EU and the US.

The EU's objective and approach is to preserve the right of member states to choose whether or not to open markets or sectors, as they see fit. The UK's aim in relation to health services in TTIP negotiations, is to maintain commitments that are broadly in line with existing obligations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, 1995. To work or operate here, any overseas healthcare professionals and healthcare companies would have to comply with UK standards and regulations in just the same way as UK healthcare providers. The UK position is also that TTIP will not affect the position that it is for local NHS commissioners to take decisions on which providers should deliver services in the best interests of their patients.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken to make the Health Service exempt from the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

(AQW 33462/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a trade agreement that is presently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. Negotiations began in July 2013 with the fifth round of talks taking place in Arlington, Virginia, from 19-23 May 2014.

The potential agreement aims at removing trade barriers in a wide range of economic sectors to make it easier to buy and sell goods and services between the EU and the US.

The EU's objective and approach is to preserve the right of member states to choose whether or not to open markets or sectors, as they see fit. The UK's aim in relation to health services in TTIP

negotiations, is to maintain commitments that are broadly in line with existing obligations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, 1995. To work or operate here, any overseas healthcare professionals and healthcare companies would have to comply with UK standards and regulations in just the same way as UK healthcare providers. The UK position is also that TTIP will not affect the position that it is for local NHS commissioners to take decisions on which providers should deliver services in the best interests of their patients.

IVF and ICSI Fertility Treatment

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when Health Service IVF and ICSI fertility treatment will be brought into line with UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance.

(AQW 33487/11-15)

Mr Poots: In February 2013 the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a Clinical Guideline (CG156) on Fertility. The Guideline was considered and endorsed by my Department in November 2013, and it is now the responsibility of the HSC Board, as commissioner of services, to set out its approach to implementing the guidance within the context of currently available resources and other HSC priorities.

Full implementation of the Guideline is expected to have significant financial implications and the Board is unable to give definitive plans for implementation until my Department's budget allocations for 2014/15 are finalised.

GPs: Weekly Hours

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what weekly hours GPs are expected to fulfil on a full-time basis.

(AQW 33488/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the terms of the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract the HSCB contracts with GMS Practices, and not with individual GPs, to provide primary medical services to their registered patients during core hours, 8 am to 6.30 pm, Monday to Friday except on public holidays and local holidays that have been agreed with the HSCB.

The GMS contract does not stipulate the number of hours that should be worked by individual GPs. The majority of GPs in Northern Ireland are party to a GMS Contract and self-employed.

Some GP Practices employ salaried GPs and a salaried full-time GP will generally be contracted to work for 37½ hours per working week.

Return of Medicines

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 33109/11-15, to detail the estimated annual cost to the Health Service.

(AQW 33511/11-15)

Mr Poots: The exact value of medicines returned to community pharmacies in Northern Ireland is currently not measured nor is there any requirement for such information to be collected. However, based on research undertaken in England it is estimated that the overall level of medicines waste, which would include medicines returned unused to pharmacies, is around £18million per annum.

Survival Rates: Pancreatic Cancer

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) one; and (ii) five year survival rates for people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in Northern Ireland compares to the rest of the UK.

(AQW 33545/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details one and five year age-standardised relative survival* estimates of patients who were diagnosed with pancreatic cancer (ICD-10 code: C25) in the United Kingdom in the years 2000-2007 and followed up to the end of 2008.

UK country	No of cases	1-year survival		5-year survival	
		(95% confidence interval)		(95% confidence interval)	
England	46,571	19.50%	(19.1% - 19.9%)	4.70%	(4.4% - 5.0%)
Northern Ireland	1,321	15.30%	(13.2% - 17.7%)	3.00%	(1.8% - 5.0%)
Scotland	4,946	17.40%	(16.2% - 18.6%)	3.40%	(2.8% - 4.3%)
Wales	3,149	18.80%	(17.2% - 20.5%)	5.40%	(4.3% - 6.7%)

Source: Eurocare/Northern Ireland Cancer Registry

* Relative survival compares the number of surviving patients in an area to that expected of a population of similar age, gender and region without pancreatic cancer. This removes inaccuracies inherent from deaths due to causes other than pancreatic cancer.

GP Practices: Technology

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions he is taking to ensure that GP practices have access to the latest technology used to diagnose pancreatic cancer. **(AQW 33548/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Pancreatic cancer rarely causes any symptoms when it first develops, which can make it hard to diagnose; the first symptoms can include pain, unexpected weight loss and jaundice.

NICE CG27 Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer were published to help GPs make decisions about when to refer patients to specialist teams.

GPs are advised to make a red flag referral to either an Upper Gastro Intestinal Team or a Hepato-biliary Team if the patient reports the following signs and symptoms:

- Jaundice;
- unexplained abdominal pain and weight loss, with or without back pain (abdominal pain occurs in 70% of cases); and
- upper abdominal mass without dyspepsia.

GPs may order an ultrasound if the patient is jaundiced and will arrange for full blood count and test urine for bile to aid specialist assessment. The blood test is not a diagnostic test but is used for the monitoring of treatment and follow up of pancreatic cancer.

Consultant Community Paediatricians

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the nature of the difficulties in the recruitment of Consultant Community Paediatricians at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 33556/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust advises that it has been actively seeking to fill the roles specified in the question. There were six recruitment competitions held from April 2013 through to February 2014. There was only one Consultant hired through these competitions as the other

applicants either did not meet the criteria/standard required or accepted a position elsewhere. There is a nationally recognised lack of suitably qualified candidates to fulfil paediatric roles that deliver clinics in the community.

Tutors at Rathmoyle Daycare Centre

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the dates in the last six years on which tutors attended Rathmoyle Day Centre; and to detail (i) the cost of each tutorial term; (ii) who paid these costs; and (iii) the colleges who provided the tutors.

(AQW 33560/11-15)

Mr Poots: Tutors have provided one class per week at Rathmoyle Resource Centre since 2007/08 and this continues to date, with the exception of 2012/13 when there were no classes.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust is unable to detail the cost of each tutorial term as these costs are paid by the Northern Regional College, who also provide the tutors at the Day Centre.

Further Education Courses at the Base, Ballynahinch

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the dates in the last six years when tutors from further education colleges ran courses in the Base, Ballycastle; and to detail the (i) cost of the courses; (ii) the content of the courses; and (iii) the number of people who attended the courses.

(AQW 33562/11-15)

Mr Poots: The only course to take place at the Base, Ballycastle in the last six years was a ten week computer course in 2013. Ten clients attended the ten week computer course.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust is unable to detail the cost of each course as costs are paid by the Northern Regional College.

Emergency Eye Clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) average; and (ii) longest waiting time at the emergency eye clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital since the beginning of 2014; and what action is being taken to improve waiting times.

(AQW 33565/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Eye Casualty at the Royal Victoria Hospital provides a service for patients who require emergency or urgent eye care. It is a walk-in emergency service; patients can be referred by their GP, optometrist or can self-refer. Waiting times vary depending on the number of patients attending the department at any one time and on the number of priority cases being dealt with.

Information is not currently available on waiting times at the Eye Casualty in the Royal Victoria Hospital. The Belfast Trust is in the process of purchasing a new software system for the Eye Casualty which is similar to that used within the main emergency departments to facilitate the timing and/or recording of waiting times. However, on average 50 to 60 patients a day attend the Eye Casualty, Monday to Friday and 15 to 20 patients on Saturday and Sunday. The service aims to triage these patients within 30 minutes, and see and treat within 4 hours; however this is not always possible.

The Belfast Trust has advised that it is working on a number of projects to modernise and reform emergency eye care services such as optometry-led services, increasing the number of specialist nurses and providing similar services at key locations across Northern Ireland for patients who need to be assessed but not necessarily within the acute eye casualty setting.

Emergency Eye Clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many consultants are employed at the emergency eye clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 33566/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Trust has advised that their Eye Casualty service is delivered by permanent nursing staff, along with approximately 20 medical staff working on a rotational and shift basis. There are 32 (26.0 WTE) Consultant Ophthalmologists who work within the main Ophthalmology Department, who provide on-call support to the service when required. Clinical leadership for Eye Casualty is provided by one of these consultants.

Health and Social Care Trust Employee Numbers

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) Chief Executives; (ii) Deputy Chief Executives; (iii) Directors; (iv) Deputy Directors; (v) other managerial roles; and (vi) the number of employees, in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 33578/11-15)

Mr Poots: The senior management structure of each Trust and details of Directorates can be found on their respective websites on the 'About Trust' web pages:

- <http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net>
- <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net>
- <http://www.setrust.hscni.net>
- <http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net>
- <http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net>
- <http://www.niamb.co.uk>

In addition, a Chief Executive has now been appointed to the Northern Trust who will take up post in August 2014.

(vi) **Staff in Post¹ by HSC Trust as at 31st December 2013**

HSC Trust	Headcount of Posts	Whole-time Equivalent (WTE)
Belfast	19,682	16,972.8
Northern	10,698	9,005.3
South Eastern	9,090	7,722.0
Southern	9,260	7,818.7
Western	9,503	8,400.1
NI Ambulance Service	1,185	1,162.4

Source: Human Resources Management System / Human Resources, Payroll, Travel & Subsistence System.

1 Figures exclude bank staff, home helps, staff with a WTE less than or equal to 0.03, staff on career breaks and members of Boards/Chairperson.

Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the post of Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service will be vacant; and to outline the procedure for filling this post.

(AQW 33581/11-15)

Mr Poots: The current Chair of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) has indicated his wish to step down but has also agreed to remain in post until his replacement is appointed.

The position is being filled using the Department's established Public Appointment procedures. This position has been advertised and interviews are scheduled to take place in June 2014. It is anticipated that the appointment of the new Chair will be made in August 2014.

Children in Care

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children in care in each of the last five years.

(AQW 33585/11-15)

Mr Poots: Table 1 below details the number of children in care in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

Table 1: Children in Care in Northern Ireland at 31 March (2009 – 2013)

Year	No. of Children in Care
2009	2,463
2010	2,606
2011	2,511
2012	2,644
2013	2,807

Source: Children Order Return LA1 2009 – 2010, Health and Social Care Board Corporate Parenting Returns 2011 - 2013

These figures are published in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2012/13' which can be found on the Department's website at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

Department of Justice

Reductions in Legal Aid Budgets

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice to outline the rationale for the cuts made to the Legal Aid budget for solicitors compared to the cuts to the Legal Aid budget for barristers.

(AQW 33536/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Through the access to justice reform programme, I am aiming to create an effective, sustainable, affordable and accessible legal aid system. The current proposals for reform of Legal Aid are about ensuring that the people who need help, receive levels of advice and representation that are appropriate and affordable. I have not made cuts to the budget, but looked at the fees which are being paid from the legal aid budget. In applying the value for money test, I take into consideration the position in other jurisdictions, especially England and Wales, and this has informed my recent proposals for reform of Crown Court remuneration.

Cost of Legal Trial

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, following the trial of a number of people in connection with the death of Kevin McDaid in Coleraine in 2009, to detail the total cost of the preparation and trial from May 2009 to date.

(AQW 33550/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the estimated costs to date of the case as at 22 May 2014.

Cost Type	Estimated Cost
(i) Legal Aid ¹	£115,606
(ii) Prosecution ²	£27,704
(iii) Court (Judiciary and staff costs)	£24,921
(iv) Facilities (e.g. courtroom accommodation)	£5,606
Total	£173,837

- 1 Legal aid costs to date include fees and disbursements paid to legal representatives for proceedings in the Magistrates' Court. A number of Magistrates' Court costs have yet to be received or assessed. No claims have been submitted in respect of Crown Court proceedings.
- 2 The total Public Prosecution Service cost is not yet available. An estimate of costs for counsel and witnesses to date has been provided.

Dungannon Courthouse: Security Bollard

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the incident in which a security bollard damaged a car at Dungannon courthouse and clarify (i) when the device was fitted; (ii) when it became operational; (iii) what staff training was supplied in the use of the device; (iv) how long after the device became operational the failing occurred; (v) whether any other incidents occurred prior to this; and if so, to provide further details; and (vi) whether this particular device remains operational in this location.

(AQW 33552/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 11 March 2014 a car was entering Dungannon Courthouse precincts when a bollard dislodged from its casing and rose from the ground causing damage to the underside of a car. An investigation is on-going to establish whether human error or a malfunction of the bollard mechanism occurred.

A range of static and gas bollards were installed at Dungannon Courthouse in August 2012 and became operational in January 2013.

Following installation, staff from G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Limited received on-site training from the bollard supplier on 22 November 2012. Further training was provided in February 2013. In addition, bollard operation manuals were provided to all G4S staff at courthouses.

The incident referred to occurred 14 months after the bollards became operational. No other incidents of this type have occurred at Dungannon Courthouse. The bollard was damaged during the incident; it was repaired on 9 April 2014 and is currently operational.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 33102/11-15, how many of the Anti-Social Behaviour Orders relate to (i) youth; and (ii) adult courts.

(AQW 33559/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made during the calendar years 2009 to 2013, split by Court Division and Tier, are presented in Tables 1 to 5.

Table 1: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made during 2009

Court Division	No. of ASBOs made in Crown Court¹	No. of ASBOs made in Adult Magistrates' Court	No. of ASBOs made in Youth Magistrates' Court	Total no. of ASBOs made
Belfast	0	4	5	9
Londonderry	0	0	0	0
Antrim	0	6	3	9
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	0	0	0
Armagh and South Down	0	2	0	2
Ards	0	3	3	6
Craigavon	0	3	0	3
Total	0	18	11	29

Table 2: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made during 2010

Court Division	No. of ASBOs made in Crown Court¹	No. of ASBOs made in Adult Magistrates' Court	No. of ASBOs made in Youth Magistrates' Court	Total no. of ASBOs made
Belfast	0	1	6	7
Londonderry	0	0	0	0
Antrim	0	4	4	8
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	2	0	2
Armagh and South Down	1	2	0	3
Ards	0	3	3	6
Craigavon	0	0	0	0
Total	1	12	13	26

Table 3: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made during 2011

Court Division	No. of ASBOs made in Crown Court¹	No. of ASBOs made in Adult Magistrates' Court	No. of ASBOs made in Youth Magistrates' Court	Total no. of ASBOs made
Belfast	0	7	6	13
Londonderry	0	0	0	0
Antrim	0	1	1	2
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	0	0	0
Armagh and South Down	0	2	0	2
Ards	0	0	0	0

Court Division	No. of ASBOs made in Crown Court¹	No. of ASBOs made in Adult Magistrates' Court	No. of ASBOs made in Youth Magistrates' Court	Total no. of ASBOs made
Craigavon	1	0	0	1
Total	1	10	7	18

Table 4: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made during 2012

Court Division	No. of ASBOs made in Crown Court¹	No. of ASBOs made in Adult Magistrates' Court	No. of ASBOs made in Youth Magistrates' Court	Total no. of ASBOs made
Belfast	0	2	2	4
Londonderry	0	0	0	0
Antrim	2	1	2	5
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	0	0	0
Armagh and South Down	0	0	0	0
Ards	0	1	2	3
Craigavon	0	0	0	0
Total	2	4	6	12

Table 5: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made during 2013P

Court Division	No. of ASBOs made in Crown Court¹	No. of ASBOs made in Adult Magistrates' Court	No. of ASBOs made in Youth Magistrates' Court	Total no. of ASBOs made
Belfast	0	3	1	4
Londonderry	0	1	0	1
Antrim	0	1	0	1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	0	0	0
Armagh and South Down	0	0	0	0
Ards	1	0	1	2
Craigavon	0	2	1	3
Total	1	7	3	11

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

PData are currently provisional and may be subject to change

- 1 All Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made at the Crown Court during the period 2009 to 2013 related to adult defendants.

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what payments are made to people or agencies who engage with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland to place offenders carrying out community service.

(AQW 33561/11-15)

Mr Ford: Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) allocate grant funding to a range of voluntary and charitable organisations that provide services for adjudicated offenders including community service placements. During 2013-2014 PBNI provided grants to 35 local organisations who provide community service placements at a cost of £188,424.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 33102/11-15 and in relation to the 2010 statistics for Fermanagh and Tyrone, to detail the courts within the division that issued the two Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

(AQW 33569/11-15)

Mr Ford: The two Anti-Social Behaviour Orders made in Fermanagh and Tyrone court division in 2010 were made at Omagh court office.

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

Cost of Legal Trial

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost of the Kevin McDaid trial.

(AQW 33570/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the estimated cost of this case as at 22 May 2014.

Cost Type	Estimated Cost
(v) Legal Aid ¹	£115,606
(vi) Prosecution ²	£27,704
(vii) Court (Judiciary and staff costs)	£24,921
(viii) Facilities (e.g. courtroom accommodation)	£5,606
Total	£173,837

- 1 Legal aid costs to date include fees and disbursements paid to legal representatives for proceedings in the Magistrates' Court. A number of Magistrates' Court costs have yet to be received or assessed. No claims have been submitted in respect of Crown Court proceedings.
- 2 The total Public Prosecution Service cost is not yet available. An estimate of costs for counsel and witnesses to date has been provided.

Disability Audits

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQO 6165/11-15, to detail who completes the disability audits on behalf of the Courts and Tribunal Service.

(AQW 33601/11-15)

Mr Ford: Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in the Department of Finance and Personnel or consultants commissioned by CPD completed the disability audits for the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service.

Northern Ireland Prison Service's Investigation of a Death

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to provide a copy of the report of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's internal investigation following the death in custody of Mr E.

(AQW 33603/11-15)

Mr Ford: The internal investigation refers to a Prisoner Safety and Support Team review which is documented in Section 8 of the Prisoner Ombudsman's report.

Benefit Appeal Tribunals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the courthouses and hearing centres that host Benefit Appeal Tribunals.

(AQW 33604/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Appeals Service currently list appeal hearings at the following venues throughout Northern Ireland.

Name of Venue

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Antrim Courthouse | ■ Cookstown Enterprise Agency |
| ■ Ards Business Centre | ■ Central Library, Derry |
| ■ Ards Courthouse | ■ Down Business Centre, Downpatrick |
| ■ Armagh Business Centre | ■ Downpatrick Courthouse |
| ■ Armagh Courthouse | ■ Dungannon Enterprise Centre |
| ■ Ballybot House, Newry | ■ Enniskillen Business Centre |
| ■ Ballymena Business Development Centre | ■ Hearing Centre, Bedford House, Belfast |
| ■ Ballymena Courthouse | ■ LCDI Advice Centre, Limavady |
| ■ Ballymoney Townhall | ■ Londonderry Courthouse |
| ■ Banbridge Enterprise Centre | ■ Mount Zion House, Lurgan |
| ■ Bangor Signal Centre | ■ Newry Courthouse |
| ■ Belfast Courthouse | ■ Omagh Library |
| ■ Causeway Enterprise Agency, Coleraine | ■ Omagh Courthouse |
| ■ City Hotel, Londonderry | ■ Strabane Enterprise Centre |
| ■ Cleaver House, Belfast | ■ TAS Omagh |
| ■ Coleraine Courthouse | ■ The Millennium Forum, Londonderry |
| ■ Coleraine Townhall | ■ Magherafelt District Council |

Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland's Investigation a Death

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland's investigation into the death in custody of Mr E, specifically page 8 "Nurses felt his concerns about bullying were not a matter for them; and on the basis of information provided by landing staff, they did not consider that Mr E had mental health problems" and given the outcome of this case, for his assessment of whether all new intake and/or first time prisoners should be regarded as vulnerable and treated as such.

(AQW 33629/11-15)

Mr Ford: That was not a recommendation made by the Ombudsman in this case. All prisoners undergo an assessment, including in respect of vulnerability, as part of the committal and induction process. A range of interventions can be taken to support vulnerable prisoners on an individual basis.

Outstanding Court Fines

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, to list the top ten highest outstanding court fines between 2009 and 2013; and of these, to detail the reasons for the fines and the court that handed them down. **(AQW 33631/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The table below details the ten outstanding court fines with the greatest monetary value for the period 2009 to 2013, as at 22 May 2014.

Fine	Offence	Court Venue	Court Tier
£144,500.43	Public Health Nuisance	Belfast	Magistrates
£143,750.43	Public Health Nuisance	Belfast	Magistrates
£100,000.00	Fraud - Abuse of Position	Downpatrick	Crown
£95,000.00	Fraud - Abuse of Position	Downpatrick	Crown
£80,000.00	Corporate Manslaughter	Downpatrick	Crown
£37,750.00	Deception	Antrim	Crown
£31,716.53	Fraud - Abuse of Position	Belfast	Crown
£26,792.52	Fraud - Abuse of Position	Craigavon	Crown
£25,588.50	Planning Regulation	Enniskillen	Magistrates
£23,039.32	Fraud - Abuse of Position	Antrim	Crown

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

Arteriovenous Malformation

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 33308/11-15, whether Arteriovenous Malformation is considered by Prison Service standards as a 'serious medical problem that could be adversely affected by the full search procedure'.

(AQW 33632/11-15)

Mr Ford: Any medical problem or condition that is known or made known will be assessed by a healthcare professional. Any search under force will only be carried out if it is deemed that this will not have an adverse effect on the prisoner's condition.

Cannabis Factory Charges

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people are currently in the court system in connection to cannabis factory charges classed as larger scale cultivation and production or intended production, broken down by court division.

(AQW 33645/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to identify charges relating to cannabis factories or to distinguish between large and small scale cannabis production. However, the following table details the number of defendants currently in the court system charged with cannabis cultivation as at 22 May 2014.

Division	Defendants
Antrim	13
Ards	19
Armagh & South Down	11

Division	Defendants
Belfast	24
Craigavon	11
Fermanagh & Tyrone	7
Londonderry	3
Total	88

Source – Integrated Court Operating System

Department for Regional Development

Cycling Infrastructure in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on cycling infrastructure in North Down in each of the last five years.

(AQW 32235/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Details of my Department's expenditure on cycling measures in the North Down District Council area are only available for financial years 2009/10 to 2012/13 and are set out in the table below:

Financial Year	Spend on Cycling Measures in North Down (£)
2009/10	27,709
2010/11	5,000
2011/12	0
2012/13	112

Street Lighting

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 32668/11-15, how many of the fourteen requests were met and put in place (a) in full; or (b) partially.

(AQW 33097/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Of the 5 requests received by my Department in 2013, I can confirm that none have yet been implemented.

Upgrading of Roads and Lanes

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the funding available to upgrade roads/lanes to an adoptable standard.

(AQW 33260/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department generally adopts roads and streets that have been provided following the exercise of street planning functions under Article 3(1) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, and in accordance with an agreement under Article 32 of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980. Most typically, these are housing development roads where the developer has funded the full cost of constructing the roads infrastructure to an adoptable standard.

In the case of roads which were not determined for adoption, for example, private roads and lanes, my Department does not have any funding available to upgrade such roads and lanes to an adoptable standard.

A scoping study in 2011 found that there are over 620 kilometres of unadopted rural roads in Northern Ireland which serve five or more dwellings, and the cost of bringing these roads up to current standards for adoption was estimated to be in the region of £300 million. This estimate was based on rates for road construction, but actual costs would depend on the specific requirements for road geometry, width, construction depth, drainage, etc as appropriate to each location. The estimated cost did not include for items such as land purchase, structures, embankments, utility works, consultancy fees, etc.

Due to the prohibitive costs, it would not be feasible for my Department to take on the responsibility for upgrading the many hundreds of kilometres of unadopted roads and lanes in Northern Ireland to an adoptable standard.

While my Department does not have responsibility for private roads which were not pre-determined for adoption at the planning approval stage, under Article 9 of the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980, it is possible for owners or occupiers to offer such roads for adoption, if they are brought up to the appropriate standards. Article 9 of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 allows my Department to consider a private road for adoption where:

- the majority of the owners and/or frontagers so request it;
- the Department is of the opinion that the street, or part of the street, should become a public road; and
- the road is first brought up to the required standard at the expense of the owners and/or frontagers.

Election Posters: Roads Service

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development why election posters were removed by Roads Service from a lamp post at the junction of Whinney Hill and Ballymiscaw Road, Holywood on 8 May 2014. **(AQW 33395/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Unfortunately an error of judgment was made by officials, which resulted in the removal of two posters to facilitate the erection of diversionary route signage relating to the Giro d'Italia cycling event.

When you first raised the matter with local officials, steps were taken to have the posters re-erected.

I apologise to the Member and his party for any offence or inconvenience caused by this action.

Flood Storage Capacity

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29942/11-15, given that the illegal landfill site at Mabuoy Road is co-terminus with the lands where his Department intends to create the flood storage capacity by depositing vast quantities of surplus materials from the construction of the A6 dual carriageway, whether the installation of the "appropriately engineered" but as yet unknown measures referred to will require an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Habitats Regulation Assessment. **(AQW 33415/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware from my response to his previous question regarding this issue, that if the illegal landfill is still present when the road is being constructed, I am content the installation of appropriately engineered measures to contain the illegal waste would ensure the compensatory floodplain could be constructed as planned. An Environmental Impact Assessment and reconsideration of the Statement to Inform the Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment would be necessary if the illegal waste is still present when the road is being constructed.

Lough Neagh Special Protection Area: Mineral Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) whether his Department has awarded any contracts to the operators of the unregulated mineral extraction taking place from Lough Neagh Special Protection Area; and (ii) whether he is aware of lignite having been present in aggregates provided to, or having been used in, works commissioned by his Department, including the detail of any problems that have arisen.

(AQW 33417/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is not aware of any contracts being awarded to operators of unregulated mineral extraction from Lough Neagh Special Protection Area.

In addition, my Department has no record of lignite being present within aggregates provided for or incorporated within our works schemes.

Car Parking in Holywood, Co. Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are being taken to improve car parking in Holywood, Co. Down.

(AQW 33423/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department commissioned an extensive parking study for Holywood in early 2012 to survey parking patterns and occupancy throughout the town centre. It was acknowledged that on-street parking provision is popular and well used, but is adequately controlled by regular enforcement of the limited waiting areas. This helps promote a good turnover of short stay parking which benefits local shops and businesses. There are also a number of charged off-street car parks under my Department's control within a reasonable walking distance from the commercial centre of Holywood, and these have capacity to meet the daily parking demands for the town.

You will be aware that, as part of the Review of Public Administration, responsibilities for off-street car parking are moving to local Councils from 1 April 2015. You may wish to pursue this issue with the new North Down & Ards Council at that time if you feel it would be beneficial. However, in the interim period I have asked officials to keep this issue under review.

Portavoe Reservoir: Avian Botulism

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether cases of avian botulism have been confirmed in any dead birds found in the area of Portavoe Reservoir; and if so, to detail (i) what action has been taken to prevent any further spread of this disease; and (ii) what investigations will take place to ascertain the source of the disease.

(AQW 33452/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are no confirmed reports of avian botulism in any dead birds found in the area of Portavoe Reservoir. NI Water is working with other Departments to attempt to establish the reason for the deaths and should any further dead birds be found that are in an acceptable condition for analysis, they will be removed and efforts made to determine the cause of death.

Metro Service 96

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, given that Metro Service 96 which connects Belfast city centre to the ferry terminals at West Bank Road operates between 06:31 and 18:26, and that ferries continue to sail at 21:45, 23:30 and 01:45, what consideration has been given to improving the public transport provision to meet arrivals and departures.

(AQW 33496/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink currently operates the Metro 96 service between the Stena terminal and Belfast city centre (Upper Queen Street), which links with ferry arrival times from Cairnryan. Services depart 30 minutes after the vessel's scheduled arrival time. This also allows Translink to provide a public transport service to cater for workers based in the Westbank / Duncrue areas.

Translink has advised me that it is currently in discussions with Stena about the introduction of a bespoke contracted service designed to meet with their sailings. These discussions are on-going. As part of these discussions Stena has requested that the service is designed to meet with all sailings with the exception of the last 2 late night/early morning services (23:30 and 03:30).

Risk of Flooding in Mourneview, Newcastle, Co. Down

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on his Department's recent work to alleviate the risk of flooding in Mourneview, Newcastle, Co. Down.

(AQW 33497/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NI Water has received the initial draft report on the feasibility study from its consultants on the drainage situation within the Mourneview Estate. The report has been reviewed and a number of queries have arisen which need to be addressed. These include the need for NI Water to consult with Roads Service as there are potentially multiple sources for the flooding.

NI Water has advised that a finalised report is expected to be available by the end of May 2014, and solutions to the flooding will be developed as quickly as possible thereafter.

Extraordinary Traffic

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department is aware of and has read the study published in the Journal of Infrastructure Systems "Estimating the Consumptive Use Costs of Shale Natural Gas Extraction on Pennsylvania Roadways"; and for his assessment of the report.

(AQW 33544/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department was not previously aware of the study which you have highlighted and I thank you for drawing it to our attention.

However, broadly speaking, the study deals with the damage caused to the road network by extraordinary traffic. Article 11 of the Roads Order 1993 makes provision for my Department to recover any additional expenses incurred in maintaining a road as a result of excessive weight or other extraordinary traffic. The application of such powers and the question of what constitutes extraordinary traffic is one of fact to be determined in each case.

Department for Social Development

Housing Executive: Boilers

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 31337/11-15 and AQW 32643/11-15, what checks and balances the Housing Executive has to ensure that works carried out on boilers are completed as stated by the contractor and that any money paid is for work that has been proven to have been completed.

(AQW 33328/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has advised that as part of their Governance Procedures they select a sample for post inspection of servicing and responsive repairs. The Housing Executive's inspectors are fully trained to OFTEC and Gas Safe standards, allowing them to carry out detailed and invasive checks to ensure that works comply fully with their specification.

The Housing Executive has further advised that contractor's invoices are based on a tendered single rate for the appliances concerned, some of which are automatically paid. The others are subject to verification that the sampled post inspected works have proven satisfactory. A further tier of assurance is provided by the Housing Executive's Corporate Assurance Unit who carry out further real time checks on both workmanship and the quality of materials.

Financial Assistance for Tenants

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive provides financial assistance for tenants who require CCTV for their homes following attacks on their property.

(AQW 33382/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they partner fund the 4 tier scheme along with the PSNI. This is for home safety projects which have provision for visual door monitoring equipment to be installed for victims of crime.

The Housing Executive also administers the HIPA scheme (Hate Incident Practical Action) on behalf of the Department of Justice. This scheme provides enhanced security measures to private and NIHE homes after a property has been attacked and Police Service NI (PSNI) has determined the attack was a hate crime. Works are carried out as recommended by PSNI and in some instances the security assessment recommends CCTV which is then fitted by NIHE. However, practices to date have involved the provision of CCTV from PSNI's own supplies (they have purchased a number of CCTV cameras for this purpose). On the request of HIPA works (which includes CCTV provision) NIHE fits the PSNI equipment to the relevant properties.

There is also the Sanctuary Scheme which is a victim-centered initiative to assist those who have suffered serious domestic violence and which aims to prevent homelessness for such victims who live in NIHE properties. It can involve the creation of a "sanctuary room" – a safe room – where the victim can call and wait for the arrival of the police. Other work includes door and window security and provision of fire safety equipment. However, the provision of 'sanctuary' in properties with multiple tenancy occupation (e.g. flats) can present problems as it is difficult to control access to communal entrance doors. Typical action taken by the NIHE in such instances includes the installation of automatic closers, a robust intercom system and CCTV.

Rent Arrears

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how rent arrears can accrue to such an extent that a Housing Association tenant received a court order for eviction from the property, when then landlord was in direct payment of the rent from the Housing Executive.

(AQW 33384/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations has advised me that a Housing Association tenant may accrue rent arrears by not paying rent during a period when they were not entitled to Housing Benefit and, by the time that case is taken to court, they may then be in receipt of Housing Benefit. In addition, a Housing Association tenant may only be in receipt of partial Housing Benefit and may fail to pay the shortfall and would therefore accrue rent arrears.

On a case by case basis, a Housing Association may proceed to court seeking order for possession with a "stay", so that they would at the direction of the court be granted an order but would not proceed to evict while the tenant is on benefit and deductions continue at £3.60 per week. The Housing Association takes into account the individual circumstances and, with the new Pre-Action Protocols in place for all rent arrears cases, the Association enlists the support of specialist Debt Advisers to engage with clients before proceeding to court. It should be noted that if a Housing Association does not satisfy the courts that they have taken all reasonable actions an order for Possession would not be granted.

Private Rented Households

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 33117/11-15, for his assessment of this figure, given that his Department estimates there are at least 123,000 private rented households.

(AQW 33478/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At present, the Tenancy Deposit Schemes Regulations (NI) 2012 apply only to private landlords who have taken a tenancy deposit on, or after, 1 April 2013.

In the absence of an accurate estimate of the number of new private tenancies created each year, it is difficult to provide a meaningful assessment of up-take. However, in the coming weeks my officials will both be engaging with Councils to encourage effective regulation of the sector and also be developing publicity aimed at landlords and tenants.

The requirement for all tenancy deposits to be protected, irrespective of when they were received, is likely to be considered as part of the wider review of private rented sector regulation.

Social Houses in the Lower Oldpark

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development whether all of the recently allocated social houses in the Lower Oldpark area were allocated to people in housing stress.

(AQW 33486/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to Phase 5. Clanmil Housing Association has advised that allocations of the properties in Phase 5 of their Lower Oldpark scheme commenced on 7 May and four dwellings have been allocated so far. All of these were allocated to applicants in housing stress.

Publications in Accessible Format

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department implements a policy of providing publications in an accessible format for people who are visually impaired; and if so, whether this applies to all agencies within his Department, including the Social Security Agency.

(AQW 33523/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I can confirm that the Department for Social Development provides publications in a range of suitable alternative accessible formats for people who are visually impaired and that this policy applies to all agencies within my Department including the Social Security Agency.

Housing Executive: Ministerial Interaction

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the recent comments by the former Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Dr Maurice Hayes, whether he will restrict his interaction with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to the Board or the Chief Executive.

(AQO 6196/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In my role as Minister for Social Development I meet regularly with the Chairman and the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive to discuss both strategic and operational issues. However, there are also meetings, in my role as Minister, when it is entirely appropriate and normal protocol for the relevant departmental and Housing Executive officials, who have responsibility for the area under discussion, to attend meetings with me in order to provide appropriate advice.

Bangor: Redevelopment

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the redevelopment of Bangor town centre.

(AQO 6190/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development is fully committed to the development and regeneration of Bangor Town Centre. DSD has approved funding of £3 million towards a major £8.5 million public realm scheme in the town centre. Work on the scheme is due to commence in May with completion anticipated in Spring 2016. This investment is viewed as a major step towards revitalising and regenerating the town centre and the works will be completed in advance of work starting on the Queen's Parade Comprehensive Development scheme that DSD is promoting.

DSD is also taking the lead to progress proposals for the comprehensive development of the Queen's Parade area as set out in the Bangor Masterplan that Minister McCausland published in July 2011. The Bangor Town Centre Masterplan set out a range of proposals for the regeneration of the town centre including the redevelopment of the Queen's Parade area as the optimum way to regenerate the town centre.

The Queen's Parade scheme will be complex and challenging to deliver. DSD has established a Project Board to oversee the comprehensive development of the site and attain planning approval for the development.

Over recent months good progress has been made and the Department has agreed the purchase of a number of properties required to complete the proposed site boundary. Negotiations to acquire the remaining property are ongoing with owners. In March DSD appointed Turley Associates to work with officials to develop a planning application and attain planning permission for the Queen's Parade scheme by March 2015.

In taking forward development plans my Department is committed to ensuring that there is effective communication with and involvement of the local community and all key stakeholders. Some early engagement events to seek the views of the public, local businesses and Council on what they would like to see developed on this prominent site have already taken place. It is anticipated that options for the site will be formally consulted on in June 2014. This is a major regeneration project and we are on target to assemble all the land needed for the development scheme and attain planning approval by March 2015.

Housing Executive: Overpayment

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on his Department's negotiations with the contractors involved in the alleged overpayment of £18m.

(AQO 6191/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has not been negotiating with the contractors. This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Pensioner Income

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development what action he has taken to address the 8 per cent decrease in pensioners' gross income between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

(AQO 6192/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Pensioner income is derived from a variety of sources including benefits, earnings, occupational and personal pensions, savings and investments etc. The overall economic climate has affected a number of income sources; for example, the reduction in real term earning may be due to a combination of pay freeze and economic restructuring following the recession. Interest rates have been at an historic low, affecting income from savings – investment income has fallen by over thirty per cent in the last four years.

Many of these issues are outside of the control of the Minister for Social Development. However, benefits account for the largest proportion of income for pensioners in Northern Ireland. It is, therefore, vitally important that we ensure pensioners are getting the full benefit income to which they are entitled. Over the 2009/12 period:

- pensioner couples in Northern Ireland had the highest weekly benefit income in the UK; and
- single pensioners had similar weekly benefit income to the UK average, England and Scotland.

Benefit uptake is a priority for the Department for Social Development and each year the Department delivers a wide ranging programme of work aimed at improving the uptake of benefits, with a focus on older people. Last summer Minister McCausland launched a three-year plan for improving uptake.

In 2010/11, the programme generated £3.95 million for approximately 1,300 people. Additional investment in 2011 delivered over £13.1 million for 4,089 people; almost £10 million of this went to older people. The outcomes of the 2012/13 Programme were announced recently. An additional £16.9 million in income was generated for 4,909 people. Over £12 million of this went directly to older people. On average, people who benefited were better off by an average of £65 per week.

Double Glazing: Kilcooley Estate

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the double glazing scheme for the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor.

(AQO 6194/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised me that the brief for a double glazing scheme which covers Kilcooley/Rathgill/Willowbrook and Groomsport was issued to the contractor Bann Ltd on 9 April 2014.

The Housing Executive anticipates a start date of September 2014.

Alcohol Licensing

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to introduce legislation to reform alcohol licensing.

(AQO 6195/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In 2012 I consulted on proposed changes to the law regulating the sale and supply of alcohol in Northern Ireland seeking views on a wide range of proposals which aim to contribute both towards a reduction in alcohol related harm and helping to make the licensed trade offering more sustainable and attractive to tourists.

I am currently giving careful consideration to all of the issues consulted on and expect to make an announcement on the way forward in the near future.

Facing the Future: Housing Strategy

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on his Department's ongoing correspondence with the Equality Commission with regard to conducting a full Equality Impact Assessment on his Facing the Future: Housing Strategy.

(AQO 6197/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Equality Commission NI is to conduct an investigation into a potential breach of DSD's Equality Scheme commitments in connection with the Housing Strategy 2012-17. My Department will of course cooperate fully with the investigation.

The Equality Commission has not made a determination of whether or not the Department has failed to comply with its Equality Scheme. That will be decided by the Commission following its investigation. It would therefore be inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Food Banks

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Social Development what support his Department offers to food banks.

(AQO 6198/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My officials are working with the sector and have put in place a partnership model whereby Foodbanks can ensure that every individual and family presenting in need of food support is referred to the Social Security Agency for a full and confidential benefit entitlement check. This assesses entitlement, not only to Social Security Benefits, but also to a wide range of additional government benefits, services and supports.

In addition, Foodbanks are offered a second layer of support - a named Community Outreach Officer, who will work closely with staff and volunteers to ensure that anyone who needs further benefit advice or help with making a claim is given the support they need immediately, in their own homes where necessary.

My Department is also taking forward research to understand the demand for and the reasons for people visiting Foodbanks in Northern Ireland.

Urban Villages

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the delivery of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy commitment to create Urban Villages.

(AQO 6199/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As you may be aware OFMdFM announced two of the four urban villages at the Colin Town Centre (CTC), and the Lower Newtownards Road (LNR). DSD has been identified as the lead delivery Department. These two projects are at very different stages. The Colin Town Centre is well developed with an existing plan having been launched, with support across a number of government departments. In contrast, the Lower Newtownards Road is at an early stage and it is impossible at this point to anticipate what the needs of the area are or what expenditure or investment may be required. DSD will continue to work with OFMdFM to identify the most effective delivery mechanisms to take forward Urban Villages.

Affordable Homes: West Tyrone

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Social Development how many affordable homes his Department has funded in West Tyrone since May 2011.

(AQO 6200/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association (NICHA) collect data by local council area, rather than by parliamentary constituency. Between April 2011 and January 2014 (the last date for which data is available), NICHA supported 11 affordable home purchases in the Strabane and Omagh local council areas.

NICHA is the main delivery mechanism for affordable housing. It caters mainly for first time buyers, encouraging them to take the first step towards home ownership via their lower cost, shared equity product.

I would hope that there would be as wide a geographical spread as possible across Northern Ireland, but it is important to remember that affordable housing is necessarily a demand-led undertaking – potential homebuyers approach NICHA with a property already selected.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 30 May 2014

(AQW 15882/11-15)

In each of the last five years, my Department has spent the following on Irish Medium Education:

	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000
Recurrent	11,418	13,271	13,169	14,236	15,021
Capital	520	843	1,524	2,332	1,940

Note: Information in relation to Irish-medium Units, attached to English-medium host schools has not been provided as it is not possible to disaggregate the funding of the Unit from the host school.



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